



Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex

Elizabeth Bernstein

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex

Elizabeth Bernstein

Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex Elizabeth Bernstein

Generations of social thinkers have assumed that access to legitimate paid employment and a decline in the 'double standard' would eliminate the reasons behind women's participation in prostitution. Yet in both the developing world and in postindustrial cities of the West, sexual commerce has continued to flourish, diversifying along technological, spatial, and social lines. In this deeply engaging and theoretically provocative study, Elizabeth Bernstein examines the social features that undergird the expansion and diversification of commercialized sex, demonstrating the ways that postindustrial economic and cultural formations have spawned rapid and unforeseen changes in the forms, meanings, and spatial organization of sexual labor.

Drawing upon dynamic and innovative research with sex workers, their clients, and state actors, Bernstein argues that in cities such as San Francisco, Stockholm, and Amstersdam, the nature of what is purchased in commercial sexual encounters is also new. Rather than the expedient exchange of cash for sexual relations, what sex workers are increasingly paid to offer their clients is an erotic experience premised upon the performance of authentic interpersonal connection. As such, contemporary sex markets are emblematic of a cultural moment in which the boundaries between intimacy and commerce—and between public life and private—have been radically redrawn. Not simply a compelling exploration of the changing landscape of sex-work, *Temporarily Yours* ultimately lays bare the intimate intersections of political economy, desire, and culture.

Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex Details

Date : Published November 1st 2007 by University of Chicago Press (first published July 15th 2007)

ISBN : 9780226044583

Author : Elizabeth Bernstein

Format : Paperback 288 pages

Genre : Sexuality, Sex Work, Nonfiction, Feminism, Sociology, Philosophy, Theory, Social Science, United States, History, Gender, Gender Studies

 [Download Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Comm ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Co ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex Elizabeth Bernstein

From Reader Review Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex for online ebook

William Lopez says

A great and balanced ethnography on contemporary sexual commerce. Bernstein illustrates with examples and contrasts from the US and abroad, and covers all her bases -from the personal to the legal.

DoctorM says

Bernstein looks at the structural changes in sex work in the later 1990s and beyond--- e.g., efforts by urban authorities to shut down street-level prostitution, the effect of the internet, and the 'professionalisation' or 'gentrification' of the way middle and upper-middle class sex workers and clients see commercial sex ---and links those things to wider economic and cultural issues. She uses Bourdieu's 'Distinction' as a theoretical background to argue that in a late-capitalist, postmodern culture, many middle-class/educated buyers and sellers seek a 'bounded authenticity' in sex work--- a performance of sex with an emotionally 'authentic' feel that is carefully recognised by both parties as commercial, and where the rules of late-capitalist marketing (compartmentalisation, mobility, efficient/convenient, flexible, 'just-in-time') apply (i.e., the Girlfriend Experience--- GFE ---offered by high-end courtesans and escorts).

Bernstein also looks at the class and race effects of the effort to end street prostitution in San Francisco, Amsterdam, and Stockholm as sees the economic underpinnings of such efforts--- anti-immigrant feeling in the EU with its fear of "foreign" sex workers, the effort to clear marginal populations out of areas in SF that can be redeveloped ---and relates that to the larger issue of privatising public space on multiple levels.

Bernstein also asks wider questions: Why do we seek 'bounded authenticity' and the Girlfriend Experience? What does it actually mean to say that sex is 'commodified'? Why does contemporary Western society so valorise 'authenticity'?

Well-written, thoughtful, and very much recommended.

Kirsten Macaulay says

This book is especially interesting to people who have lived or are living in San Francisco. It explains the history, the commodity, and changes of prostitution in the sex industry throughout three decades. It describes how the dot com era brought prostitution indoors and was appealing to several different socioeconomic classes.

Evan Cvitanovic says

Amazing look at sex work from the turn of the beginning of the 20th century to the end, and also into the 21st with the advent of the internet and technological advances that can intersect the public and private spheres of sexual commerce. The idea of bounded authenticity coupled with the marketing power of a

nascent internet makes for a very interesting shift in consciousness or whatever from the early 90s to the early 00s and the transformation of the sexual sphere. This can probably be extended to many different trends that emerged in the 2000s until today in the porn industry

Dafna says

It was one of the best accounts of sex work I have read so far. Not only Bernstein has done a great fieldwork and collected enormous amount of data, she has also presented a very neat and insightful analysis, situating sexual commerce in a broader social and economic context, and reflected on her own position in the field as a woman and a feminist researcher. Bravo.

Kaliseviltwin says

An analysis of sex work in San Francisco, the Netherlands, and Sweden as placed into a socio-economic context.

Sex work is yet another area where I had a fairly knee-jerk opinion of it. I have long been an advocate of legalizing prostitution, assuming it would be safer for those who engage in it (clients and workers alike), but I still held a primarily middle-class belief that it was a career only "chosen" by people with few choices. I also held a fairly typical point-of-view that sex work was inherently demeaning to the worker. This book shows how sex work has changed in the post-industrial age and that the demographics of sex workers and their clients has changed in kind. It also offers some insight into how sex workers view their work and provide alternative theories as to what workers (and clients) receive from the exchanges.

The book is competently written, but it has its flaws. The author makes clear, though, where her research is limited.

This book is also an incredibly fascinating alternative view of the history of San Francisco as seen through the lens of the sex work industry. For that alone it's worth a read, especially if you live in or just really like San Francisco.

Laura Holt says

I was bothered by how she presented the startling different experience of middle class sex workers, who where all but exclusively white, and the street walker prostitutes but then moved on without exploring race/ethnicity and privilege at all.
