

本文已發表

'Les désirs sexuels masculins et leurs contradictions: Masculinité, style de vie et sexualité Le cas des clients de prostituées à Taiwan', *Travail, Genre et Societes*, no. 10, pp 107-128, Paris: L'Harmattan & the CNRS (The French Center for National Research)

Contradictory Male Sexual Desires: Masculinity, Lifestyles and Sexuality among Prostitutes' Clients in Taiwan

Mei Hua Chen
mc153@york.ac.uk

Introduction

Feminist debates on prostitution, both in the West and in Taiwan, have become deadlocked. Prostitution is generalized as either work or sex, and prostitutes are as sexual agents or sexual victims. Nonetheless, both sides more or less agree that '[I]t is the economic coercion underlying prostitution,...that provides the basic feminist objection to prostitution' (Jaggar, 1980:360). In my empirical research on 18 female Taiwanese sex workers I found that the sex industry and the gendered labour market are highly interdependent on each other. Many respondents actually had been working as low-paid service workers (e.g. hairdresser, waitress, 'betel-nut beauty'¹, and factory woman) for a few years. It is very likely that the gendered labour market produces the reserve sexual labour force for the sex industry. Nonetheless, theorizing prostitution from the supply side does not inform us of the ways in which the strong sexual demands of prostitutes' clients are so stable and persistent. Neither does it offer a detailed account of client-prostitute sexual encounters. Therefore, I slightly revised my original research project. I conducted six interviewees with male clients in order to examine the demand side of prostitution. Problematizing the ideology of the 'male sexual urge' and analyzing the ways in which gender, sexuality, and class interweave to constitute Taiwanese men's sexual consumption therefore are the major concerns of this paper. There is a trend to approach these issues through analyzing sex tourism, however, I will approach these issues by analyzing how Taiwanese sexual consumers understand and

¹ Betel-nut (i.e. areca nut) is a form of Taiwanese chewing gum. It is very commonly chewed among indigenous people and working class men, especially taxi drivers and long-distant truck drivers. Betel-nut stalls are prevalent to the extent that one could find them easily on the streets in Taiwan. As there are many betel-nut stalls, it is a very competitive business. Thus many betel-nut stall owners hire young girls, dressed in bikinis, to prepare betel-nuts to attract male clients. The term 'betel-nut beauties'

experience their encounters with sex workers.

Radical feminists theorized clients as sexual oppressors and exploiters. As gender hierarchy is the key element of social organization of prostitution, almost all men are represented as potential punters and all women as, to different degrees, prostitutes (see for example, Barry, 1995; Jeffreys, 1997). This scholarship is problematic as it simultaneously says too much and too little. The totalizing account successfully theorizes prostitution as a gendered social structure, while paradoxically it dissolves the specificity of the oppression of prostitution. In this sense, it says too little about the ways in which clients exercise male power over women and fails to offer an elaborated account of how clients combine the double privileges of being consumers and men to fetishize prostitutes as sexually desirable.

Taking modern consumption into account, Brewis and Linstead (2000) argue that the commodification of sexual pleasure and the rise of the leisure industry make prostitution as a consumer industry possible. As global sex tourism grows rapidly, there is a tendency to analyze the ways in which the western/first world/white men use sex tourism as collective sexual consumption to pursue sexual pleasure in third world countries (Truong, 1990). This literature concentrate on the ways in which prostitution is interwoven with the macro social and economic inequality between first world and third world countries. Thus, they seldom go further to excavate clients' personal representation of being a (transnational) sexual consumer and how consumerism comes into play in shaping client-prostitute sexual encounters. Also they do not address the sexual consumption of indigenous population.

Recently some western empirical studies on prostitutes' clients offer more detailed accounts of the varied meanings of clients' use of prostitutes. One remarkable phenomenon reported by these studies is the ways in which clients' emotional demands play a central role in prostitution. These emotional demands include chatting with sex workers, demanding a warmer woman or sweetheart, 'passing' and dating sex workers as heterosexual couples and even expecting sex workers' orgasms etc. Above all, the majority of clients tend to see the client-prostitute encounters as reciprocal rather than exploitative (O'Connell Davidson, 1995; Plumridge et al., 1997).

Reviewing the body of feminist studies on prostitutes' clients we might find that there is a discrepancy between theorizing clients from macro-structures and from micro personal narratives. The former sees clients as sexual exploiters, and therefore fails to capture the diverse voices of clients. The latter focuses on analyzing client-prostitute encounters in terms of gender and sexuality while neglecting the client's remarkable social status as a consumer. Hence, both approaches are unable to offer an account of the ways in which prostitution is located at the intersection of gender, sexuality and

refers to these young girls.

capitalist market where men are buyers and women are sellers/workers.

It is strongly argued that consumption is not only organized by the consumers' social and economic conditions (i.e. *habitus*), but also signifies and fashions an individual's lifestyle and sexual identity (Evans, 1993). This paper will locate clients' use of prostitutes at the intersection of gender, sexuality and consumption in Taiwan. As personal narratives always serve to link the individual and the society (Lawler, 2000), it is very important to see how respondents' narratives serve to construct their self and make sense of their use of prostitutes in Taiwanese society. This paper, based on six in-depth interviews with Taiwanese sexual consumers, will analyze clients' use of prostitutes in terms of gendered sexuality and class. I will discuss how sexual consumption is strongly supported by the gendered discourse of the 'male sexual urge' in Taiwan; and how clients' consumer consciousness plays an important role in shaping client-prostitute sexual encounters. Moreover, I will draw on interview data and field notes of ethnographic observation to show how Taiwanese clients' use of prostitutes is related to their social classes and lifestyle. Above all, I would argue that clients' emotional demands, always represented as 'not just sex', are indeed highly related to their conception of 'good sex'.

Methodology

The methodology used in carrying out prostitution research is a very gendered issue. Not only because the interviewer's gender has an impact on the interview data, but also because male and female researchers conduct research differently. It is no surprise that male researchers 'pass' as sexual consumers in order to carry out ethnographic fieldwork (Stewart, 2002 [1972]), whilst female researchers work as hostesses (Allison, 1994) in the sex industry to allow them to observe commercial sex.

Confronting the difficulty of working in a sexual establishment, the research data used in this paper is mainly collected through six in-depth interviews with prostitutes' clients during July 2001 to Jan 2002 in Taiwan. I also conducted interviews with 18 Taiwanese sex workers and carried out ethnographic observations in bars, tearooms and streetwalking on the streets. These data are also very helpful in seeing how sex workers and sexual consumers invest different social meanings in commercial sex.

As commercial sex is criminalized, the Taiwanese sex industry is organized in many different ways and very class-stratified. There exist varied sex-related establishments ranging from brothels, massage parlours, escort services, barber saloons, dancing house, tearooms, karaoke bars, hostess clubs to high-class call-girl services etc. In addition, streetwalking is also very prevalent. Therefore, interviewees are sampled in terms of class in order to understand how far social class relates to people's sexual consumption. Two interviewees were working class (truck drivers), one was upper-middle class (a

doctor), two were middle class (a manager and an Internet studio owner), and one lower-middle class (a salesman). All interviewees were introduced by my friends except the doctor who responded to an Internet advertisement that I posted on *Yahoo! Taiwan*. Five interviews were conducted in a face-to-face setting. The interview with the doctor was a telephone interview because he was very anxious to protect his privacy. As buying sex is still considered immoral behaviour, most interviews were conducted in coffee shops. Only the two interviews with the truck drivers were conducted in one driver's flat.

Although punters are stigmatized in Taiwan, these male interviewees were very keen to talk about their experiences of buying sex². It seems that telling these sexual stories is one of the ways interviewees show off their masculinity. Above all, interviewees looked very excited when describing their sexual encounters with sex workers during the interviews. I could not help but think that they re-visited and re-experienced those sexual encounters by graphically describing it to a female researcher. These gendered interview conditions might have an impact on my data-collection. Nonetheless, the aim of the paper is to try to analyze these sexual consumers' personal narratives and how these narratives relate to class, gender and sexuality in Taiwanese society, rather than to produce a generalizing theory on men's sexual consumption.

I. Using prostitutes as social ritual to build manhood

It is impossible to suggest a single pattern to interviewees' use of prostitutes. Indeed, even a single interviewee does not describe a prostitute use in a consistent way. Most interviewees directly pointed out that their first visits were a kind of peer group behaviour that was obviously stimulated by the fantasy of using prostitutes, and masculine competition. Usually they hung out with friends and alcohol was always involved. Some experienced friends proposing to 'wan nu ren' (i.e. play women), so hanging out ended with visiting prostitutes.

Oh, at first I was curious, you know. It was sort of curiosity of youngsters. ...We got a group of people and had a couple of drinks. I didn't have that kind of experience, so they invited me to try it. I thought 'Yeah, I could try it, why not?' (Lai, 44, truck driver, separated)

For me, the first time was due to friends' taunts....They said something like 'Ha, you don't dare to do it, do you?' ...It's very common

² As I was quite skeptical about doing a telephone interview the doctor even made an effort to persuade me to conduct an interview with him. The two truck drivers also took me to a family-style karaoke bar, which they visit frequently, thereby showing me their daily social entertainment. The interviews lasted between forty-five minutes and four hours.

growing-up ritual among young men, you know. It's difficult for me to imagine that one's first visit was done alone. After that, you get to know it well and it becomes easier. It's not a big deal, is it? (Lin, 33, Internet studio owner, married)

As Person (1980) points out, 'An impotent man always feels that his masculinity, and not just his sexuality, is threatened. In men, gender appears to "lean" on sexuality' (quoted in Tiefer, 1987:166). Holland et al. (1996) also argue that heterosexual 'first sex', the gendered moment, is an 'introduction into adult masculinity for young men' (Ibid., 144). The two quotations above indicate that using prostitutes is a way to prove men's masculinity by conquering women sexually. As Connell (1995) pointed out masculinity would be more powerful if it were carried out through specific collective social rituals and/or totems that shape the identities of individuals and the groups they belong to. Here, masculinity is carried out collectively to build up manhood and brotherhood.

In Taiwan buying sex from a prostitute is still considered as immoral. Yet visiting special bars is actually one of the essential elements of being a 'man' in Taiwan. Hence, how clients negotiate the contradiction and social morality surrounding prostitution, such as fidelity in marriage, stigma of punters and objectifying women as sexual objects, is always an issue in clients' narratives. As an interviewee put it, 'I definitely would not dare to claim that *piao-chi* (i.e. to go whoring) is guiltless'. However, clients face different moral issues according to their social backgrounds, i.e. class and marital status. Married clients usually avoid seeing prostitutes during weekends as they have to stay with their families. They also spent quite a long time talking about how they deal with the contradiction of using prostitutes within marriage. Some clients are therefore aware of avoiding having penetrative sex, 'real sex', with prostitutes and some claim that they make an effort to give their wives/children a 'strong sense of security'. A married interviewee, Liu, reported that he does not visit young (bar) girls who are around his daughter's age because '[I]t feels very bad, if you think about your daughter doing the same job'. Unmarried clients complain about the 'social pressure' of visiting prostitutes.

It's the pressure of piao-chi. It's pressure. I walked into a brothel. I saw passers-by around there and some even laughed at me. It was nasty, so later I chose some discreet and secure places. (Hong, 35, manager, engaged)

Although clients are not criminalized by using prostitutes, it is still covert consumption.

Some interviewees did not care about the pressure either due to the fact that he ‘knows very well about the laws’ or ‘as a consumer, I am just like ordinary consumers’. The risk management, however, is still a core issue, especially for those middle-class ‘respectable’ clients. The affluent doctor went into details talking about how he was impressed by an ‘excellent’ pimp who arranged everything perfectly. For example, the pimp did not ‘ask for the money at the beginning because it looks bad’, and his speech was not as ‘vulgar’ as gangsters. The pimp always treated clients’ security concerns as the priority. The doctor could see the call girl at his house and never even meet up with the pimp. Thus *piao-chi*, a stigmatized behaviour, was then kept as an ‘absolute secret’, and, most importantly, arranged in a very ‘elaborate’ way that suits ‘clients who have a high economic status’. *Piao-chi*, therefore, is well-planned consumption rather than popping into a brothel to release sexual urges.

II. Prostitute-using as ‘playing women’

Personal sexual interests are highlighted in accounts of western men’s prostitutes use (See, for example, McKeganey and Barnard, 1996). Interviewees in this study report without any hesitation that they suffered from a desperate sexual life when they were servicemen, without sexual partners or because their wives/girlfriends could not offer enough/good sex etc. Most sexual consumption is justified by their ‘sexual needs’, nonetheless visiting prostitutes is obviously not the only solution to ‘male sexual urges’. Interviewees explain why masturbation is not always enough:

When you have experience of playing women, and you know that playing women...is much more interesting than masturbation...If you could afford it, you definitely would choose to play women. (Hong, 35, manager, engaged)

It was impossible [to masturbate myself] when I was young. I had many [girl]friends and was very popular when I was young, you know. I definitely wouldn't think about it. (Lai, 44, truck driver, separated)

‘Playing women’ is precisely the keyword of Taiwanese clients’ use of prostitutes. Both quotations show that physical sexual needs are not the first concern; instead it is how to have sex in masculine ways that makes seeking prostitutes desirable. Considering the cultural and social practices of ‘playing women’ in Taiwan, it usually refers to ‘othering’ prostitutes as sexual objects that can be flirted with, gazed upon, played, chatted up and fucked by men, but it does not necessarily end up with fucking prostitutes. Above all, clients are very aware that these prostitutes could be ‘played’

plainly because they are paid sexual commodities. One client complained how he and friends were so excited about visiting a brothel during the Lunar New Year, but there was ‘no commodity’ there! The commodification and fetishization of prostitutes’ bodies are especially manifest in the process of ‘picking up’ prostitutes. A client laughed lasciviously when talking about how he and a friend picked up two Chinese prostitutes who had ‘big breasts, good body shape and a pretty face’ among hundreds of prostitutes in Shanghai. The ways women were coded by numbers, lined up and displayed to clients, present prostitutes as commodities and clients were entitled to the ‘right to choose’. The ‘right to choose’ not only signifies clients’ consumer sovereignty, but also is the key that makes prostitution use a ‘thrill’ (O’Connell Davidson, 1998). Indeed, this client ‘others’ prostitutes as pure sexual commodities to the extent that he does not care about whether the women are trafficked into prostitution or not.

I don't care. I choose women....by their physical features. It doesn't matter whether she was trafficked or not. ... I only think about my sexual pleasures —whether I come or not. This is their job. (Hong, 35, manager, engaged)

Seeing prostitution in this way, the client-prostitute encounter is extremely sexualized, commercialized and depersonalized. The exchange of money for sexual pleasures is the major theme in this type of sexual consumption. As seeking sexual pleasures is manifest here, brothels and/or call girl services which explicitly provide sexual services are commonly chosen by this type of clients. The social boundary between ‘respectable’ clients and *unrespectable* ‘other whores’ is clearly maintained by sexual contracts within which clients are consumers and prostitutes are workers.

Oh, to be honest, somehow ...I totally treated her [the prostitute] as a whore. Yeah, I would introduce my friends to visit her. It doesn't matter because she knows she's a whore! (Ho, 38, sales, married)

I paid, so I could do whatever I wanted to her [prostitute]. I don't need to consider prostitutes' feelings or emotions...I pay for it. I spend money on it. ..I only think about my sexual pleasures. I go there and eager to get...come, and I would then leave quickly. I am not doing charity! (laugh) That's their jobs. (Hong, 35, manager, engaged)

O’Connell Davidson (1995) precisely pointed out clients’ visible ejaculations signify the end of clear-cut sexual contracts. Nonetheless, as far as paying for ‘playing women’

is concerned, moving beyond the contracts to enjoy more sexual benefit is not only a way to prove clients' masculinity, but also a way to reconfirm the social boundary between the 'respectable' Self and the Other 'whores'. An interviewee talked about how he 'conquered' a sex worker in a skin nutrition saloon where penetrative sex is not allowed.

Both men and women are naked in the saloon. In that situation...it is working women who should be subjected to the regulations of the saloon. They are not allowed to have intercourse with clients, so women have to control the situation. Eventually every man wants intercourse. ...I didn't force her [to have intercourse], but ... I used my body to ...approach her. If she didn't agree to do it, men are doomed to failure. Of course, she had her line of defence, but eventually she gave up defending it. She gave it up. It was she who gave it up! (Ho, 38, sales, married)

It is more accurate to call this a rape than commercial sex. As McIntoch (1978) put it, women/prostitutes are expected to be responsible for their 'sexual attractions' because men's/punters' 'sexual urges' are uncontrollable—as in '*Eventually every man wants intercourse*'. Moreover, the representation of the sexual encounter is heavily dependent on the widely-accepted biological discourse in which the penis is an active weapon that embodies male sexual drives, while the vagina is a passive container that needs to be aroused. Nonetheless, it is only 'good women' who are confined to this gendered sexuality; the prostitutes as 'fallen women' are excluded from this sexual norm. Hence, prostitutes were understood as lustful dirty whores who would eventually give up the line of defence because they 'grew to like it'! In this way, clients successfully convince themselves that prostitutes are conquered by their masculinity, while ignoring the reality that 'It is useless [for working women] to report it to the company'.

III. 'He hua jeou'--The collective consumption of prostitution

Apart from personal sexual consumption, collective sexual consumption, *he hua jeou*³, is very popular in Taiwan. Currently '*he hua jeou*' is actually a daily social and cultural practice in Taiwan. It is one of the remarkable hedonistic models of Taiwanese men across classes and ethnicity. Although the six interviewees are different in terms of class, they all reported that they had *he hua jeou* for business matters or simply as part of their social lives.

³ '*He hua jeou*' literally means drinking flower wine. In Taiwan, flower is a very common metaphor for women. Drinking flower wine means having alcohol and accompanied by women at the same time. Nonetheless, the point of this cultural practice is playing women rather than drinking wine.

'*He hua jeou*' is usually practiced in so-called *Eight Special Businesses* (ESBs) in which drinking is combined with diverse urban sexual entertainment such as massage services, barber saloons, karaoke bars, dancing houses etc. Above all, the entertainment is delivered and accompanied by hostesses, bar girls, and/or tearoom women. As consumers are spread through all social classes, ESBs are very class-stratified to cater for diverse lifestyles and/or tastes. Most bars charge a client at least £40 to have a bar girl's company for one hour and very cheap 'family style' karaoke bars cost a client £6 per hour⁴.

(i) Exchanging women among affluent men

Taiwanese society is well organized by interpersonal networks based on traditional kinship. Therefore, building up 'good relations' with interest-related people is very important to get one's job done. Treating business contacts, colleagues, clients, contractors, employees and politicians to *he hua jeou* is considered as one of the major means of building up a 'good relationship'. It is prevalent to the extent that there are many scandals⁵ surrounding this cultural practice. Recently some studies have focused on how Taiwanese enterprises invest budgets on treating business contacts to *he hua jeou* in order to win contracts (Chang & Tan, 1999). The basic logic behinds this cultural practice is that

You need to deal with your clients, you know. Usually they didn't demand [it], but we had to keep the business going. So, we treated clients to go there. It is a means of shortening the distance between clients and ourselves, you know... Buying [clients] a big meal is very common. If you could take him to an extra party, the relationship between you and him is definitely much closer. (Liu, 47, truck driver, married)

Bourdieu (1984) argues that modern consumption is well organized by an individual's or a group of individuals' *habitus*. It refers to those taken-for-granted individual tastes about food, drink, holiday, hobbies, manner, gestures and many routine daily and/or bodily activities. Above all, the *habitus* is always related to a set of social and economic conditions, specifically the social classes, and to an extent demonstrate the social origin of an individual. Using *hua-jeou* culture to run business is not only grounded on calculated interests, but also firmly based on Taiwanese men's

⁴ These costs only refer to having a woman accompany clients; it does not include alcohol and dishes and tip for waiters and working women.

⁵ The cultural practice of *he-hua-jeou* is taken for granted. Only if it were involved in bribery and/or corruption, would it then become a public issue. For example, Yan Ching-biau, the former chairman of Taichung county council, appropriated £1m of a county budget to treat his colleagues and friends to *he*

urban daily life, i.e. available leisure activities, the ways in which labour is organized, and how work and hedonism could be well-combined in the city.

Treating *he hua jeou* as a business tool also means that it is an extension of workplace. Allison (1994) points out how junior Japanese employees initially felt forced to accompany their senior colleague drinking late, but eventually enjoyed themselves in joking and flirting with the hostess. The hierarchy between the junior employees and their senior colleague seemed blurred when all three cut in flirting with the hostess. Nonetheless, one interviewee subtly talked about how the hierarchy in the workplace creates the tension in this cultural practice.

Allison (1994) points out how junior Japanese employees initially felt forced to accompany their senior colleagues drinking late, but eventually enjoyed themselves in joking and flirting with the hostess. The hierarchy between the junior employees and their senior colleague seemed blurred when all three cut in flirting with the hostess. Nonetheless, one interviewee subtly talked about how the hierarchy in the workplace creates the tension in this cultural practice.

The thing is that my boss was looking at me and waiting to see whether I dared to play [girls] or not. Did I think about clients when I played with bar girls? That's part of what business means. You need to think about how to please those clients, passing hot girls to clients and making them have a good time. For me, that's an extension of workplace....Usually, I would let people choose girls first and don't care who accompanies me.
(Lin, 33, Internet studio owner, married)

As masculinity is not self-evident, there is always a question as to whether a man is 'man enough' (Seidler, 1989). Above all, Connell (1995) argues that masculinities are varied in terms of production and class. The technical knowledge and expertise in the workplace result in different work-related masculinities. Working-class men take pride in toughness, strength, and male-bonding, while white-collar salaried men and/or skilled technical workers value self-discipline and rationality. Lin complained of the ways in which his masculinity was put under scrutiny (*whether I dared to play or not*); however, he prided himself on demonstrating manhood and/or brotherhood by 'passing hot girls to clients', and in behaving as a well-trained and experienced employee. In other words, it is not only the power hierarchy in the workplace that burdens younger employees, but also the competition of masculinities in the cultural practices that create

hua jeou during one and half years (The United, 1/03/2001, p3).

the pressure. To be lustful is one of the ways to be masculine, but, paradoxically, self-control is also a core element of masculinity (Seidler, 1989). Hence, clients who are able to control their 'innate sexual drives' and 'pass hot girls' to others are considered as men of the men. *He hua jeou* is thus a social and cultural practice in which men compete with each other. Moreover, in the competition, male bonding and brotherhood can be built up by circulating working women around (Hwuang, 2001) as commodified sexual objects.

(ii) *He hua jeou* as working-class men's social life

It is quite common for Taiwanese working-class men to hang out together and visit affordable ESBs for 'relaxation' after an eight-hour shift. It is plainly part of their daily lives rather than using prostitutes.

When visiting a bar, I would go with friends. It is sort of social life, you know. We chat to each other in the bars. You know, killing time and having someone to talk to... If I like a woman, I will chat with her and make friend with her (Lai, 44, truck driver, separated).

Another working-class respondent also talked about how, when he ran a small gambling business and won an amount of money six years ago, he visited *a-gong-dian* (i.e. a low-ranking drinking place for middle-aged or elderly men) almost every night and always ended up with sleeping with different hostesses or massage workers. Most importantly, he is so proud of himself for having convinced his wife that his 'nightlife' was simply 'healthy entertainment'.

I took my wife to visit there, too. Working women still came to accompany us...So, I give my wife the impression that I visit those places simply for entertainment. I sing songs and sometimes have a massage. It's very healthy. It's entertainment but not sex. (Liu, 47, truck driver, married)

As *he hua jeou* is treated as Taiwanese men's social entertainment, it plays a part in organizing the gendered social relationships between men/husbands and women/wives. Usually wives are expected to 'understand' that their husbands are playing social games with working women but not betraying marriage. However, clients, taking advantage of gender hierarchy, benefit from both sides and enjoy the fantastic dream of having 'a housewife at home and a lustful and lewd woman in bed'!

(iii) The illusion of love

Allison (1994) argued that visiting a hostess club is desirable for Japanese men, because the performance of femininity by hostesses reinforces clients' masculinity and manhood. The attractions of visiting ESBs is that it gives clients an illusion or fantasy of 'falling in love'. As a bar girl put it, 'we are selling affection and love, but not necessarily selling sex'.

We intend to give them that kind of ...illusion because we have to. Let them feel that we like them very much. We sincerely like them very much. You have to understand men. They are chauvinists. They like you taking them seriously and like to take care of vulnerable women. So it's very useful to pretend that you are soft and meek, and try to show weakness. They feel that we are falling in love with them, and there are possibilities for them to have affairs. (Fung-fung, 28, 3 years as a bar girl)

This quotation indeed is quite typical of young Taiwanese bar girls. According to Hochschild's (1983) definition Fung-fung is actually doing emotional labour, i.e. managing, regulation, and even controlling her own emotions as well as those of her clients. See, '[L]et them feel that we like them very much'. Nonetheless, this performance of emotional labour is not necessarily indicative of the victimization of bar girls. As Firth and Kitzinger (1998) argues (young) women do invest interest in this talk of 'emotion work' and represent themselves as sophisticated enough to deal with men's feelings and knowledgeable about men. As Fung-fung reports, '[T]hey are chauvinists'; '[T]hey like you taking them seriously and like to take care of vulnerable women'. With this 'knowledge' of men it therefore is possible for bar girls to create the illusion of 'falling in love' with clients, and thus have the ability to 'cultivate' and 'keep' clients. Instead of being victims they are knowledgeable, skilled, and sophisticated sex workers.

The 'fall-in-love' games between sex workers and clients create an ambiguous space that blurs the commercial relationship between clients and prostitutes. Liu reiterated that sex always 'happened naturally' when both working women and he had 'sexual needs'; hence, he proudly said that 'I seldom pay for sex'. Making sense of using prostitutes in this way, the axiom that 'prostitution is the transaction of money and sex' is problematic. Liu 'gives' money to his regular women, but it is understood as a mutuality of friendship rather than a commercial transaction.

I don't want to buy sex with money. However, sometimes I consider that she is working for survival, so I more or less give her some money... It is

because I feel ashamed; otherwise, women usually do not talk about money when I take them out. ...Although it is based on her consent, but, at least, as a consumer I am prepared to spend money while she is struggling to make money. (Liu, 47, truck driver, married)

The self-account is complicated and contradictory because heterosexual love relations interweave with sexual consumption and masculinity. 'Authentic' sexual encounters won by masculinity (See, *women usually do not talk about money*) is supposed to be pure and without money involved, while monetary reward is a basic principle of sexual consumption. As Liu is always aware of his social status as a consumer, the intimacy will not be *just* like any other heterosexual relationship. The working woman was personalized as his lover, but, she still existed as the Other whose who lived by prostitution. Above all, the 'mutuality' is always subject to change according to clients' arbitrary preferences (Plumridge et al, 1997:172), especially when the clients' economic situation and the calculation of gains and losses come into play. In fact, client-prostitute relationships, even in those long-term relationships, are mostly, at best, an intimacy without commitment. This calculation was illustrated by how he related to a working woman.

I told her, 'if you forced me to do anything, I would just leave you'. I mean, since we are friends and are together, you then cannot make things difficult for me. Neither would I make things difficult for her. So, she still kept working there. She needed to survive, you know. It was impossible for me...According to my personality, it is impossible for me to raise a cow simply to have some milk to drink! (laugh) You did your job, and I ran my own business. That's it! (Liu, 47, truck driver, married)

The long-term intimate relationship is hardly reciprocal and/or transgressive. It is the man/client who decides how far the working woman can cross the boundaries to have an intimate relationship; it is the woman/prostitute who should always remember her place and not transgress further!

IV. 'Good sex' and emotional demands

(i) 'Seasickness' in using prostitutes

Compared to Taiwanese clients who seek explicit sex and use the ESBs as daily urban hedonism, some clients claim that they use prostitutes to satisfy both 'physical and psychological needs'. The former, again, refers to 'men's sexual urges', while the latter are varied, ambiguous, and contradictory. The affluent doctor tends to 'seek sex

without any responsibility', i.e. 'it is just hedonism', and he does not have any 'psychological burden'. An interviewee, Ho, who suffered from long-term frustration in pursuing heterosexual women, argued that using prostitutes serves to fill up his 'psychological lack', i.e. lack of heterosexual intimacy. As Ho never had heterosexual intimacy before he used prostitutes, using prostitutes, for him, were very emotionally-invested encounters.

I visited her (a 20-years-old licensed prostitute) frequently, and I got to spend more and more time with her... It's a bit like investing something in her. I then began to miss her all the time. How can I say it, I mean, at that time I didn't have any experience of intimacy at all. So, ...it was like people put it, seasickness. It's seasickness because I was inexperienced. I told her 'I want to redeem your life!' (ha, ha, ha...) (emphasized by Ho) Just like the old-fashioned lines of soap operas...It's not love, it's a feeling that I wished I could possess a woman who belonged to me...I had no idea of being depended on. The feeling of being depended on. Emotionally being depended on...Even now I feel it was a kind of lack or incompleteness. It's a bit similar to being mentally disabled. (Ho, 38, sales, married)

Seasickness is very commonly used metaphor among Taiwanese punters. It refers to those 'inexperienced' clients who 'lose' themselves and 'fooled' by working women's 'fall-in-love' trick. The ways Ho talked about how he missed the brothel girl and how he cares about her are very like ordinary heterosexual love. However, the dream of 'possessing a woman of my own' was always contested by the cruel fact that 'I stood outside her room and she was busy inside'; hence, he tries to convince himself that 'It's not love because there was not any commitment!' Strongly denying that it is 'love', claiming he was 'seasick' and 'inexperienced', indeed, are much easier to face than the stark reality that a prostituted girl was not falling in love with him. Moreover, using the language of seasickness serves to construct prostitutes as cunning and greedy women who only fancy about clients' money, while 'inexperienced clients' are presented as innocent victims. Thus, 'I want to redeem your life! **Ha, ha, ha...**' (my emphasis) ended up as an ironic footnote to these sexual encounters.

(ii) Not just 'sex' but 'good sex'

Apart from this extreme story, most interviewees do not have a clear account of the 'psychological needs'; however, one thing in common in their narratives is that the client-prostitute relationship is 'not just sex'.

Oh, I do not want to take a woman out only for having sex. I mean just for having sex, I don't want it. It [sex] must be mutually enjoyable and with some feelings, then the sex could be interesting. (Liu, 48, truck driver, married)

I emphasized carnal desire earlier. It's a physical need, because one's dick cannot stand it. But, it would be better if there were something more than that [sex] ...It might not be love. I think maybe an illusion of love or something. (Lin, 33, Internet studio owner, married)

I think that sex is not just about doing that thing or just about ejaculation. I need emotional attachment. That makes you feel that you are not so...It's right that it is very comfortable, but it will make you feel that you are not so... lonely. Um, it makes you feel that you are not so lonely. (Chen, doctor, 38, single)

These remarks challenge the 'lust balance' in which men tend toward to lust-dominated sexuality or carnal desire and women toward love or intimacy-dominated sexuality (Wouters, 1998). As emotional attachment is expected, more work needs to be done (by both parties) in the client-prostitute relationship.

Lever and Dolnick (2000:96) point out that *talk* is considered as a way to show clients' 'limited reciprocity' with call girls. Respondents in this research have very different sexual expectations, however, everyone starts with chatting with female prostitutes. The affluent doctor, who paid £300 to £500 per hour to see call girls at his house, served call girls red wine and arranged erotic music to create a romantic atmosphere, and, most importantly, made the encounters 'not so commercialized'. The ways clients romanticized the commercial sex not only reflects on when and how to deal with payment (O'Connell Davidson, 1995), but also relates to how to do the sex itself. In other word, the commercial sex should be as similar as non-commercial sex as possible. Nowadays, heterosexual encounters are seen as 'a series of stages to be gone through before the final output: foreplay leading to coitus culminating in orgasm' (Jackson and Scott, 1997:560). The doctor, for example, 'needs more time to do foreplay', because 'it feels more pleasurable'.

Seidman (1991) argued that the 'sexualization of love' and the 'eroticization of sex' considered non-commercial sex as co-operative, mutually respectful, and, most importantly, mutual sexual satisfaction is treated as the most intimate way to express love. In this sense, demanding 'mutuality' in client-prostitute sexual encounters serve to,

at least, create an illusion that clients are 'loved' or 'cared about' by the prostitutes. In prostitution, the mixing-up of love with sex creates a paradox in which emotional demands (i.e. that it is mutually enjoyable, an illusion of love, and avoidance loneliness) are presented as 'not just sex', while, they explicitly or implicitly link to clients' fantasies of 'good sex'. See, 'It [sex] must be mutually enjoyable and with some feelings, then the sex could be interesting'. '[I]t would be better if there were something more than that [sex]'. Even the 'good interaction' brought up by chatting is preliminary and preparatory for having 'good sex'. 'Good interaction' is described as followed:

...[S]he served me and I served her. Um, I think we treated each other equally. She made me happy and I wanted to make her happy, too... That's co-operation....Of course, you could just lie down there and let her to rub or stroke you, but it's very different... Oh, it's much higher than making love, you know. Yeah, I just used my fingers and let her come for two or three times. It wouldn't be possible, if the two parties didn't have a good interaction (Ho, 38, sales, married).

Many punters think they are buyers, so they simply lie down there and don't do anything. I think many men do it. But, for me it would be a very bad sex. ... It won't guarantee a good interaction. (Lin, 33, Internet studio owner, married).

Here, 'good interaction' and prostitutes' 'co-operation' are keywords for carrying out 'good sex'. For the sake of 'good sex', Lin pointed out, the consumer sovereignty is better to be restrained and interact with working women in a sense of 'partnership'. However, so-called 'good interaction' and 'co-operation', as I showed earlier, are firmly based on combining consumerism to 'conquer' working women in a masculine way and even use force. Most importantly, 'good interaction' also represents Lin and Ho as 'good clients' who are not arrogant, rude, and rough people thinking that 'I spend the money, so I am the boss!' Proudly talking about 'good interaction' they thus identify themselves as sexually attractive, good consumers, and, most of all, sexually skilled.

Ho's narrative also shows that *giving* working women orgasms constitutes an important part of 'good sex'. Nonetheless, the discourses surrounding heterosexual orgasm are very much gendered. As feminists (Roberts et al. 1995; Jackson and Scott, 2001) observed, men's orgasm is always presented as self-evident due to the discourse of 'male sexual urges' and the visible ejaculation. On the contrary, women's orgasm is always treated as mysterious and problematic. It needs more 'work' and/or 'sexual skills', because the *lack* of sexual drive and less visible orgasm. Heterosexual women's

orgasms are not their own but, rather, are achieved by men's 'hard work' or 'excellent sexual skills'. In a demanding orgasm era, *giving* women orgasms becomes a criterion of whether men are good at sex or not.

Actually, only one interviewee does not care about whether working women come or not as he 'just wants to give vent'. Three interviewees reported that most working women do not have an orgasm and more or less fake it, as an interviewee put it, '[I]t is all about good or bad performance'. Liu, had long-term relationships with working women, reported that '[W]e are not doing commercial sex, so there is no point for her to fake it!' (See, women's [fake] orgasms are successfully performed in non-commercial sex!) Nonetheless, all interviewees reported that they could *tell* whether working women came or not. Thus working women's fake orgasms, in most cases, irritated these interviewees.

I can tell it [orgasm]. Later on I was very annoyed when prostitutes pretended to make some noises. I told them 'Don't bother to fake it!' I said something like 'Fuck you, don't fake it! It's OK, if you don't enjoy it. You don't need to fake it!' She then replied that 'Hum, I do it to please myself. Does it bother you?' (laugh) Damn! I'm not that kind of innocent punter. I know women's orgasms very well. Why should I cheat myself? (Hong, 35, manager, engaged)

Sometimes I felt annoyed. (he, he, he..) I got bored. I really want to slap her face and say something like 'Yeah, keep faking!' Yeah, it's very boring. I finished it rashly....It was very awful. I mean when you throw yourself into the sex and you find that your partner also throws herself into it, then you feel very comfortable. ...When you are concentrating so much on it, while she is faking...Your thing [penis] shrinks immediately. (Chen, 38, doctor, single)

In non-commercial sex, women might fake it to keep the relationship working. Roberts et al (1995:528) ironically comment that in non-commercial sex 'woman's orgasm is exchanged for the man's work'. It might be that the economics of orgasm in non-commercial sex make prostitutes' clients, more or less, expect prostitutes' orgasms in commercial sex. As one interviewee put it, '[Y]ou should have a better performance, if you want to work in this profession'. To sum up, the sexualization of love, the eroticization of sex, and the way orgasm is constructed as the climax of heterosexual sexual encounters make commercial sex a very emotionally-involved work. The clients not only demands sex, but 'good sex'—involving flirtation, seductive verbal and body

language, caresses, in-and-out intercourse, and finally both parties' orgasms. The 'good sex' demanded here is highly emotionalized rather than only carnal desire.

Conclusion

In this paper I have explored Taiwanese clients' sexual consumption in terms of class and gendered sexuality. I contest the ideology of the 'male sexual urge' which underpins Taiwanese prostitution and argue that some sexual consumption is a covert and well-planned consumption, especially for those respectable middle-class men. Respondents who visit prostitutes just to 'give vent' are more likely to see the client-prostitute sexual encounters as a commercial relationship. Thus, the rule of 'the exchange of money and sex' marks the client-prostitute relationship. At the other extreme, some respondents use prostitutes as substitutes for 'romantic lovers'. Hence, the client-prostitute encounter is personalized and non-commercialized.

Locating prostitution in Taiwan's specific cultural context, the social and cultural practice of '*he hua jeou*' creates different client-prostitute relationships and complex power struggles. Firstly, '*he hua jeou*', as a way of 'playing women', is very class-stratified. Middle- and upper-class businessmen use '*he hua jeou*' to combine the urban lifestyles and work on the one hand, while using bar girls and hostesses, as sexual commodity, to exchange social, political and economic interests among men on the other. '*He hua jeou*', however, is plainly part of social life for working-class men.

Finally, respondents' conception of 'good sex' also has a strong impact on shaping the client-prostitute relationships. Although the 'good sex' is represented in slightly different ways, one thing in common is that most respondents demand 'emotional' comfort in prostitution. Thus, prostitutes are expected to perform diverse emotional works ranging, e.g. chatting, flirting with clients, performing femininity, faking orgasm, and even 'falling in love' with clients. Nonetheless, sex workers also manage to manipulate clients' emotions and feeling by creating an illusion of 'falling in love' with the clients. Therefore, the relationships between clients and sex workers are far more complex than monetary transaction. It is very important for feminists to see these different encounters between sexual consumers and sex workers, rather than to reproduce the polarized positions of prostitution, i.e. either victimizing prostitutes as sexual victims or celebrating sex workers as free sexual agents. Indeed, in many cases, sex workers are neither free agents nor pure victims, but somewhere in-between.

References

- Allison, Anne. 1994. *Nightwork: Sexuality, Pleasure, and Masculinity in a Tokyo Hostess Club*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
- Barry, Kathleen. 1995. *Prostitution of Sexuality: Global Exploitation of Women*, New York: New York University Press
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Brewis, Joanna & Stephen Linstead. 2000. *Sex, Work and Sex Work: Eroticizing Organization*, London and New York: Routledge Press
- Chang, Li-yun and Tan Kang-rong, 1999. 'Constituting the Networks of the Industries', in Chang Li-yun (ed.), *Networks of Taiwan: the Relationships and Economical Reason of Taiwanese Enterprises*. P. 17-64. Taipei: Yuan-Liou Publishing Press
- Connell, R.W. 1995. *Masculinities*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Evans, David T.. 1993. *Sexual Citizenship: The Material Construction of Sexualities*, London and New York: Routledge Press
- Frith, Hannah & Celia Kitzinger, 1998, 'Emotion Work' as a Participant Resource: A Feminist Analysis of Young Women's Talk-in-Interaction, *Sociology: The Journal of the British Sociological Association*, 32(2): 299-320.
- Holland, Janet, Caroline Ramazanoglu, and Rachel Thomson. 1996. 'In the Same Boat? The Gendered (In)experience of First Heterosex', in Diane Richardson ed., *Theorising Heterosexuality—Telling it Straight*, Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Hwuang, Shu-ling. 2001. The Cultural meanings of Taiwanese Men's Collective Use of *He-hua-jeou*, Working paper represented on the *Conference of Taiwanese Teenage Girls, the Sex Markets, and Male clients*. Taipei: The Taipei Rescue Women Foundation Press.
- Hochschild, Arlie R. 1983, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Jaggar, Alison M. 1980. "Prostitution" in Alan Soble ed., *The Philosophy of Sex*, Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams.
- Jeffreys, Sheila. 1997. *The Ideas of Prostitution*, Melbourne: Spinifex
- Jackson, Stevi & Sue Scott. 1997. 'Gut Reactions to Matters of the Heart: Reflections on Rationality, Irrationality and Sexuality', *The Sociological Review*, 45 (4): 551-575.

- 2001. 'Embodying Orgasm: Gendered Power Relations and Sexual Pleasure',
Women and Therapy, Vol. 24, No. 1/2, pp. 99-110. London: The Hawth Press.
- Lawler, Steph. 2002. 'Narrative in Social Research' in Tim May ed., *Qualitative Research in Action*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Lever, Janet and Deanne Dolnich, 2000. 'Clients and Call Girls: Seeking Sex and Intimacy' in Ronald Weitzer ed, *Sex for Sale: Prostitution, Pornography, and the Sex Industry*, New York and London: Routledge Press
- McIntosh, Mary. 1978. 'Who needs prostitution? The social construction of male sexual needs' in C. Smart & B. Smart (eds), *Women, Sexuality and Social Control* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
- McKeganey, Neil and Marina Barnard. 1996. *Sex Work on the Streets*, Buckingham: Open University Press
- O'Connell Davidson, Julia. 1995. 'British Sex Tourist in Thailand', in M. Maynard and J. Purvis (eds), *(Hetero)sexual Politics*, London: Taylor & Francis Press
- 1998. *Prostitution, Power, and Freedom*, Cambridge: Polity Press
- Plumridge, Elizabeth W., S. Jane Chetwynd, Anna Reed & Sandra J. Gifford. 1997. 'Discourses of Emotionality in Commercial Sex: The Missing Client Voice' in *Feminism & Psychology*, 7 (2): 165-181.
- Roberts, Celia, Susan Kippaz, Catherine Waldby, and June Crawford. 1995. 'Faking It: The Story of "OHH!"', *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 18, No. 5/6, pp. 525-532.
- Stewart, George Lee. 2002[1976]. 'On First Being A John' in Ken Plummer ed., *Sexualities: Critical Concepts in Sociology, Vol II, Some Elements for an Account of the Social Organization of Sexualities*, London and New York: Routledge Press.
- Seidler, Victor Jeleniewski.1989. *Rediscovering Masculinity: Reason, Language, and Sexuality*, London and New York: Routledge Press
- Seidman, Steven. 1991. *Romantic Longings: Love in America, 1830-1980*, New York and London: Routledge Press
- Truong, Tahn-Dam. 1990. *Sex, Money, and Morality: Prostitution and Tourism in Southeast Asia*, London: Zed Books Press
- Tiefer, Leonore. 1987. 'In Pursuit of the Perfect Penis: The Medicalization of Male Sexuality' in Michael S. Kimmel ed., *Chaning Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity*, Newbury Park, Beverly Hills, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications

Wouters, Cas. 1998. 'Changes in the "Lust Balance" of Sex and Love Since the Sexual Revolution: The Example of the Netherlands', in Gillian Bendelow and Simon J. Williams (eds.), *Emotionals in Social Life: Critical Themes and Contemporary Issues*, London and New York: Routledge Press.