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The Body/Sex/Work Nexus: A critical perspective on body work and sex work

Rachel Lara Cohen
Kate Hardy
Teela Sanders
Carol Wolkowitz

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Introduction

This book focuses on intimate, embodied and sexualised labour in body work and sex work, exploring empirically and theoretically the labour process, workplace relations, regulation and resistance in some of the many work sites that together make up these types of work. It seeks to tease out similarities and differences in the ways that sexual and physical intimacy are organised, managed and experienced across different employment contexts and in doing so will provide ways of reframing key questions in critical studies of work and employment.

Many of the authors in this volume are interested in a particular relation between bodies and labour, conceptualised as paid 'body work' (Wolkowitz 2006, 2002 Twigg 2006, 2000), or, sometimes, 'body labour' (Kang 2003, 2010, Cohen 2011), which involves 'assessing, diagnosing, handling, and manipulating bodies that thus become the object of the worker's labour' (Twigg et al 2011, p.1). Conceptualising 'body work' as work on others' bodies, and not simply physical and cultural work on one's own body, which was its earlier usage (Shilling 2005, Gimlin 2007), recognises the incorporation of body work (and sex work) within market relationships, and emphasises the role of paid workers in social reproduction. Concretely, body work is typically found in health and social care, aesthetic services, for instance beauty work, sex work and protective and security services, for example nightclub bouncers or airport security personnel, who police and control bodies. Interactions in body work may take various forms: touch, caress, manipulation, transformation, arousal or even incision. Cohen (2011) estimates that, according to this definition, at least 10 percent of UK jobs involve body work (this does not include sex work, which is rarely measured by labour market data).

Sex work spans a range of activities in which sexuality is explicitly being sold. These are largely coterminous with customer-facing work within the 'sex industry' and include direct sexual services (prostitution in the form of flat, brothel or street work) (Brents and Hausbeck 2010), erotic dance (stripping, lap dancing and peepshows) (Sanders et al., this volume), pornography (Fazzino, this volume), webcam work and phone sex lines (Selmi, this volume), amongst others. Much, but not all, sex work involves work on or with another's body (and so comprises a form of body work). Therefore, in this introduction we employ the shorthand body/sex work to indicate work across these broad, and overlapping categories, reserving 'body work' or 'sex work' for instances where we want to specify particularly either work on the body of another or work in the sex industry.

The focus on the intimate, embodied and sexualised labour that occurs within body/sex work is part of a new trend toward recognising the embodiment of labour and that the body, emotions, and sexuality are sites of commodification (Wolkowitz 2006; Witz et al 2003; Gimlin 2007; Hassard et al 2000; Hochschild 1983, 2003; Otis 2011; Hardy et al 2011). The embodiment of occupational cultures and organisational practices has probably been documented most thoroughly by research on medical, nursing and social care (for instance Lawler 1991; Twigg 2006; Twigg, et al (eds) 2011). Meanwhile, Boris and Parreñas (2010) and McDowell (2009) have carried an interest in embodied labour and interactions between bodies into our understanding of economic relations and the

geography of employment in private services, including sex work.

None of these books, however, has employment relations or the labour process at its heart. In contrast, we focus on what we can learn about the social organisation of labour by considering paid work that takes other people's bodies as its focus or 'material of production'; the inter-subjective relations involved, for example the sexualisation and desexualisation of work involving, or intimating, touch; and the conflicts and organisational problems that arise when work involves bodies working on bodies and/or sexuality.

Workers' bodies and sexuality are implicated in all labour, but bodies and/or sexuality are the *object* of labour in a smaller number of instances. As described below, bodies and sexuality are peculiar objects of labour due to the social meaning of human bodies, and the social, spatial and organisational contexts and constraints of the situations in which they receive attention. The empirical recognition of the peculiarity of bodies as materials of production has as its corollary the conceptual recognition that labour processes are always concrete, located and material, in ways that are consequential for the forms of managerial organisation possible. Additionally, in engaging with types and places of work that differ from those usually considered in research on the labour process (Thompson 1989; Thompson and Smith 2009) or on the institutional and social organisation of labour, consideration of body/sex work may provide new avenues for developing labour process analysis.

Conversely, it is essential that sex work and body work are explored as work – for instance within a labour process framework – rather than viewing these activities as fundamentally different from other forms of work, whether as simply extra-economic oppression (sex work) or 'natural' nurturing (other forms of body work). One reason for the timeliness of this book is the apparent increase in the quantity and visibility of sexual labour and its consumption (Brents and Sanders 2010), as well as increases in other forms of body work (especially care work) which have also become increasingly commodified as paid labour. This book elucidates the lived experiences of those whose work implies or necessitates sex, sexuality and inter-personal touch and the implications of this for their experiences of work, temporality, and their ability to organise to transform their working conditions. We explore the managerial constraints and organisational pressures of this work and the emotional and aesthetic implications of intimate embodied interactions for those being worked-upon.

In this introductory chapter, we highlight continuities and differences across a range of work that has tactile, often intimate or sexualised interaction between bodies at its heart. These bodies are mostly, but not always, human and mostly, but not always, co-present. We begin by providing an overview of the changing socio-economic and historical structures of body/sex work. We then focus in on conceptualizing body/sex work, exploring the embodiment of service sector encounters, and how this contributes to wider understandings of embodiment at work, as well as detailing specific issues that arise when workers are engaged in body work. Next, we consider the ways that workers, located within different occupations and managerial regimes, adopt strategies for sexualising or desexualising interactions. We then focus in more detail on the social organisation of 'body work' as 'body labour' and

the ways commodification affects the labour process of body/sex work. The next section considers the consequences of commodification for relationships between workers and those whose bodies they work on. Finally, we explore the impediments that both body work and sex work present for workers' capacities to resist exploitation, via appeal to institutional (especially legal) structures, but also through collective and individual forms of resistance.

The changing socio-economic structures of body/sex work

People, largely women, have worked on the bodies of others, as well as on their own bodies for time immemorial. Much of this work (for instance care or aesthetic work as well as sex work) occurred within the home. Yet, with the radical separation of home and work wrought by industrialisation and capitalism and the erosion of extended familial care-networks, new institutions dedicated to the provision of health and social care (hospitals, asylums, care homes and nurseries) were established, both by private providers and by emerging welfare states.

In contemporary capitalism, body work is increasingly not simply commodified as body labour, but located within private, profit-making organisations. This movement has its roots in several intersecting processes. First, the entry of increasing numbers of women into paid labour has further reduced the capacity for body work to be provided domestically. Second, the triumph of neo-liberal politics has meant that many states have withdrawn from direct provision of health and social care, while the ongoing responsibility of the state as funder-of-last-resort (for at least a large proportion of health and care provision) is precisely what makes this a viable market for capital (Diamond 1992).

Third, the growth of the cosmetic, beauty and 'pampering' industries has promoted the development of ever-new aestheticising techniques and 'specialist' skills. These have moved services like hairdressing from kitchens and bathrooms to dedicated salons (Willett 2000), and increasingly marketed services towards 'bodies of value' (Anagnost 2004).

Fourth, a growing cultural acceptance of the commodification of 'intimacy' (Zelizer 2005; Hochschild 2003), has opened up new spaces for capital (especially, as discussed below, small scale capital). Consequently forms of work previously performed for love are increasingly performed for a wage (McDowell 2009).

Fifth, socio-demographic shifts as well as cultural expectations have meant that ageing bodies, particularly, represent an increasing market for goods, services and labour (Wolkowitz 2012). Partly this involves provision of care, but the market has diversified, and now involves selling products and body services to reduce visible signifiers of ageing (such as anti-ageing beauty regimes of Botox and fillers, or, more drastically, facelifts and other cosmetic surgeries).

Sixth, there has been an apparent growth and 'mainstreaming' of the sex industry. The internet has made pornography instantly accessible, often for free, while table dancing and gentlemen's clubs have etched their way onto high streets. Meanwhile in the context

of neo-liberal retrenchment, recession and austerity, more men, women and children may be turning to unregulated and casual jobs in the sex industry for income and survival.

Conceptualising body/sex work

Work that focuses on the bodily desires and needs of customers, clients and patients, or that involves the manipulation or movement of other people, may involve differing relations to, and social and tactile understandings of, their bodies. Even sex work stretches from the most intimate sexual exchanges to the, apparently disembodied, communications of the telephone sex line. Other kinds of work also involve varying degrees of touch and direct intervention in the body, ranging from the security guard's pat-down to the care-worker's adjustments, and from the surgeon's incision to the manicurist's filing.

Exploration of the labour process of body work/labour (including sex work) places centre-stage the role of bodies and sexuality within service sector interactions. However, as Twigg et al (2011) stress, the concept was never intended to displace the concept of 'emotional work/labour' (Hochschild 1993). Rather, as Kang (2010) and Cohen (2011) make explicit, body work/labour is conceived as analytically complementary to emotional work/labour. Moreover, the recognition that all body/sex work necessitates negotiating powerful social meanings attached to the body, touch, physical intimacy and sexuality highlights the intense emotional labour required to manage the bodies and emotions of patients, clients and customers, as well as workers' own responses. Because bodies are volitional subjects (except when unconscious) body/sex work necessarily involves communicative as well as bodily interaction with clients, customers and patients to get the work done, even when forming a relationship is not the aim (Toerien and Kitzinger 2007). It can also involve a variety of ways of conceptualising the body-worked-upon, for instance the mindful body of alternative and complementary therapies, or the more objectified body typical of modern medicine.

The lack of attention hitherto paid to the extent of service sector employment now focusing directly on the human body is surprising. One reason for this inattention may be the apparent continuity of this work with women's unpaid labour, which means this work is not consistently recognised as labour. Indeed, as Stewart (this volume) shows, neither care work nor sex work is fully recognised in UK law as employment. The concentration of workers seen as outside the 'mainstream' labour force (women and racialised, often migrant minorities) in body work occupations contributes to the marginalisation of this work and increases workers' vulnerability. Even where body work, such as hairstyling, requires dedicated training and skill acquisition, the line between domestic and workplace social relations may remain fuzzy (Cohen 2008), again undermining recognition of this work as labour. Furthermore, workers themselves, in discussing their work, may obscure its bodily content in an attempt to professionalise their image by privileging the intellectual and affective aspects of their work over what is frequently seen as the stigmatising 'dirty work' of physical intimacy (Bolton 2005, Simpson et al 2012; Twigg et al 2011).

Body work is also relatively invisible because the places where it is performed are frequently out of view, in the informal sector and/or outside our understanding of 'the workplace': for instance in workers' or recipients' homes, 'behind the screen' (Lawler 1991) in hospital, or, in the case of sex work, in criminalised locales. Finally, the difficulty in standardizing work on the human body, and the labour-intensive nature of the work mean that much body work is incompletely subsumed under capitalist labour processes, and, with the exception of conventional health care, tends to be located in relatively small-scale enterprises in which self-employed workers bear the costs of the 'flexibility' it requires (Cohen 2011, Sanders, Cohen and Hardy, this volume).

Because frontline body/sex work is centrally concerned with touch skills are in large part haptic (Miller and Brents and Jackson, this volume; Tarr 2011; Harris 2011). As such much training is (literally) hands-on, with on-the-job training the norm in fields as varied as medicine and hairstyling. The level of skill assigned to particular parts of the labour process is of course not static but shifts with technological development or the development of new disciplines and associated values, such as the shift from feeding to nutrition (see Rodeschini this volume). In addition, while we have focused on body work on human bodies, as Miller (this volume) shows, there may be important parallels in work that involves working with and on non-human or animal bodies, specifically in terms of the haptic learning involved.

Investigating the social organisation of body/sex work builds on recent concerns with 'embodying labour' (Wolkowitz and Warhurst 2010), explicitly recognising the bodily basis of human effort and consciousness. Despite the centrality of embodiment to the labour process—and the incorporation of embodied experience in many ethnographies of work — the dominant tendency hitherto had been to understand the body as a biological constant, which can be bracketed away. Conversely work was understood as impersonal activity, with bodies, emotion, sexuality and even one's physical attractiveness restricted to the province of private, family life and associated with women rather than men (Gimlin 2007).

Yet understandings of the body have long been embedded within critical understandings of work. For Marx the body constitutes both the source of labour and, as an artefact of labour, its product (Scarry 1985), while, as Foucault (1977) showed us, the operation of power requires bodies, operating in terms of surveillance, excitation and repression. Others have suggested that flexible, self-regulating bodies lie at the heart of post-industrial society, supplanting the defensive, unbending body of industrial society (Martin 1994,). Research into work and employment is now increasingly engaging with 'body studies' and the debates around modernist, postmodernist and feminist conceptualisations of bodies and embodiment (e.g. Butler 1993, Crossley 2001, Shilling 2005), and usually see bodies as both material and constructed through multifarious discourses, inscribed upon and inscribing and therefore culturally and historically contingent (Evans 2002).

Theorisation of the body in the literature on sex work has been somewhat more overt, since representations of the sex worker appear to be wrapped up more closely with her body than is the case for other workers (Wolkowitz 2006, O'Neill 2001, Hardy, this

volume). Wolkowitz (2006) argues that different approaches to sex work explicitly or implicitly deploy different concepts of the body, which underpin different understandings of the meaning of sex work in contemporary societies and sex workers' agency (something elaborated on by Hardy, this volume). The role of the body in sex work is highlighted in Brents et al's (2010) account of working in the Nevada brothels, a topic extended by several chapters in this book (see Brents and Jackson, Cheung, Hardy, Fazzino, Sanders, Cohen and Hardy and Selmi).

It does not help that analysis of sex work continues to be stuck in the 'sex wars' (as noted by Hardy this volume). Thus notwithstanding research which highlights the complexities of voluntary adult sex worker-client relationships, media and social and criminal justice policy continues to construct the customer or 'punter' as an untrustworthy, dangerous and potentially violent offender (Kingston 2010).

However, most theoretical writings and empirical research on the body, sex and work are primarily concerned with the body of the worker, for instance the worker's body as the bearer of labour power (Marx), the target of power (Foucault), or the embodiment of 'distinction' or other forms of social hierarchy (Bourdieu). The attempt to 'embody' labour has not, however, yet told us as much about the relation between bodies in the workplace. While there is research on the embodied relations between workmates or members of organisations (which features in Halford et al (1997) and other research on gendered organisations), this is rarely extended to explore embodied relations between workers and the customers, clients and patients with, and on whom, they work. In looking at the interaction between workers' and these bodies-worked-upon, including the ways in which this interaction is sexualised or desexualised, we need to consider the role of customers, clients and patients as embodied, wilful subjects, and at how their bodily vulnerability, variability, and unpredictability affects the organisation of the work and workers' relation to the labour process, along with the sensory nature of this relationship, which (as evocatively evidenced by Cheung, this volume) involves touch, taste and smell as well as visual and aural interaction.

Sexualising Bodies, Desexualising Bodies

Critical investigations of the role of sexuality in labour, within and beyond the sex industry, have demonstrated the ways in which sex is increasingly central to multifarious forms of work (Wolkowitz 2006; Brewis and Linstead 2000; Adkins 1996; Boris et al. 2010) not least sex work (Hardy et al. 2010; Bernstein 1999; Day 2007; Charusheela 2009). Body work involves confronting the sexual meanings of the body and therefore always involves sexualisation/desexualisation. As such it requires the management not only of the bodies that comprise the material of labour, but also workers' own bodies. As an important component of work that cuts across different forms of body work, within and outside the sex industry, processes of sexualisation and desexualisation in body/sex work is discussed below.

In sex work, workers construct a sexualised body/self through aesthetic labour, both to produce a particular body image and form and also to dress it 'appropriately' (Pilcher 2012; Fazzino, Brents and Jackson, Hardy this volume). Depending on the specific

labour process, this sexualised presentation often, however, goes much further to develop a complex 'manufactured identity' (Sanders 2005), providing, for example, a 'girlfriend experience' (Sanders, 2008; Bernstein, 2007). The importance of the sexualised persona becomes particularly evident amongst sex workers who are unable to utilise aesthetic cues, for instance those engaged in phone sex work (Selmi, this volume). And, while the sexualisation that occurs in instances such as phone sex could be understood as disembodied, in order to 'sell' the illusion it is critical that a sexualised body is verbally constructed and narrated.

Beyond the sex industry, as workers' bodily presentation and aesthetic representation are systematically incorporated into consumer landscapes, sexualisation becomes increasingly common across the service sector (Warhurst and Nickson 2009). While workers' sexualisation may be part of a resistant or informal worker strategy (Warhurst and Nickson 2009) it is also harnessed and organised by management across retail, hospitality and leisure environments, with services marketed on the 'sexiness' of staff (for example, Hooters or Abercrombie and Fitch). Management control operates via the recruitment of 'certain personalities'. Notably these 'personalities' are then most frequently employed within relationships in which their income is dependent on tips (restaurants, bars) or commission (sales), providing workers with a material incentive to sexualise their workplace interactions. Such employment relations shift risk and responsibility for pleasing clients to the worker, thereby facilitating a highly sexualised working environment, while enabling employers to avoid the punitive constraints of equalities legislation. In this sense there is a parallel between these sexualised leisure services and workers in the sex industry, who are largely employed as either self-employed own-account workers or are dependent on commission/tips (see Sanders, Cohen and Hardy, this volume).

The sexualisation of some service interactions has a knock-on effect on other intimate service interactions, especially where these involve body work. Where it is a female body being touched by a male body worker the 'need' to desexualise the encounter is exacerbated by dominant socio-cultural gender understandings of the passive yet sexual female, and the predatory, sexually demanding male (Simpson 2009). Conversely, in the more common case (given the gender distribution of body work), when a young women works upon often older men (such as care work), desexualisation requires workers to use their relative physical power and professional identity as a mechanism to overcome or neutralise extra-work social relations of feminine disempowerment/sexuality. The frequent failure of such desexualisation is evidenced by incidents of sexual harassment of care workers (Wolkowitz 2012). The sexualisation of women service workers may be exacerbated where workers' sexuality is constructed through customers' racialised stereotypes (see Kang this volume).

In all these cases, workers conducting relatively mundane tasks are required to desexualise touch to avoid 'misinterpretation'. Strategies of desexualisation may involve aesthetic clues – for example the white 'medical' gown of the beautician that marks beauty therapy as a treatment, not a sexual service (Oerton, 2004), or relocating work – for instance the movement of therapeutic massage into complementary and alternative therapy centres (Purcell, this volume). Desexualisation also may be achieved verbally: by

making rules explicit, through implicit clues, by preceding touch with a verbal description of an upcoming procedure, by establishing a relationship or through the strategic use of humour (Brown et al 2011; Giuffre and Williams 2000; Purcell, this volume). As Kang and Purcell show, however, it is difficult to verbally desexualise an encounter without undermining what Korczynski and Ott (2004) and Korczynski (this volume) term the 'enchanted myth of customer sovereignty'.

In various forms of sex work, a key part of the worker's emotional and physical labour is related to sexualising the client's body. This might involve discursive framing: highlighting how 'good' the customer is at sexual activities especially in sexually pleasing the worker, the praising of specific bodily attributes, how 'big' he is, or (in phone sex) his capacity to fulfil needs/desires (if worker and client were ever to be co-located). But in interactive sex work this might also entail physical or embodied framing, with forms of touch deployed specifically to symbolically designate the worker's lust, even lack of control. This may simply be the light and suggestive touch employed by dancers/hostesses in sex work venues (Parreñas 2010; Sanders, Cohen and Hardy, this volume). Alternatively the embodiment of desire may be more complex, with prolonged and reciprocal worker-client sexual engagement (see Brents and Jackson, this volume). As such, production of a sexualised body-worked-upon is in stark contrast to most body work, in which workers work hard to desexualise the client's or patient's body.

The social organisation of body/sex work labour processes

Commodification continually alters the social organisation of body/sex work. As commodification of body work (including sex work) takes place, transforming it into body labour, it produces two contradictory impulses: commoditisation and individualisation. Commoditisation involves standardizing the service offered and therefore the labour processes. This necessitates standardisation of the bodies-worked-upon so that they can be treated in standardised, labour-saving and cost-saving ways. Several chapters in this book highlight the process, whereby commodification of bodily care work alters the ways in which workers work with patients and clients. The work activity itself is speeded up and fragmented (James 1992, Diamond 1992) and reorganised around conformity to written rules and rotas, which Campbell (2008) calls 'textualisation'. In her study of Italian care homes, Rodeschini (this volume) demonstrates the ways in which the use of artificial nutrition removes the need for co-presence during feeding. Commodified care work seems to seek to tame the unruly nature of variable and unpredictable bodily needs, for instance through sophisticated technology (Rodeschini); by dealing with incontinence by putting adult care-home residents in diapers (Greener); or by establishing standardised rotas, which ignore individual needs and variations in these (Wibberley).

Yet bodies are diverse and, as Cohen (2011) has pointed out elsewhere, there are constraints on labour process (re)organisation where the body is the object of labour, which make it difficult to rationalise without leading to neglect. These constraints include a stickiness in the ratio of workers to bodies worked-upon, the need for co-presence combined with temporal unpredictability and bodily inviolability (the difficulty of dividing up the body-worked-upon) and that bodies comprise a highly varied and changeable material of production. As such, discussions in this book highlight both the perennial

desire of capital, embodied in management, to standardise and rationalise labour for the greatest possible profit and the consequent contradictions and tensions for workers and for those worked-upon.

Those things that make bodies peculiarly difficult to standardise are the reason that in many forms of body work (outside of state subsidised sectors) there has been relatively little capital entry. Instead small firms and self-employed workers seek to attract higher-end niche markets (in beauty services, sex work, aesthetic and holistic medicine) by responding to the individual needs of specific people and their bodies. The ways in which such individuation and personalisation occur are discussed in greater detail in the section below. However, where strategies for attracting high-end consumers are unsuccessful, yet body work remains labour intensive it is also synonymous with low wages. For instance hairstyling frequently ranks bottom of UK wage scales.

In most labour processes standardisation and commoditisation are facilitated by the introduction of technologies. In body work and sex work technological change has had differing and somewhat bifurcating effects. Some types of body work are near impossible to perform remotely or with non-human machinery (Cohen 2011), for example a dental extraction or even the mundane activities of painting a fingernail. Moreover, as Greener highlights, even simple technologies like body hoists may actually slow down the labour process, and are unlikely to perfectly 'fit' all bodies, so their use in body work settings is inconsistent.

In lieu of the substitution of human for non-human labour, and despite continual attempts to divide the labour process (for example reconfiguring the division between high-status doctors who diagnose, nurses who medically treat, care assistants who clean, and orderlies who move bodies), the ongoing requirement for co-presence has made concentrating body work in particular locations tricky. Indeed, although it has been suggested that 'body work without bodies' is developing in medicine, where doctors examining laboratory results and scans may never see patients and instead (re)construct their bodies technologically in order to make a diagnosis (Atkinson 1995), thus far only some kinds of body work have been moved to remote locations: largely diagnostic work (such as that involving scans) and advice work (May et al 2005). In contrast care work, or even the work involved in testing the body in order to conduct diagnosis (inserting a thermometer, drawing blood, scanning the body), as well as most aestheticising services, continue to require co-presence. This requirement has implications for the geographies of body work as it means that that body work requiring the most extended physically intimate contact is unlikely to be off-shored. This is notwithstanding the development of certain hubs and enclaves, often in the majority world, to which customers travel to receive bodywork, with sex and cosmetic surgery tourism being the most obvious examples (Sanchez Taylor 2000; Holliday et al. forthcoming). We also see increasing migratory flows of, largely but not exclusively, women from the majority world to minority world cities to perform body/sex work for those with more access to capital (McDowell 2009).

In the sex industry the transformative impact of new technologies has been more striking. Thus, as Fazzino documents (this volume) the dramatic cheapening and pervasive

distribution of recording and broadcasting technologies (namely the internet) have contributed to the widespread production and dissemination of 'amateur' pornography. This raises questions about whether this amounts to decommodification of sex and sexuality. Full discussion of this will have to occur elsewhere, but it is worth noting that the forms taken by amateur porn remain highly interwoven with the commodification of sex (for instance, pay-to-view websites). The centrality of the internet to these forms of sex work, and the extent to which the work has become truly 'mobile', dissociated from space/place, is in stark distinction to forms of interactive sex work (for instance involving escorts). The latter, despite being increasingly marketed online, retain a strong connection to place, both because of the co-presence required for intercorporeality, but also because such work occurs within particular worksites (brothels, flats, streets) and particular regulatory constraints and boundaries.

Organisation of the body/sex work labour process is also affected by status differentials between workers and bodies-worked-upon (Abel and Nelson 1990, Wolkowitz 2002), in relation to both their positioning within the body work interaction (patients queue to see doctors, not vice versa) as well as their relative status in the wider society. As Twigg et al (2011:178) note the relationship between body status and labour process is profound. Class and other distinctions play out in embodied ways, with, for example, poor, ethnically 'other' or ageing bodies likely to smell, touch, and feel different. Therefore, the desirability of bodies-worked-upon varies in socially meaningful ways. Where body work is funded by the public sector, or where it is organised to serve more disadvantaged groups workers encounter the most socially 'undesirable' and unappealing bodies. As Raghuram, Bornat and Henry's (2011) study of geriatric medicine shows, where body work, even high-skill, highly paid body work, takes socially undesirable bodies as its object, it is often also performed by more socially disadvantaged groups.

The relations between workers and client, customers and patients

The ways in which the labour processes of body work and sex work are organised shapes the relations between workers, clients and customers, as does the type of work and the consumer market. Body work interactions are structured very differently where workers are in direct economic relationships with their clients/patients/customers (for example: self-employment; own-account work; even commission or tipping) than where body work is wholly funded by a third party (for example the state), or where it is ultimately funded by the recipient, but the economic relationship between recipient and worker is indirect (for example in private care homes where workers are employed by the home; or in nightclubs where bouncers are employees of the venue). In all these latter cases the incentive for employers to rationalise structures of employment, and the tensions of this process (discussed above), are felt more strongly. Where, on the other hand, workers are independent contractors or otherwise dependent on customer/client repeat or prolonged interactions, there may be strong structural incentives to facilitate greater physical and emotional intimacy (Cohen 2010; Sanders, Cohen and Hardy this volume; Sanders and Hardy 2012).

An advantage of exploring the three-way relationships (employer, worker, consumer) typical of service work (Macdonald and Sirianni 1996) through a body work lens is that it

highlights the ways in which the organisation of work and workers' strategies affect and are affected by the embodiment of the encounter. Korczynski (this volume) argues that the key social dilemmas (between worker and customer) are different where workers navigate different kinds of body work. Care workers, he suggests, face severe difficulties in maintaining the patient's or client's sense of autonomy, never mind 'sovereignty'. In contrast, work in aestheticising services, involving adorning consumers' bodies, flattering and following consumers' wishes, poses potential threats to workers' dignity because the superiority of the service recipient is so accentuated. Korczynski does not, however, consider sex work, in which interactions within the upscale sex markets being produced by diversification take yet a variety of forms. In particular, threats to workers' dignity may be reduced where worker-client relations are more equal and extra-work sociability, even sensuality overlap somewhat with work-based relations, something found both in sex work (Sanders 2005, Brents and Jackson, this volume) and aestheticising body labour in small firms (Furman 1997, Van Leuven 2002).

Where work is intimate obtaining and maintaining the participation or compliance of the client, customer or patient is necessary. Compliance may be secured with both verbal and tactile instruction (Toerien and Kitzinger 2007). It may also involve the use of chairs, beds, straps or other equipment that moves the body-worked-upon into a suitable state to be worked upon, often temporarily leaving the body prone or otherwise vulnerable (Wolkowitz 2002). In this process, establishing and retaining trust is essential (Eayrs 1993, Soulliere 1997, Brown et al 2011). In body/sex work trust is facilitated by long-term worker-client relations (Cohen 2010). For instance, Sanders (2008a) notes that a significant number of men who buy sex do not want to purchase what they consider an intimate interaction from 'a stranger', so therefore seek out a commercial partner with whom they can become physically, socially and perhaps emotionally familiar. Hence, in the indoor sex markets (escorting, brothels, working flats for example) research has found that a third of customers become 'regulars' to the same sex worker over a period of time. These regulars engage in 'normalised' male sexual scripts such as romancing, flirting, social support and emotional interactions and the possibility of creating mutual sexual pleasures (Sanders, 2008b; Atchison et al 2006; Monto, 2000).

The possibility of 'mutual intimacy' in any commercial marketplace is a huge topic, and beyond the remit of this introduction. Yet, we note that it may both be true that sex workers do not have to experience intimacy to provide it (see Zeilzer 2005) and can, and sometimes do, gain intimacy and sexual pleasure from their work (Kontula 2008). Not dissimilarly, workers involved in other body work may experience emotional engagement (Cohen 2010) and more limited forms of pleasurable touch (Miller this volume). One example of how important intimacy within sex work is to customers is provided by men with physical impairments. They describe how physical non-sexual interactions around touch, caressing and caring purchased through sex work are part of their 'human needs' that can be met in the marketplace (albeit illegally in most places), especially where few other intimate relationships are present (Sanders 2007). These men seek romance and caressing, and in doing so upturn stereotypes of male purchasers of sex as driven purely by biological sex urges to seek rampant sexual encounters with as many women as possible.

While all forms of body work involve the worker in initiating touch and intimacy, in many examples of commercial sex work interactions, especially between escorts and customers, the customer is not a passive actor but rather is encouraged and expected to *interact* sexually and at times emotionally (Hardy and Brents and Jackson, this volume). Brents and Jackson argue that some of the sex workers in their study represent these interactions as 'holistic' (relatively equal interactions involving mind and body), which echoes the understandings of holistic masseurs in Purcell's study (this volume). Nonetheless most body/sex workers clearly bound their working lives from their non-working. For instance, sex workers in Cheung's study (this volume) set clear boundaries around touch, and indeed taste.

In sex work there are economic incentives for reciprocal bodily interactions and for allowing customers some control over touch; often the price of the service increases the more sexual touching is incorporated especially where customers can touch intimately as well as being touched. For example, self-employed erotic dancers regularly allow, even encourage, customers to touch and interact with their body in the build up to (hustle) and performance of striptease as a way of drawing customers in to spend more (see Sanders, Cohen and Hardy this volume). Even where the body is not present in telephone sex work (Selmi, this volume), sex workers employ narrative strategies to allow the customer to feel in control of the conversation. In this context the standardised 'scripts' seen in call centres elsewhere in the service sector (e.g. Bain and Taylor 2000) are notable by their absence. Here prolonged, and necessarily individualised, interactions are more profitable than efficient ones, and intimacy is the key to repeat custom.

As Korczynski demonstrates, in sectors such as healthcare mutual interactions between the customer and the worker are less typical, particularly where customers are patients and are made passive, by their health status and/or (social or physical) vulnerability. Interactions in these settings increasingly rely on routinised and standardised 'care' and treatment provided by a practitioner who ultimately is conditioned by institutional and organisational power relations (condensed, for instance, in 'the rota' governing domiciliary care, as Wibberley's chapter shows). The division of labour within health and social care also mean that patients commonly interact with multiple different workers, each of whom is required to produce a record of their interaction for each other (Greener, this volume). These records disembodify and disaggregate the body-worked-upon; their insufficiency highlighted by repeated public calls for 'joined up care' (Cohen 2011). In contrast to science-led medicalised care, therapeutic-led care and holistic interventions (Purcell, this volume) contain 'a more equalitarian view of practitioner-patient relations' (Twigg et al, 2011: 179) and seek to recombine body and mind, but such interventions comprise a small part of all body labour.

Where the patient's embodied integrity as a person is denied, and the organisation of body work means that workers struggle to relate to the embodied patient as another subject, the contradictions of commodified body labour become particularly apparent. It is in these contradictions, Korczynski argues, that 'workers skilfully reclaim dignity, sometimes for themselves, sometimes for the service-recipient'. What is perhaps a bleaker alternative is depicted by Greener and Wibberley in their studies of care home and domiciliary work, in which workers 'responsible' for bodies cannot even complete the work required for bodily

reproduction within the time allotted. In these circumstances workers may provide additional unpaid labour and still not complete tasks adequately, yet they, as the human face of the institutions for which they work, shoulder the blame (from recipients, relatives or even the media) for the inhumanity of commodified care.

Resistance and consent

Identifying the characteristics of body/sex work sheds light on specific difficulties workers have in mitigating the negative consequences of the work and the possibilities for organised resistance. The first obstacle is that their work is often not recognised as work, with sex workers derided as either vulnerable or deviant, and care work naturalised as women's traditional role. As Stewart (this volume) shows, at present neither sex workers nor many care workers are able to access employment law protections that are supposed to protect the weaker party in employment contracts: rather British public policy intends to impede the functioning of sex markets while protection in the field of social care is extended mainly to the elderly recipients of care, rather than workers. Similarly, Kang (2010) shows that health and safety controls in US manicure primarily protect customers, not workers. Moreover, bearing the stigma of 'dirty work', physical or moral, body work and sex work challenge the rhetoric of contemporary high-skill, high tech production – this work is not 'the future'. On the other hand, the intensity of this stigma may, as Cheung shows, be an incentive to delimit what labour workers are willing to perform and thereby facilitate small acts of resistance.

An additional obstacle for body work is that the sector remains labour-intensive and funded largely by states with pathological commitments to austerity, or private consumers, often women, limited in the amount they can pay by their own, relatively modest earnings (Himmelweit 2005). As such the viability of body/sex work is increasingly dependent upon the availability of unorganised, racialised, female labour, unable to command high wages. In this context, improvements in earnings are particularly difficult to achieve.

There is nonetheless worker resistance, especially in large-scale care and medical settings (see for instance Diamond 1992, Armstrong and Armstrong 2008). Yet, as documented in the care sector (Lee-Treweek 1997), informal resistance is hard to deploy without harm to care recipients. Wibberley (this volume) shows that the unwillingness of workers to commit harm acts as a powerful motivation for quiescence (and extending working hours). Moreover, whereas other research has demonstrated the ways workers work with patients to ignore managers' standardised procedures and achieve a least worst outcome (Lopez 2007), Greener's study (this volume) suggests that sometimes the only outcome workers can achieve is one that harms at least some of those bodies they work upon and yet, it is workers who will be, and are regularly, judged to be 'callous' or 'uncaring'. Workers' personal sense of responsibility for others' bodies and fear of being represented as uncaring can easily undermine industrial possibilities. This is exemplified by the June 2012 industrial action by the British Medical Association (BMA) over pension reductions. Notwithstanding 'overwhelming' support for industrial action (for example 84% support from consultants; 92% from junior doctors (BMA.org.uk)), the BMA advised frontline services to 'remain open and fully staffed' and patients 'considering themselves

in need of urgent attention' to be seen. While the consideration of patient needs is admirable, unsurprisingly the action ended up as a damp squib, with the minority of doctors who formally took industrial action nonetheless at work and performing unpaid work.

The vulnerability of many recipients of body work firstly highlights the need to incorporate physical as well as social vulnerability, power and control in analysis of the social relations of the labour process. More critically, in the context of resistance, the common dependence of some workers and bodies-worked-upon on the willingness of governments to fund services, have led to suggestions that care workers' interests lie in making common cause and collective action with care recipients and their relatives (Boris and Klein 2006, Razavi 2007). This may be a necessary strategy across body/sex work.

Cheung (this volume) concentrates on the individual resilience that sex workers develop to mitigate and manage the negative consequences of working in sex work. This builds on existing research which charts sex workers coping mechanisms including the use of humour (Sanders 2004; Downe 1999), client screening (Kong 2006, Sanders 2005) and 'doubling' (Hubbard 1999). While resilience may differ from resistance (Katz 2004), this contributes to the growing of body of literature which seeks to outline the way in which sex workers resist repression or control through forms of micro-resistance. In contrast, Hardy (this volume; see also 2010) has shown that recognising sex work as work and the possibilities for larger scale resistance, such as labour organising, go hand in hand (see also Kempadoo and Doezema 1998; Jenness 1998). In arguing for recognition of the complexity of bodies in the production of sex work encounters, Hardy argues for nuanced strategies for challenging sex workers' conditions in work and the production of those conditions themselves by recognising the ways in which class, gender, race, history and geography, amongst other factors, shape the intercorporeal nature of sex work, and social life itself.

Conclusions

Contemporary labour processes oscillate around particular interactions with the body, shaped by the problems bodies present for the organisation of the labour process. In this chapter we have highlighted the variable ways in which bodies are worked with and on and tried to show that assumptions about these bodies, including those about sexuality, are consequential. We have also highlighted variations around common constraints and possibilities, which exist insofar as the human body (and to some extent the animal body) is a unique and indivisible social and biological phenomenon, both subject and object, experiencing intractable needs and malleable pleasures, open to both gratification and abuse, care and discipline, power and resistance. And we have tried to show that differences in how body work and sex work are organised and experienced are part and parcel of increasing global inequality and the political economy of labour and life itself. Many workers described in this book are engaged in processes which enable bodies to survive, both in a literal sense, by feeding them and watering them and also in a social sense through providing recognition and attention. As such the shifting boundaries of body and sex work – between public and private spaces, between commodified and uncommodified and between paid and unpaid labour – has wide-ranging social

implications.

In the chapters that follow, authors explore the different contexts in which body work and sex work occur, the constructions of the bodies of workers and clients, customers and patients, and the experiences of workers involved in those labour processes outlined above. The next chapter in this, first, section, **Theorising Body/Sex Work**, is *Marek Korczynski's* 'Touching Moments: An Analysis of the Skillful Search for Dignity within Body Work Interactions'. Marek locates his analysis of different types of body work (body care/ maintenance, controlling body work and body aestheticizing work) within the wider literature on consumption in service work, especially the potential conflict between efficient production and customer enchantment, and indicates key tensions in body work.

Kate Hardy, in her chapter 'Equal to any other, but not the same as any other: the politics of sexual labour, the body and intercorporeality', builds on existing understandings of the body in sex work and proposes that understanding sex work as 'intercorporeal', enables us to account for the complexity and diversity of the structures and experiences of sex work. Central to her argument is a concern with understanding existing sex worker politics and developing a terrain on which struggles over sex work - and work more generally - may be fought in the future.

The authors in the second section of the book concentrate on **The legal and Socio-economic Contexts** of body work and sex work, and how these shape the position of workers and the labour process. Using the example of the provision of commercial sex and caring for the vulnerable, *Ann Stewart* considers the ways in which intimate, embodied and sexualised labour is regulated within UK law, how the relationships involved are understood within law, and the limitations of the existing regulatory norms and frameworks.

Next, *Barb Brents's* and *Crystal Jackson's* 'Gender, Emotional Labour and Interactive Body Work' uses the context of Nevada's legal brothels as a case study to examine the ways that sex workers talk about their bodies and their labour. They argue that the body/work nexus must be understood as a body/emotion/work nexus involving a variety of dimensions assembled in different ways, even within similar jobs.

Joe Greener's focus is the consequences of the extensive privatisation of the ownership and management of nursing homes on work and on care standards for the elderly residents. He examines some of the frontline effects for workers and residents of the struggling profit margins of Southern Cross, a British firm that acquired a large number of nursing homes before its financial collapse in 2011.

The last paper in the section, 'Hairdressing/undressing: Comparing Labour Relations in Self-employed Body Work' by *Teela Sanders, Rachel Cohen* and *Kate Hardy* provides a

comparative analysis of body labour in two settings. Drawing on empirical studies, the authors explore how interactive service work is undertaken by both hairdressers and strippers to perform aesthetic, emotional and body labour for their customers.

Section 3, **Sexualising and Desexualising Bodies in the Labour Process** compares and contrasts the strategies of workers whose earnings depend on sexualising their engagements with male clients with those working in mundane forms of body work, such as in nail salons or therapeutic massage, who struggle to desexualise their interactions. American researcher *Lori Fazzino* considers explores the body work women performers do to sexualise their own bodies. In 'Altered Bodies, Engineered Careers: The Effect of Body Technologies on Pornographic Performance', Fazzino compares professional and amateur women performers who appear in corporate as against do-it-yourself pornography.

In her chapter, 'From erotic capital to erotic knowledge: body, gender and sexuality as symbolic skills in phone sex work', *Giulia Selmi* discusses erotic capital and sexualized performance by sex workers through the medium of technology and voice. Absent the physical body or any corporeal engagement with the male customer, Italian phone sex workers translate sexual and emotional intercourse through voice, language, tone and narrative by drawing on a range of corporeal, sexual and gender resources.

The chapters by *Miliann Kang* and *Carrie Purcell* each explore ways that women who undertake body work attempt to deflect sexualisation that leads to sexual harassment. Kang, however, stresses that the sexualisation of body work takes specifically racialised forms. Drawing on her wider study of mainly Korean-owned nail salons in the US, *The Managed Hand* (2010), she argues that the manicurists she came to know were subject to sexualisation not only because of the connotations of 'body labour' but because of what she calls 'racialised sexualisation'. *Purcell* looks at the practice of Holistic Massage in a Scottish city in the context of what she argues is widespread devaluation of touch, despite its powerful immediacy. She argues that in attempting to deflect the sexualisation of their work through recourse to an ideology of maternal care, female practitioners ended up naturalising their skills.

In the final section, **Disciplining and Resistant Bodies** authors consider the ways in which workers' bodies, and the bodies they care for are disciplined and workers' resilience in the face of social hostility. *Janet Miller's* 'Racing Bodies' uses the framework of body work to study stable-yard work in Britain, exploring both workers' interaction with the horses they care for and the work required on their own bodies. *Giulia Rodeschini* and *Gemma Wibberley* are both concerned with the ways in which care recipients' individual needs are denied, under conditions of standardization that reduce the need for temporally specific interactive body work. Rodeschini considers a trend in Italian nursing homes towards the adoption of artificial nutrition through a feeding tube inserted into the patient, while Wibberley shows how the rota through which domiciliary care is timetabled, paced and curtailed to the bare minimum disciplines both workers themselves and the amount and kind of care they have time to provide.

Finally, *Olive Cheung* considers the resilience Hong Kong sex workers develop to cope with the 'dirty work' their work entails, both in terms of preventing and managing contact with bodily substances. Cheung details the levels and specificity of disgust sex workers

experience, resist and develop strategies to control, as intimate bodily interactions with customers jar with cultural codes around physical contact. This contrasts with those sex workers who describe intimate body work as providing 'pleasure', including sexual excitement and satisfaction.

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