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Governing sex work in the city

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Abstract

Sex work is often constructed as an urban ‘problem’. As a result, sex workers, clients and the spaces in which people buy or sell sex are frequently the subject of intervention from those governing cities. This paper considers the ways in which problems and solutions are framed in the wider governance of sex work in cities in the global north. It draws on a range of academic literature to show how the urban governance of sex work takes relational and territorial forms. Governance is relational in the sense that it is about ‘improving’ the connections and relationships between those involved in sex work and those seemingly affected by sex work; and it is territorial in that placing sex work in the city through spatial exclusion, containment and the construction and maintenance of spatial boundaries is often the focus of strategies of governance. The paper argues that while the urban governance of sex work is contingent, there are often resonances and connections between cities in how they frame the problem of sex work and the interventions used. The paper concludes by highlighting future areas for research on the subject of sex work, governance and the city.

Introduction

It is frequently recognised that the sex industry has a longstanding presence in cities (Aalbers and Sabat 2012; Hubbard 1999). It is equally common to hear sex work – defined here as the provision of sexual service(s) in return for money or payment in kind (Hubbard 2012) – being framed as ‘problematic’ in some way or another. Whether sex work is perceived as an unpleasant sight, an affront to monogamy and heteronormativity, a hindrance to urban regeneration, an inherently violent practice, or a form of work that does not receive recognition, rights and protection, or something different, it has been subject to much public and academic scrutiny and debate. For some sex work is

inherently problematic, constructed in and of itself as a violation and as exploitative; for others the problems are more contingent on who and what is involved, the context in which it takes place, and the impacts it has. It is perhaps no surprise then that sex workers and urban spaces of sex work have been targeted by a wide variety of interventions and policies from those governing the city. With this in mind, the aim of this paper is to critically examine the different ways in which commercial sex has been regulated in cities in the global north. Drawing on the expanding literatures on sex work and urbanism in geography and cognate disciplines including sociology, criminology and social policy, we will use the conceptual frameworks of territoriality and relationality to demonstrate how the ‘problem’ of sex work and the related ‘solutions’ take territorial and relational forms in urban governance and policy.

Let’s explore what is meant by relationality and, first, territoriality. For Delaney (2005) territoriality is more than territory. It is the social construction of territory through, for instance, the drawing of borders, the exercising of socio-spatial power, the inclusion and exclusion of certain people, identities and things, and the making of claims over particular territories. While territory and territoriality have had a longstanding history in geography, relationality has only recently become a prominent concept. Its use has differed somewhat, but the relationalist viewpoint is adeptly summarised by Cresswell (2013, p. 218) when he states: “[r]ather than thinking about the inhabited world as a set of discrete things with their own essences (this place, different from that place), we can think about the world as formed through the ways in which things relate to each other”. Thinking relationally, therefore, is about focusing on connections and relationships, near and far, and anti-essentialist thinking. For “[a]s connections (relations) change, so those things which are in relation change” (Cresswell 2013, p. 235).

Following the work of Massey (1993, 2007) and Amin (2004), cities and regions have increasingly been understood in relational terms through their ‘internal’ relations but also through their ‘external’ relationships with people and places beyond the city boundaries. As Massey (1993) notes, places are not watertight, free-floating entities but are surprisingly porous and situated in wider networks. Likewise policymakers rarely work in isolation nor do they understand the targets of their policies such as sex workers in isolation. Cities are shaped, and policymaking is infused, by relationality. For Amin and Massey as well as others such as Marston et al. (2005) and Allen and Cochrane (2007) the messy multitude of relations stretching in and out of places means that scholars should adopt a relational approach rather than a territorial approach. To use a related set of terms, they instruct us to think topologically (relationally) rather than topographically (territorially). In contrast, others argue – and we concur – that this is somewhat of a false ‘either/or’ binary and that relationality and territoriality work alongside each other in contingent and often complex ways (see, for example, Harrison 2013; Jessop et al. 2008; McCann and Ward 2010).

To illustrate the need to think both territorially and relationally, we will now examine sex work and urban governance. This paper will demonstrate that while urban governance never takes the same form in different cities, the framing of sex work as an ‘problem’, and the solutions offered frequently have resemblances and connections between places. Indeed, the paper will show that sex work is frequently problematised through the citing of a range of ‘harms’ that it is deemed to cause, with the client increasingly framed as a problematic figure in discourse alongside the sex worker. It will also show that sex work is governed in territorial and relational ways through, for example, the construction of red light districts, the struggles over sex work in neighbourhood spaces, and the circulation and use of ‘best practice’ models. To do this, the paper will begin by drawing on academic studies to examine territorial aspects of the

urban governance of sex work, before examining its relational aspects. It will conclude by reiterating that the urban governance of sex work in the city is constituted through territorial and relational practices by a variety of different actors and institutions. It will then argue that more work is needed on the governance and regulation of sex work in cities, highlighting three key areas for future research into the subject.

Sex work, territoriality and the city

Sex work is commonly considered to take place in towns and cities; this is not to say that the rural cannot be (commercially) sexy, but in common parlance sex work is a distinctly urban practice. Sex work takes place in a variety of indoor and outdoor settings within the city, some more hidden than others. It is commonly understood to be concentrated in red light districts (RLDs) and this is where interventions by public bodies on the issue of sex work are usually focused. Research, however, has shown the heterogeneity of RLDs (see, for example, Albers and Sabat 2012; Hubbard and Whowell 2008; Symanski 1981; Weitzer forthcoming). Weitzer (forthcoming), for instance, notes two different types of RLD. The first is the single use area “confined to erotic service” (ibid, p. 3). These are typically located away from the city centre and have few if any other uses. One example of this is new state-financed ‘drive-in brothel’ on the outskirts of Zurich that has recently opened which resemble wooden garages but also feature panic buttons, showers and CCTV cameras (*The Guardian* 2013). Spaces of street sex work might also fall under this definition. The second type of RLD are “more *variegated* vice zones in cities such as Amsterdam, Bangkok, Frankfurt and Tokyo – where prostitution is mixed in with other businesses (bars, cafes, snack shops), other commercial sex businesses (strip clubs, peep shows, adult video stores etc.), or other vice (e.g., gambling arcades)” (Weitzer forthcoming, p. 4, *emphasis in original*).

The location of RLDs within cities also varies, although as Aalbers and Sabat (2012, p. 115) note they are usually situated in “areas close to city’s central business district that are known to be poor, dangerous and deprived – but also areas of sometimes rapid change in land use, occupancy and real estate values”. The heterogeneity of RLDs is further reflected in Weitzer’s (forthcoming) study of two RLDs in Antwerp and Brussels. He reports that even though both areas are ‘window districts’ (where female sellers remain indoors viewable to passers-by through windows and glass doors) and they operate with a *de facto* legal status in both cities, “the RLDs differ strikingly from each other in physical arrangement, ambiance, social structure and relationship to local government” (p. 6).

Locating the RLD and its boundaries is not always so simple. The boundaries frequently change over time and are often difficult to identify. Complicating this geography even more, it is reasonable to assume that few if any cities contain *all* sex work activities in RLDs; outdoor and indoor sex work in a city is often present in various venues and spaces outside of its RLD. Indeed, many cities do not have a specific RLD. Instead, the sex industry exists and is territorialised in different ways. A number of studies such as Sanders’ (2005) research on indoor sex work in the UK, Bernstein’s (2007) work on changing nature of the sex industry and the emerging ‘respectability’ of sexual encounters in a middle class, often hidden, off street context, and Laing and Irving’s (2013) report on the multiple and contingent practices, networks and spaces of sex work in Newcastle upon Tyne all disrupt assumptions about the ‘bounded’ red light district.

There are continued struggles about the location of sex work in cities. Its placing is often marked by processes of inclusion on the one hand and exclusion on the other. Some aspects of the sex industry, for example lap-dancing clubs and ‘high class’ sex

shops are often allowed and deemed appropriate in some city spaces; however others including street sex work and visible brothels or other sex on premise clubs are not. This inclusionary-and-exclusionary dynamic is also illustrated by purpose built ‘managed’ zones like the ‘drive-in brothel’ in Zurich. These are often promoted as being spaces that are easier to regulate and survey which, in turn, improves the working conditions and safety of sex workers. These spaces and their promotional discourse, nevertheless, are often underpinned by a desire to contain sex work; to keep it *away* from other areas (Bellis et al. 2007; van Doorninck and Campbell 2006). There is some truth, therefore, in Beckett and Herbert’s (2008, p. 20) wider argument on the policing of urban space that “inclusion and exclusion are but two sides of the same coin”.

Academic work has, therefore, sought to uncover the overt and hidden exclusionary practices in the spatial governance of sex work. Phil Hubbard’s early work on prostitution in the city is useful to consider here. He regularly draws on the classic texts *Geographies of exclusion* by David Sibley (1995) and *In place/out of place* by Tim Cresswell (1996) (see Hubbard 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2008). Sibley focuses on the ways in which individuals and groups are ‘Othered’ by those who construct them as ‘dirty’ and ‘defiling’. Othered groups are thus seen as being in need of containment, and are excluded through the construction and maintenance of spatial boundaries. Cresswell, meanwhile, critically analyses how some behaviour and bodies are socially constructed as being in-place while others are constructed as incongruous and out-of-place. Like Sibley, Cresswell focuses the ways in which boundaries are drawn but also on the ways in which people transgress these boundaries. By drawing on Sibley, Cresswell and others, Hubbard demonstrates the ways in which sex workers in the UK have been discursively framed by some as being a desirable but disgusting, ‘polluting’ and sexually deviant presence in selected residential and business areas. He shows how this has informed the

material and uneven ways in which police and residents have sought to spatially exclude them. Spatial exclusion is both a material and discursive process for Hubbard.

For many, boundary maintenance with regard to sex work – and a number of other seemingly connected social problems – is seen as a job for the police and the courts. A large collection of literature has critically examined “the ways that policing seeks to control sexuality through the surveillance and punishment of those pursuing illegal activities” (Crofts et al. 2013, p. 54) with the police usually central (but not always solitary) bodies within this regulation (e.g. Hubbard 2004a; Mathieu 2011; Sharpe 1998). This literature has tended to focus on the policing of outdoor spaces rather than indoor sex work (cf. Sanders 2005). Echoing the wider literature on public space (Atkinson 2003; Cook and Whowell 2011; Mitchell 2003), sex work research has shown that the police are central figures in demarcating what public space is, should be and can be. They have significant powers to delimit who can use public space, when, where and how. Indeed, research has shown that it is not just the female sex worker who has been the target of such interventions with the police in many cities actively targeting male and trans-gender sex workers (Whowell 2010) and clients (Cook, forthcoming; Fischer et al. 2002), a topic we will return to later. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the targets of the police and other policing bodies, as well as their power, tactics, resources and willingness to intervene often varies from place to place and morphs over time.

The police are not alone in governing sex work in the city through territorial practices. Indeed, research has provided some insights into the way members of residential neighbourhoods act territorially in seeking to remove sex workers and their clients from street spaces. For example, Sanders (2004) and Hubbard and Sanders (2003) describe how sex workers were encouraged, and sometimes forced, to move out of residential areas by residents who perceive the presence and visibility of sex workers as being somehow contra to hetero-social-sexual normativities. As Sanders (2004) points

out, the street space in Birmingham where the female sex workers in her paper are seeking business is not politically neutral, instead it is a hotbed of competing interests and understandings of who and what *belongs* in particular neighbourhood spaces and public space. Sex workers here, Sanders shows, are frequently perceived by residents as being outsiders, deviant, dangerous and having a ‘spoiled identity’ (Pile 1996), associated with perceived ‘street’ lifestyles of drugs, criminality and sexual promiscuity. These studies of the relationships between residents, sex workers and residential areas speak to Cresswell (1996) and Sibley’s (1995) ideas on spatial exclusion, as outlined earlier. The framings of sex work also typically employ the frequently narrow and normative framing of ‘the community’ by different actors and groups that explicitly and implicitly delineates who and what embodies and belongs in the community and who and what does not (England 2011). Such discourse tends to assert “a moral geography in which sex work is deemed incompatible with family occupation” (Hubbard and Prior 2013, p. 145). Although it is important to note that some scholars have pointed to more tolerant attitudes of sex workers by residents as well as ways in which residential communities and those involved in sex work can work together in more harmonious ways (O’Neill et al. 2008; Pitcher et al. 2008; Sagar and Jones 2013).

Further research suggests that planning and licensing bodies also play a role in where sex work can take place. For Crofts et al. (2013, p. 55), planning shares some similarities to policing as both are “implicated in the making of ‘moral geographies’... through the exercising of discretionary powers that determine what is permissible where – noting that this can only be established situationally”. Likewise, work by Gould (2001), Hubbard et al. (2009) and Laing (2012) have shown how licensing bodies – who provide licenses for certain venues (such as brothels, massage parlours, strip clubs), as well as individual workers – set the conditions that licensees must meet, and check for compliance, further shaping the legalities, practices and geographies of sex work in the

city. Such work has also shown that licensing bodies, like their planning and police counterparts, are not always able to (or are willing to) create and sustain neatly defined and bounded spaces of sex work.

While the police, planners and licensing officials are clearly important figures in shaping the urban geographies of sex work, in an era where public services are increasingly being marketised, contracted out and privatised, and ‘partnership-working’ is increasingly promoted (Cook 2009), a range of public, private and voluntary bodies are involved in the urban governance of sex work. Here is not the place to list all these. Nevertheless, it is important to note that outreach teams, health services and charities play a vital role in governing sex work in the city (often working with the police). These bodies, as the conclusion to this paper note, have received limited academic attention. In contrast, academic work has begun to show how sex workers are also active agents in the shaping of the spaces of sex work. If as Delaney (2005, p. 15, emphasis in original) suggests “territories are the *products* of social practices and processes”, we can see red light landscapes as coming into being through their continued use, in large part through the presence of sex workers and their resistance to interventions. Spaces of sex work are also identifiable through what has been left behind, for example in some public spaces there is evidence of sex litter, sexually explicit graffiti and clothing (Atkins and Laing 2012). Perhaps one thing that should be noted then is that territories can be stretched, re-shaped and renegotiated by sex workers and other actors, and this is evident in a number of different spaces. Laing (2012), for example, explores how exotic dancers in Canada would ‘stretch’ the spaces available to them in dance clubs and use areas to entertain clients that did not fall under the scope of the licence as a means of making additional income. In the context of policing, Sharpe (1998) and McKegany and Barnard (1996) discuss how the territorialisation of areas of street sex work was negotiated and boundaries shaped through deal making with the police about where and when sex work

could take place. The key message here is that sex workers, although often the targets of interventions, have a degree of agency and capacity to shape the ways in which sex work is territorialised.

Sex work, relationality and the city

In this section we will show that it is not only territoriality that underpins the governance of sex work; relationality does as well. As thinking relationally is about seeing the connections and relationships between things (Cresswell 2013), it is possible to see urban sex work policy as about reshaping the relationships between the people and places involved in sex work. Urban policy on sex work is often focused on changing the connections between those involved in sex work on the one hand and those outside of sex work on the other (with the latter seen as being negatively affected by sex work). Furthermore, as the latter half of this section will explain, the reworking of relationships as well as the practice of governance often stretches beyond the boundaries of the city. Urban governance, after all, is not simply governance *within* the city.

Two Acts of Parliament in England and Wales are useful examples to begin to understand relationality. The first, the Street Offences Act 1959, made it illegal for sex workers to ‘loiter or solicit in a street or public place for the purposes of prostitution’. As Self (2003) has shown loitering and soliciting were framed in the Act, in the media and in the Wolfenden Committee (whose recommendations were drawn upon in the Act) as a public problem; the presence of sex work in public space was seen to potentially cause discomfort to on-looking ‘ordinary’ citizens. The second, the Sexual Offences Act 1985, criminalised kerb crawling in England and Wales. Again, this was framed as a public nuisance problem (Kantola and Squires 2004). When looking at the wording of the 1985 Act, we can see that it is defined as a man soliciting a woman in

street or public place for the purposes of prostitution from, or within the vicinity, of a motor vehicle. It also states that it would only be a criminal offence if it were conducted persistently and ‘in such manner or in such circumstances as to be likely to cause annoyance to the woman (or any of the women) solicited, or nuisance to other persons in the neighbourhood’. While annoyance and nuisance (as well as persistence) were never defined, the use of these nouns present kerb crawling as a relational and emotional problem. However, in both the 1959 and 1985 Acts the problematised social relations are also spatialised and territorialised as they focus exclusively on, in their words, the street and public places. They are only ‘problems’ in public space. Similarly many of the subsequent laws on prostitution and kerb crawling in England and Wales are also based on the belief that they are (territorial-relational) public nuisance problems in public space.

For some, however, sex work is not so much an issue of public nuisance but is constructed as, in and of itself, inherently exploitative. Here the victims are not onlookers or residents but sex workers. Such a view is promulgated by a number of radical feminists (e.g. Barry 1995; Jeffreys 1997) who frame sex work as a patriarchal, inherently violent and oppressive practice, underpinned by sexual and psychological violence, where women are seen as exerting little or no agency in the context of them selling sexual services, as they are victims of coercion, largely by men. Here ‘prostituted women’ (Jeffreys 1997) are increasingly framed as victims with ‘pimps’ and clients cast as the offenders. Indeed, in Sweden, Norway and Iceland, such understandings of prostitution have led to the decriminalisation of selling sex and the criminalisation of buying sex (Skilbrei and Holmström 2011). Despite the growing influence of radical feminism in some policy circles, it is important to recognise that radical feminist understandings of prostitution have been heavily criticised (see, for instance, O’Neill 2001; Scoular 2004; Weitzer 2012). Indeed, for Weitzer (2012) such accounts suffer from sensationalism; essentialising the experiences of sex workers with “an exclusive

focus on the negative” (p. 11); overlooking male sex workers and female buyers; removing agency and presenting a “passive victimhood” (p. 12); and conflating sex work and human trafficking. Understanding prostitution relationally as unequivocal patriarchal oppression is therefore somewhat problematic.

At this point, it is important to consider whether local approaches to governing sex work in cities are also aimed at those who are not socially or spatially proximate to practices and spaces of sex work. Indeed, a number of scholars have argued that cities are increasingly utilising punitive or ‘revanchist’ measures against marginalised groups who occupy public space in order to ‘improve’ its appearance and sense of safety in order to entice inward investment (Mitchell 2003; Smith 1996; see also Cook and Whowell 2011). In an era of intensifying inter-urban competition, they argue that urban elites feel a necessity to entice apprehensive businesses and wealthy residents through ‘beautifying’ the urban landscape (Mitchell 2003). Bringing those who live, work and play elsewhere into the area is seen as a means of reviving the economy, bringing in jobs and raising public revenues in the locality. It is both a territorial and relational outlook.

In a study of London and Paris, Hubbard (2004a, 2004b) draws on and develops these ideas to argue that female sex workers are being removed from public space in order to “send out a message that it is ripe for reinvestment” (Hubbard 2004a, p. 1698). “In this sense”, he continues, “the displacement of sex work can be viewed as an essential precursor to middle-class, family-oriented gentrification” (ibid, p. 1698). However, Hubbard (2004b) argues that it is more than just a capital-oriented process of spatial exclusion, but also a deeply gendered one, structured he argues by the desire to reassert patriarchal relations in the city. While Hubbard’s linking of sex work to a gendered urban revanchism is useful in highlighting the cross-boundary territorial-relational aspects of urban policy, we must remember that the urban revanchist thesis has

its critics. Leading the criticism is DeVerteuil et al. (2009), who argue that the notion of revanchism tends to mask a more complicated process by implying that the 'local state' is as singular entity, led by the desires of regeneration elites, whose sole aim to restore capital accumulation and will do this through unrelentingly punitive measures (see also Cloke et al. 2010). So while the revanchist framework is undoubtedly thought provoking, it seems to offer a partial and at times misleading account of urban policy and policing.

Continuing to look across the boundaries of the city, we can see that practitioners and policymakers are influenced by policies devised elsewhere. This is clearly the case in terms of legislation and policies enacted at international, national and regional scales that organisations and elites working in the city must comply with or are significantly affected by. Another important way in which policies created elsewhere influence policies in the city is through the circulation and emulation of policy models. As the increasing body of work on policy mobilities has shown, urban policymakers often look to places elsewhere to learn from and draw inspiration (McCann and Ward 2010; Peck and Theodore 2010; Temenos and McCann 2013). Through a variety of technologies such as conferences, study tours, best practices and blogs, often distant places are brought into relational proximity with those that have been selected and promoted as 'best practice' models (Cook and Ward 2011). In turn, these studies have shown how a variety of policy models have circulated internationally and emerged in different places (rarely without resistance and never without changing form). Yet there have been no explicit studies of policy mobilities within prostitution policymaking. This is somewhat surprising given the ways in which discourse around the 'problems' of prostitution and their respective 'solutions' circulates between people and places.

This absence is even more surprising given that over many years the media regularly reports (positively and negatively) on ‘fact-finding’ visits on the topic of sex work made by elites to places elsewhere. For instance, news of a visit to the Netherlands and Sweden by a British government delegation, led by the then Home Office Minister Vernon Coaker, was widely reported in the British media in 2008 (e.g. *Politics.co.uk* 2008). Likewise, over 50 years earlier a British government-sponsored ‘vice’ policy tour of US cities by Philip Allen (Home Office) and Ernest Cole (Scotland Yard) in 1953 – just prior to the establishment of the Wolfenden Committee – made the headlines on both sides of the Atlantic (e.g. *The Manchester Guardian* 1953; *Newsday* 1953). Such visits and communications, of course, are not restricted to British officials going overseas but often involve a variety of state, para-state and non-state officials from different places. Indeed, this point strikes a chord with the policy mobilities literature that highlights the plurality of figures, institutions and places involved in ‘policy tourism’ and the circulation of best practice (Temenos and McCann 2013). Yet unlike some tours associated with urban development and planning, we are largely unaware of what happens on sex work study tours or how they are linked to the wider policy process (cf. Cook and Ward 2011).

As with study tours, the circulation of ‘best practice’ models is also a common feature of urban governance. One of many possible examples is the John School ‘model’. It first emerged in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1981, and has subsequently been ‘reterritorialised’ in a number of towns and cities in North America, the UK and South Korea. The John School usually takes the form of a court-diversion education programme that didactically teaches those arrested for soliciting for the purposes of buying sex – ‘Johns’ in North American terminology – the negative consequences of their actions (Cook, forthcoming; Fischer et al. 2002; Majic, 2014). Alongside the movement of specific programmes such as John Schools, there is also a circulation of ideas and discourses around sex work internationally – for instance, on the subjects of

the rights and wrongs of sex work and the broader attitudes governments should take towards sex work. Two examples here are the circulation of radical feminist ideas on prostitution and the continued referencing by policymakers and activists in cities across the world of the ‘Swedish model’ which utilises a (radical feminist inspired) prohibitionist system which criminalises the client, not the sex worker (Scoular 2004).

Even from the brief examples used above – notably fact-finding trips, the circulation of radical feminist ideas, the ‘Swedish model’ and John Schools – we can see that circulation of discourses, ideas, models and expertise is a complex and contingent process. It is one that involves territorial and relational practices that stretch beyond the boundaries of particular cities (McCann and Ward 2010), and one that needs further academic attention.

Conclusion

This paper has explored some of the ways in which sex work has been socially constructed as a ‘problem’ in need of solutions in cities in the global north. It has shown that while the framing of sex work as a ‘problem’ and the creation and implementation of policies are spatially contingent, there are some commonalities and connections between the ways in which sex work is governed in different cities. For instance, sex work is frequently framed as a ‘nuisance’ in public space, something that should be separated from ‘mainstream’ society and moved away from residential neighbourhoods and prime city spaces. What is more, it is rarely perceived as a ‘victim-less’ activity, and is seen to negatively affect others around them such as discomforted passers-by, neighbours or reluctant investors. Such problematisations of sex work have territorial and relational underpinnings and are, of course, subject to contestation. Likewise, the promoted interventions are also made up of territorial and relational understandings and practices.

Here we resist the temptation to think of urban sex work policy as being solely relational (i.e. aimed at ‘improving’ the relations between people). Instead, we believe that it is also deeply territorial as it also focuses on particular spaces and constructs material and discursive boundaries to delimit what can happen where.

Existing research, as we have seen, has provided a number of important insights but further research is necessary. In addition to the aforementioned need for more research on policy mobilities around sex work, three particular areas of future research stand out. First, more work is needed on the socio-spatial governance of male and trans-gender sex workers in the city as well as the clients of sex workers. Second, it is important for further research to examine the *multiplicity* of public, private and voluntary bodies involved in the territorial and relational governance of sex work. Taking cues from Cloke et al. (2010) and DeVerteuil et al.’s (2009) excellent analyses of urban homelessness, this would involve a critical examination of outreach organisations and social services that offer forms of support for sex workers and their relationships with the police, planners and other bodies. While a small number of studies on outreach organisations exist (see Pitcher 2006; UKNSWP 2012), more work is required. Third and finally, research needs to explore the connections between cities in the global north and those in the global south through, for instance, examining the movement and mooring of migrants, money, policy models and so on. The academic study of the regulation of urban sex work, therefore, has much to do, and careful attention to territoriality, relationality and their intertwining is a useful stepping-stone from which to do it.

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