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Number of Workers in Bangkok -- Number of Workers in Thailand: Point-in-Time Estimate -- DIRECT VERSUS INDIRECT VENUES AND WORKERS -- VENUES NOT STUDIED -- Barbershops, Teahouses, Karaoke Parlors, and Khao Tom -- Massage Parlors -- Local Thai Bars -- Brothels -- Brothels in the North -- The Role of Brothels, Hotels, and Outcall Services in Foreign-Oriented Commercial Sex -- FOREIGN-ORIENTED BARS -- Areas Studied -- Patpong -- Nana -- Cowboy -- South Pattaya -- Format Changes over Time -- Types of Bars -- Hostess Bars and Discos -- Go-go/Downstairs-Type Bars -- Show/Upstairs-type Bars -- Specialty-Service Bars -- After-Hours Venues -- CLIP JOINTS -- Screening of Applicants -- THE SHOW -- Artistic Acts -- Body Painting -- Fire Show -- Candle Show -- Floor Exercise -- Bath or Shower Show -- Traveling Man/Snake Show -- Simulated S& M Show -- Insertion/Expulsion Acts -- Extraction Acts.

Insertion Acts -- Meaning of the Show -- 3 THE ROUTES TO BAR WORK -- INFLUENTIAL FIRST SOURCES OF BAR WORK INFORMATION -- Phase I Data: Optimal Heterophily in Workers as Information Sources -- Phase II Data -- Indentured Servitude, Slavery, and Abuse -- MOTIVATIONS TOWARD BAR WORK -- Ability -- Money -- Economic Hardship -- Economic Advantage: Increase in Standard of Living -- Love and Money -- Boredom versus the Excitement of the Bar -- The Dating/Exciting Model -- The Home/Family Model -- Friendship -- Status -- English -- 4 REASONS FOR NOT WORKING -- INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS -- Loss of Status -- Sex without Love -- Loss of Boyfriends and the Ability to Marry -- Loss of Self-Respect -- Parents -- Hassles -- Arrest, Fines, and Incarceration -- Considerations of Foreign Workers -- LATER CONSIDERATIONS -- Difficulty and Nature of the Work -- Job Satisfaction -- Hardening and Desensitization -- Job Hazards -- Assault and Refusal to Pay -- Disease -- Losing Money to Pimps -- Abandoning Children Conceived in the Occupation -- A Bad Ending -- Required Intimacy with Unattractive Partners -- Required Intimacy with Unknown Partners -- Enjoyment of Sex on the Job -- SUMMARY OF LACK OF REASONS FOR NOT WORKING -- FUTURE RESEARCH -- 5 MORAL AND RELIGIOUS CONCERNS -- BUDDHISM -- Lay Buddhism -- Sexual Immorality -- Merit Making -- Status of Women -- Buddhism as Practiced -- RELIGIOUS PRACTICE WITHIN THE BAR -- THE MORALITY OF BAR WORK -- Promiscuity -- Honesty -- Reopening the Closed Deal -- COMMERCIAL SEX AND WESTERN MORAL THOUGHT -- THE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL MODEL AND THE SUPPRESSION OF SEX WORK -- 6 BAR WORKER DEMOGRAPHICS -- AGE -- Comparisons with Other Studies -- Age-Cohort Friendship Groups -- The Youngest Workers -- Comparison of U.S. and International Data -- United States -- International -- Thai-U.S. Comparison -- Number of Underage Workers -- The 800,000.

Empirically Based Estimates -- Enforcement Effects -- The Oldest Workers: Two Cases -- Suay -- Noi -- FAMILY OF ORIGIN AND RESIDENCE -- Area Definitions -- Origin -- Means of Support of Family of Origin -- Current Living Situation -- EDUCATION -- PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES -- Hearing Impairment -- Drug Use -- 7 EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS -- PRIOR BAR WORK EXPERIENCE -- MONTHS WORKED -- AGE FIRST WORKED -- EMPLOYEE TURNOVER -- Turnover Rate -- Employment Activity Rate -- Workforce Half-Life -- Observed Turnover and Employment Activity -- Observed Half-Life -- Reenter Percentage -- Novice-Worker Percentage -- Applications of the Reenter and Novice-Worker Percentages -- Number of Workers in Thailand: Yearly Ever-Worked Estimate -- Effect of Foreign Workers and Working Abroad -- Yearly Population Proportion Estimate -- SUNLIGHTING:

WORK IN ADDITION TO BAR WORK -- NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS --
INCOME -- Salaries and Commissions -- Tips -- Customer Payments
for Services -- Fines -- Calculating Income -- Income Variation --
Income Comparisons -- Comparisons with Previous Studies -- Thai
Minimum Wage -- Other Thai Income Comparisons -- Incomes of
Outcall Workers -- DISTRIBUTION OF CUSTOMER PAYOUT -- BAR
WORKER EXPENSES: WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO? -- Savings -- Major
Expenses -- Lesser Expenses -- 8 PARTNER SELECTION AND
NEGOTIATIONS -- INTERACTION STAGES IN SHOW BARS, GO-GO BARS,
AND SALARIED HOSTESS BARS -- The Approach Stage -- The Decision
to Approach -- The Selectivity Index -- The Approach Itself -- The
Social Interaction Stage -- The Negotiation/Sell Stage -- Use of
Extraction Fabrications -- Cooperation and Competition in the
Negotiation/Sell Stage -- Negotiating to Go -- Inside versus Outside --
Preemptive Payments -- Inducing a Reluctant Worker to Go -- Delivery
of Services -- INTERACTION STAGES IN PHI HOSTESS BARS.
INTERACTION STAGES IN SPECIALTY-SERVICE BARS -- INTERACTION
STAGES IN OUTCALL WORK -- 9 AIDS IN THAILAND -- THE EXTENT OF
THE AIDS PANDEMIC -- THE EPIDEMIC IN THAILAND -- The Five Waves
of HIV Infection in Thailand -- The Extended Cost of AIDS -- Changes
in Risk Factors and Prevalence in Thai Population Subgroups -- WHAT
DO WE MEAN BY "YOU'VE GOT AIDS?" -- Testing in Sex Work Venues --
and : Type I and Type II Error Rates in HIV Testing -- Western Blot
Error Rates -- ELISA Error Rates -- Effects of Communication of a
Positive Test Result -- The Effects of Communication of a Negative Test
Result -- AIDS BELIEFS AND KNOWLEDGE IN THAILAND -- SEX
EDUCATION IN THAILAND -- SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN THAILAND -- Visits
to Sex Workers -- Number of Customers of Sex Workers -- AIDS AND
COMMERCIAL SEX IN THAILAND -- Sexual Transmission Rates --
Infection Rates and Related Risk Factors in Commercial Sex -- Infection
Rates among Female Sex Workers -- Infection Rates Among Males --
The Decline in Infection Rates and in Brothel Visits as a Risk Factor --
CONDOMS, COMMERCIAL SEX, AND AIDS IN THAILAND -- Do Condoms
Encourage Sex? -- Condom Effectiveness and Breakage -- Decreased
Sensation -- Condom Use -- The "100% Condom Campaign" -- Risk of
HIV during Oral Sex -- Continued Condom Use -- Alcohol
Consumption, Sexual Behavior Patterns, and Condom Use -- Use of
Multiple Condoms -- Condoms and Cervical Cancer -- The Female
Condom -- THE EFFECTS OF KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATION ON RISK
BEHAVIOR -- Knowledge -- Fear Appeals -- Locus of Control --
Knowledge of AIDS Vaccine Trials -- Studies of Unique Populations --
Sexual Beliefs and Behaviors of IV Drug Users -- Men Who Have Sex
With Men -- Hill Tribe Studies -- AIDS Education in Thai Commercial
Sex -- Outreach Programs -- Health Education -- EMPOWER -- WELD
and Microloans -- The Model Brothel Program -- Diffusion of
Innovations.
RELATIONAL BONDS, CONDOM USE, AND THE "CAUSE" OF AIDS --
Commercial Yes, Noncommercial No -- The Relational Bond Effect --
Feen Relationships, Casual Sex, and Marriage -- A Mechanism for
Blaming Sex Workers for HIV Transmission -- Occupations Do not
Transmit AIDS -- 10 CONDOM USE AND HEALTH COMMUNICATION IN
FOREIGN-ORIENTED BARS -- DO ORAL RESPONSES RELATE TO ACTUAL
CONDOM USE? -- CONDOM USE PROPORTIONS IN BAR TRANSACTIONS
-- BAR TYPE, WORKER TYPE, AND CONDOM USE -- BAR WORKER
CONDOM REQUESTS PRIOR TO VAGINAL SEX WITH CUSTOMERS -- Bar
Worker Condom Use with Noncommercial Partners -- BAR WORKER
NATURAL MESSAGE STRATEGIES IN INDUCING CONDOM USE -- Opening
Strategies -- Fallback Strategies -- EFFECTIVE WORKER

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES -- 11 HOPES, DREAMS, AND THE FUTURE -- SHORT-TERM GOALS -- MID-RANGE GOALS -- LONG-TERM GOALS -- The "No Thai Men" Rule -- A Perceptual Domain Explanation -- A Comparison with "Sarong Party Girls" -- RETIREMENT -- The Sample of Retired Workers -- Pattern 1 (Representing 13 Retirees)-Ah, Ton's Wife -- Pattern 2 (Representing 12 Retirees)-Bun, Older Sister -- Pattern 3 (Representing 10 Retirees)-Kop, Sister and Student -- Pattern 4 (Representing 5 Retirees)-Lek, Never on Sunday -- Pattern 5 (Representing 5 Retirees)-Doi, The Emigrant -- Pattern 6 (Representing 10 Retirees)-Lai, Coping and Thinking of Japan -- On Working Abroad -- Closing Comments on Retirement -- 12 SUPPORT STAFF, MANAGEMENT, AND OWNERS -- SUPPORT STAFF -- MANAGEMENT -- The Manager -- Why Have a Mamasan? -- The DJ -- Manager Style -- Hiring Decisions -- The Manager's Views on Health Issues: Phase I -- The Manager's Views on Health Issues: Phase II -- Sok, the Manager -- Mamasan -- Conducting Staff Meetings -- Mamasan's Views on Health Issues: Phase I -- Mamasan's Views on Health Issues: Phase II -- Pattern 7 (Representing 9 Retirees)-Mrs. Daeng, Mamasan. OWNERS.

Sommario/riassunto

Commercial sex is the occupation of a significant portion of the women of the world, providing economic support for millions of people and their families. Working at the Bar is the first-ever, long-term, longitudinal, in-depth study of a large sex work industry-and Thailand, the most prominent nation in the rapidly growing sex tourism industry, makes for an excellent case study. While previous works have provided brief glimpses of one group of workers studied from a particular point of view, author Thomas Steinfatt examines considerations of health, behavior, economics, morality, religion, and worker safety. The result of data gathered from thousands of workers and customers in Thailand over a period of twelve years, Working at the Bar covers all aspects of an industry that, although it does not conform to various Western ideals, is nevertheless enormously significant. Among the most provocative of Steinfatt's arguments is that sex work is not itself immoral, and that far from being the exploitation industry we might imagine, sex work in Thailand is beneficial to everyone involved-especially given that education in this nation has proven not to be a viable alternative. Providing an opportunity for economic progress unavailable through other means, and providing working conditions far safer than those of the average Thai factory, sex work is ripe for a study that explores all aspects and perceptions associated with it. Working at the Bar is that long overdue study.