

The Glass Headboard: Gender Stratification in the Porn Industry

Considerable research has addressed the disadvantages to women in the paid labor force, investigating such things as pay differentials (see for example England 1997, Marini and Fan 1997), differences in hiring, promotion, and advancements (see for example, Rosenberget al. 1997, Spain and Bianchi 1996), and career longevities (see for example Scott 1994). In a variety of work settings, and regardless of gender composition, men experienced differential advances, benefits, and opportunities.

Perhaps most striking in regard to gender stratification is the wage gap. Women earn less than men in nearly every occupation, even at the entry level (Marini and Fan 1997), and this disadvantage for women is both cumulative and continuous (Bielby and Bielby 1992). Previous attempts to explain this gap have questioned the role of gender differences in worker characteristics, occupational aspirations, job-related skills and credentials, and adult family roles. More recent research suggests that it is not the characteristics of the workers that encouraged differential earnings, but rather the pay gap is more profoundly impacted by such things as the allocation of women and men to different jobs by employers, and by the informal process of networking that provides access to job-related information and influence (Marini and Fan 1997).

Empirical research has explored the dynamics of gender stratification in a variety of occupations to identify enduring patterns and unique manifestations. For example, Dixon and Pstrong's (1996) study of sex stratification in the legal professions suggests that despite the rising number of women in the field, women are still segregated in the least prestigious law schools, specialties, and organizational sectors. They argue that this

segregation has simultaneously led to the profession being *sex stratified*. In addition, they found that women do not show the same patterns of mobility as their male colleagues (i.e., they are less likely to be made partners or receive tenure). Researchers have suggested that sex stratification is influenced by traditional (socially constructed) gender expectations, and that through this segregation, men have maintained a “near monopoly” on better paying jobs (see for example Reskin and Roos 1990, Steiger and Reskin 1990).

Another central concern in the study of gender and work is the presence and prevalence of sexual harassment on the job. Previous research has suggested that women are more likely to experience sexual harassment than men, even when they are in higher status positions (Grauerholz 1991). The most common scenario involves women receiving sexual advances from male peers or superiors (Andsager, Bailey and Nagy 1997), although research suggests women often resist labeling this as sexual harassment and typically do not file complaints (Giuffre and Williams 1994). Among the many consequences reported by targets of sexual harassment include dissatisfaction at work, increased anxiety, loss of career mobility, fear of reprisals, and the creation of a hostile work environment.

While gender stratification and sexual harassment are well researched in regard to “legitimate” jobs, significantly less research has explored these topics in “deviant” careers. The sex industry, however, offers a unique site in which to explore these issues, since the industry is, by definition, sexualized. This paper examines whether these patterns are found in pornography production, asking the question, does the sex industry exhibit the same gender patterns as other occupations? While a comparison between a

porn career and other service work suggests the prevalence of some of these patterns, it also provides an opportunity to explore the conditions in which these patterns are exhibited. Furthermore, this comparison serves to strengthen the notion of sex work as work.

Of the limited research that has addressed gender differences in the sex industry, the majority of it has been focused on stripping (or erotic dancing), and very little has explored manifestations of traditionally defined gender stratification. Central concerns focus instead on stigmatization and career entry. For example, Thompson and Harred (1992) research on male strippers suggests that male strippers experience less social stigma than their female counterparts. They argue, “Women apparently view them as ‘studs’ or ‘hunks,’ and the male dancer expresses that type of self concept (1992:309). The authors argue that since the double standard related to sex and nudity for men and women dictates the level of stigma associated with nude dancing, it could be assumed that it will also shape the extent to which those involved in the sex industry must manage the personal stigma experienced.

A similar comparison between male and female strippers is offered by Dressel and Peterson (1992a, 1992b), and provides insights into possible gender differences in regard to entry into careers in the sex industry. The authors argue that recent advances in gender equality have opened the doors for male strippers and female audiences. The authors found that most women began careers in stripping because of some sort of economic crisis such as divorce or limited job opportunities. For their female respondents, the choice to begin stripping was made with the knowledge that more money could be made in stripping than in the legitimate occupations open to them. In

contrast, none of the men began stripping because of a crisis situation. The authors also found that most female strippers had held previous jobs that required some display of their bodies, such as modeling, go-go dancing, or waitressing. In contrast, only one of the male respondents had previous work experience as a model for an art class displaying his body.

A more recent article by Weinberg, Shaver, and Williams (1999) explores differences between male, female, and transgendered prostitutes in San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood. The authors found that of the three groups, women experienced the least sexual satisfaction from their work, were more likely to be involved in heavy drug use, and were more likely to maintain a regular work schedule. They also found that women in their sample did not suffer inequalities of income, although they were more prone to "occupational hazards" such as assaults and rape. They conclude that sex work is extremely gendered, although their research does not indicate that women bear the full weight of the burden. Their study is significant because it suggests that gender stratification in the sex industry may be a "mixed bag," in which women are advantaged in some areas, but disadvantaged in others.

In regard to the porn industry, it has been documented in a variety of sources that porn actresses receive higher fees per scene than actors (see for example Faludi 1995, Thompson 1994). Porn acting, therefore, is one of the few jobs in which gender pay differentials benefit women. Other areas regarding gender and work, however, remain unexplored. This paper attempts to fill those gaps by examining the careers of porn actresses and actors to determine patterns of longevity, mobility, and success. In particular, this paper will explore the construction of femininity and masculinity within

the industry, gender and career patterns of actresses and actors, and differences in opportunities offered to performers.

This paper draws upon data collected in two primary sites of pornography production, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Interviews were conducted with nearly one hundred individuals working in the commercial pornography production industry, encompassing nearly every aspect of the production process: actresses, actors, directors, producers, camera operators, sound technicians, makeup artists, caterers, company owners. Those who perform sex accounted for half of the interviews. Ethnographic data were also collected at production offices, industry parties, business meetings, distribution warehouses, and on production sets. Respondents were asked several questions regarding the typical expectations for men and women in the industry, what is needed to get ahead in the business, and how the careers of actors and actresses differ from one another.

Construction of Femininity and Masculinity in the Pornography Industry

In many ways, gender role expectations in the heterosexual pornography industry embrace the most stereotypical notions of femininity and masculinity in the dominant culture. Actresses are expected to be cooperative, sweet, kind, friendly, accommodating, gentle, willing to take direction, attractive and sexy, and sexually enthusiastic but not aggressive. Nicki's description of a good actress captures these expectations:

You have to take directions, that's first, and be reliable. For actresses, well, it is just what you would expect. Pretty, thin, real thin, big tits, never the iron, although that is changing, finally. If you have the right attitude, you'll get more work.

As part of this expectation of femininity, good actresses also should exhibit pleasure or enthusiasm for their sexual performances. It is understood, however, that this pleasure is exaggerated for the sake of a good scene. Actresses who are “too into” these aspects of their jobs are suspect.

While embracing certain aspects of traditional femininity makes actresses well-liked, possessing these traits may limit success in the industry. When asked what it takes to get ahead in the industry, respondents listed traits contrary to those characteristic of traditional femininity. For example, actresses reported that to have a successful career, an actress must have high self-esteem, be sure of herself, retain control over her earnings, be unwilling to be walked on, and be ambitious. Successful actresses therefore must be able to embrace both traditional and non-traditional sets of expectations or, more commonly, they must rely on the services of a manager (usually male) to negotiate the business side of their careers. The use of managers (often husbands or boyfriends) reifies the belief that femininity is inconsistent with the demands of a successful career.

Actors are similarly expected to embrace the traditional construction of masculinity. In addition to being powerful, strong, and athletic, they are expected to be virile and horny. For example, a producer described a successful actor as someone who could “fuck cement, and enjoy it.” The focus on sexual performance for actors parallels the concern for appearance and beauty among actresses. To do their jobs competently, actors must be able to maintain erection throughout the filming of a scene (typically, an hour or more) and ejaculate on command. Despite the possible stressors caused by these demands, actors were expected to remain enthusiastic about this aspect of their job,

despite their years in the industry. Actors who experienced difficulty performing sexually usually find themselves without work prospects.

The disjuncture between what is expected of actresses and what is required to get ahead in the industry does not hold true for actors. The construction of masculinity, as embodied in the porn actor, is consistent with career success. As men, they are expected to be, and are valued for being, driven and ambitious, competitive (particularly with other men), and interested in impersonal sex. Possessing these traits is assumed to assist actors in seeking more money, future projects, and advancement in the industry.

The link between gender expectations and career patterns has been examined in other service jobs. For example, in her study of fast food workers and insurance salespeople, Leidner (1993) found that workers in the service industry emphasize aspects of the job that most accentuate gender appropriate attributes. Women's work accentuates people skills, while men's work often emphasizes manual labor, even for jobs in the same worksite. Leidner explains this phenomenon by arguing that the gendering of work arises from gender expectations in the worksite, rather than in the work tasks themselves. The gendering of work also influences workers' identities. Leidner concludes that for workers to accept the identity implied by a job, they must be able to interpret the job as expressing their gender satisfactorily. Within the porn industry, the ability to conform to these gender expectations not only influences self-perceptions, but also the perception of those doing the work. Conformity, therefore, has profound economic consequences.

Gender and Career Patterns

As previously mentioned, porn is one of the few jobs in which women make more than men for the work of performing sex. Actresses make nearly twice as much as their

maleco-workersperscene. However, while actresses are paid more perscene, actors usually work on more projects each year because of the smaller pool of male talent, and thus often have higher overall earnings. Actresses, however, have more opportunities to make money as a result of their porn careers. For example, there is a considerable amount of overlap between porn and erotic dancing or stripping. Strip bars and "gentlemen's clubs" will seek well-known performers to headline at their venues. Actresses also have more opportunities than actors to model for X-rated magazines and adult publications.

Despite this pay advantage, actresses' careers are considerably shorter than those typically experienced by actors. Many respondents speculate that the average length of time for an actress in the industry is two years. After that time, and despite their personal goals, actresses usually experience a decrease in work prospects. In contrast, actors can maintain their careers as long as they can perform sexually. Respondents suggest that the average length of a career for actors is about six years.

One of the biggest factors determining the length of an actress' career is the number of projects (publications and videos) in which she appears each year. Ironically, in many cases, the more exposure an actress receives, the shorter her career. As many respondents suggested, actresses are most popular in their first few months in the industry, when they are new and fresh. After this initial period, most actresses are vulnerable to overexposure. The threat of overexposure is premised on assumptions about the assumed audience. It is believed that the mostly male audience will tire of the same performer once her image becomes commonplace in the industry, desiring instead a never-changing list of top performers. The industry contributes to this pattern by saturating the market with an image to capitalize on short-term profits. An actor named Jason describes this phenomenon:

Here's what happens to a brand new porn starlet. She comes in, and she is brand new, and she's popular with the directors. So the director phones, I want you, I want you, I want you. So they go and do a whole bunch of pornos. Low-level pornos. Then after all the low-level guys have their say in court, they've got enough footage on her to last three or four years, they stop calling. So the typical porn actress starts thinking, huh, no one wants me anymore.

While Jasons speak of low-level videos, actresses are particularly vulnerable to overexposure at the high-end production level, since in addition to increased avenues for distribution, industry publications, such as the *Adult Video News* (AVN), heavily advertise large budget productions, thus increasing exposure for the performers. The risk of overexposure is not a consideration in an actor's career. It is believed that the audience ignores the male performers, focusing only on the female co-stars. As such, many actors described themselves as "walking dildos," or "life support" for their penises.

Those interested in a longer-term career in the industry must create a strategy in which they accept the "right" number of projects with the "right" type of people. These strategies are possible since most actresses and actors are freelance employees. They can pick and choose among work prospects, and can work for several types of companies simultaneously. At the higher end productions (characterized by bigger companies, higher budgets, and more avenues for distribution), some actresses and a handful of actors hold exclusive or semi-exclusive contracts. These contracts assure the performer of a certain number of projects a year, but can also limit potential earnings. While contracts may not be economically wise for actors, they can lengthen an actress's career by protecting her from overexposure. Kyle, whose girlfriend is an actress under exclusive contract, compares their positions:

With females it's longevity in their career because since they are under contract, they're not having the heck shot out of them. So they pace it for a longer period of time, and they shoot slow over a year. So, for a secure job it is actually a very good thing, but you get frustrated because she [his girlfriend] can't go out and make that thousand that she wants to. Where I could pick up the phone if I needed a new set of tires, and if I am a little short this month, go do three scenes

and outfit the car instantly. There's always somebody doing something, and there's no end of girls saying, 'I've got a girl, I can come over on Tuesday,' and being, but with a contract you can't. But at the same time, she has longevity.

Ashis and other actors' comments suggest, actors have more freedom to forge careers of their own design, as their jobs are less influenced by market variables.

Gender similarly influences perceptions regarding how serious one is about maintaining a career in porn. For example, within the industry, there is a perception that actresses phase in and out of their careers more frequently than actors. A common explanation for this pattern is that actresses leave the industry to pursue intimate relationships, and when they fail, they return to sex work. Although this perception regarding actresses' career patterns was widely shared, in my research, both actresses and actors, in equal numbers, had taken time off at some point in their careers. As a pattern, actresses phased out because of intimate relationships, while actors phased out for personal problems, such as divorce or to recover from drug addiction. Despite this reality, the perception that actresses work intermittently might affect women's career success and career longevity. As Fermlee (1995) argues, even brief breaks in employment can have detrimental effects on a career. She may be considered less serious about pursuing a career, or less capable of doing the job. This relationship seems to hold true for the porn industry as well.

Regardless of these perceptions, taking time off from porn work may be a protective strategy for the workers. Actresses and actors report a high degree of burnout. Several actors and actresses described exhausting schedules, often shooting several days in a row for different projects. This often leaves little time for social activities,

particularly with individuals outside of the industry. Outside of exclusive contracts, the industry structure does little to encourage pacing oneself in regard to career productivity.

Gender and Career Advancements in the Porn Industry

Mobility is difficult to define for porn actresses and actors because of the overlap between different types of production companies and the prevalence of freelance employment. Within the industry, however, one way to view “moving up” is to direct a video or to own a series with similar titles or featuring the same star (known as “owning a line”). Most respondents perceive that these opportunities for advancement are influenced by gender.

Directing is regarded as a higher status position than acting because it is believed to require more skills. In addition, because directing is behind the scenes, it carries less stigma than performing in front of the camera. While both actresses and actors stated this goal in equal numbers, respondents suggested that actors were more likely to be given the opportunity to direct. To date, there is no listing of all of the directors in the industry that could be used to check this assumption. However, in my observations, and from respondents’ comments, male directors were far more common than female directors. When asked to explain this phenomenon, respondents offered a number of possible hypotheses. For example, many suggested that the industry is run by men, and therefore, actors experience more opportunities and benefits through their connections (both personal and professional) to other men in the business. To illustrate, one actress claimed:

The industry is run by good old boys. It always will be, and it’s the men that run it. Women that survive as directors usually have a husband behind them somewhere.

Her comment alludes to the solidarity between men in the industry that many actresses and actors suggest is readily observable .

In addition to the connections between men in the industry, respondents also attributed differences in opportunities to the perception of actresses as weaker and less professional. Other respondents suggested that actresses and actors present different attitudes in regard to advancing their careers, and these attitudes are generally linked to gender expectations . For example, Eric claims:

You've got to have that strong independent attitude to say, okay, I am going to be taken a little bit more seriously. But men, on the other hand, it's like yeah, great, I'll have my editor to teach you. [There are] A lot of apprenticeships. You want your own gonzo series, great.

Similarly, Joanna suggests:

You got to be one of those big shouldered broads, you've got to be really on your game to get behind a camera. A man doesn't have to have those kind of balls to get behind the camera.

Those who subscribe to this perspective suggest that actresses and actors could have access to the same rewards, as long as actresses are willing to violate the gender expectations assigned to their positions . Actors, as men, simply need to "be themselves."

Similarly, some respondents suggested that actresses do not possess the socialization necessary to seek out different career opportunities in the industry. This assumption is illustrated by one actor's comments:

The big porno companies will kick you. So, and I guess it's the men's ambition to direct, I guess because we don't have the fear of going and asking for the money, or whatever, Girls don't, they can't even fathom how to go in and ask for the money from porno companies. You know, they don't even think they should talk to the porno company owners, much less go in and ask them for \$30,000, \$40,000, to shoot a porno. Only the strong ones get a bug up their ass and go, hey, I want to direct one, fuck it, I'll walk in there and ask for the money myself.

According to this perspective, differential socialization better prepares actors for career advancement, while traits of traditional femininity disadvantage actresses. Combined with actors' social relationships with male producers and directors, their movement into directing positions is considerably easier.

While few actresses appear to have progressed to directing or editing, many assume other jobs in the industry once they retire from performing. Perhaps not surprisingly, these jobs confirm, rather than challenge, prevailing gender norms. For example, I interviewed several former actresses who were currently working as makeup artists, production assistants, caterers, and set designers. Each reported that they had found a sense of family in the industry, making them reluctant to leave the X-rated industry. These jobs, available to them based on their knowledge of the production process, paid significantly less than their fees for performing. In contrast, directors and producers earn more than performers.

Sexual Harassment in the Porn Industry

While there is a great deal of variability in the accepted definition of sexual harassment, many worksites rely on the definition set forth by the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. According to EEOC's definition, sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This definition, as well as more commonsense definitions of harassment, is premised on the idea of the workplace as non-sexual. Many theorists have disagreed with the basic assumptions of this premise for most work settings, arguing that work relationships are often sexualized even in non-sexual contexts (Adkins 1995). Some researchers have suggested that this sexualization results from such things as boredom, attempts to restrict sexualized interactions, and the

culturally prescribed interactions between men and women (Hearn and Parkin 1987, Pringle 1989). This research provides an opportunity to determine whether these patterns differ in a work site which is explicitly sexual.

One component of the EEOC definition, the request for sexual favors, appears to be a common experience for actresses in heterosexual porn. While no actors reported they were expected to provide sexual services to producers and directors,¹ most actresses stated this was commonly expected of female talent, especially if they were new and young. For example, Michaela claims:

Sure, lots of directors expect blow jobs, things like that. Some girls do, and some girls don't. I have never heard of anyone not getting a job because they wouldn't blow the director, but I know most of the hot [popular] girls do.

Similarly, when asked if she had been asked to provide sexual favors in exchange for work, another actress stated:

I don't put out vibes like that, so it has never been an issue for me. It depends on how much respect you have for yourself. I don't prostitute myself, and I don't put myself in compromising positions. I think a lot of the new girls don't know they don't need to do that, especially when the rent is due.

Interestingly, while most actresses reported these requests were common places they all suggested that this practice was not something they engaged in. Whether their responses were truthful is unknown, but their comments alluded to the stigma attached with engaging in these practices. The assumption held by respondents was if an actress possessed enough talent and/or self-esteem, she would be able to secure work without providing sexual favors. Those who did exchange sex for work were regarded as unprofessional by

¹While the taboo against male-male sexuality in the industry explains why actors were not subjected to sexual advances from male directors, actors also suggested that they were not expected to be sexually available to the few female directors currently working in the industry.

other actresses and were considered “sluts” or “whores.” Similarly, this label of slut was applied to actresses who perform *mingang* -bang films, suggesting that even in a group considered deviant by others, certain members are sanctioned for violating shared norms.

Sexual overtures from male producers and directors mirror general assumptions made about the sexual availability of actresses off -set. Many actresses reported that these expectations were held by both dating partners and business associates. As Divine illustrates:

People expect you to be a certain way because you’re reportracting a sexual act on film. It’s my job, I get paid a lot of money for that. I’ve decided to make this my career path, but that doesn’t mean I am horny twenty -four hours a day, seven days a week, and that I’m just looking to have my hole filled by anyone who will pay me attention.

However, these requests and the underlying assumptions behind them were not construed by respondents as harassment. Instead, they were constructed as part of the job.

A second component of the EEOC’s definition of sexual harassment addresses unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In the work of performing sex, it is often difficult to characterize unwanted contact. Sexual interactions between participants are highly scripted and list the agreed-upon activities in a scene (e.g., *fellatio*, *cunnilingus*, *penetration*).² Actresses and actors typically discuss the scene with director prior to the beginning of filming, and participants suggest that they have a clear sense of what they are expected to do within the context of the shoot. However, within the context of filming, changes may be made to the script last minute, or individuals may innovate. For example, during one scene I observed, the actor made numerous attempts to penetrate an actress anally, although the scene called only for penile -vaginal

² Actresses’ and actors’ fees are based on these activities. Anal penetration pays them most (averaging about \$800 for actresses and \$400 for actors), and masturbation and women -women sex the least.

intercourse. When interviewed the actress later, I asked if she found this bothersome.

She responded that she considered it part of the work, as part of her job required keeping the actor turned on and creating a “hot” scene. Only two of the respondents suggested they ever felt coerced on set.

More common were descriptions in which actresses and actors had to have sex with someone they were not attracted to (or even repulsed by), or who were insensitive or rough partners. Actresses in particular suggested that a “bad scene” could affect both their work weeks and their intimate relationships at home. As one actress stated:

Last week, I was working a new full lot. As a matter of fact, Thursday was the last day of eight days in a row for me, that's a lot.... After eight days, I tell you, I was really sore. The sixth day, I had a three-hour hardcore scene in the evening. Three hours of actually getting penetrated, with an actor who was very well endowed, lots of them are, that's part of why they are there, and of course, he was wearing a condom.... That eight day stretch, I was not neglecting my partner, but we weren't having penetrative sex. I couldn't.

Others reported that they were emotionally drained after a particularly intense or difficult scene. Despite these grievances, however, most respondents suggested that they would choose to work in porn over other jobs available to them.

There are several possible explanations for why sexual harassment does not appear to be a common experience for participants in the porn industry. First, what might constitute harassment in another setting may not be defined as such by actresses and actors. For example, sexual overtures and sexual activities are considered part of the job. Rather than being constructed as deviant, these occurrences are part of everyday reality. Second, because they are doing nontraditional work in marginalized settings, participants may have developed norms and expectations that are different from other workplaces. Finally, working in freelance positions may allow individuals to avoid potentially

problematic situations. Actresses and actors have some ability to choose among a variety of projects, selecting for both their co-workers and the director. Gossip, characteristic of the industry, assists in circulating the names of those who should be avoided in the industry. Although sexual harassment is not part of the discourse of porn work, participants have constructed norms to govern against coercive actions. Respondents voiced their disdain for such things as non-consensual sex, sex with minors, or things that are degrading to women and/or minorities. It is not a culture in which “anything goes.”

Conclusion

Porn work is undeniably gendered. The work roles of performers mandate that actresses be highly concerned with appearance and personality, while actors' work roles focus almost exclusively on their sexuality abilities. This focus on women's appearance and men's sexuality as gendered work has been noted in other jobs as well. For example, Adkins' (1995) study of service workers in tourist locations found that female caterers and wait staff were subjected to regulation surrounding their appearance, although no similar criteria existed for their male co-workers. As Adkins argues (1995:105)

What was clear was that women workers were subjected to a set of criteria relating to appearance regardless of occupation, while men were not. These criteria can be said to exist regardless of occupation in two senses. First, they existed not because the occupation “needed” its workers to possess these qualities -- you do not have to be pretty to make sandwiches -- but because women workers were constructed as somehow needing these appearance qualities *to be workers*. (emphasis hers)

Using Adkins' analysis, one does not need to be pretty to have sex, but actresses must be attractive in order to be good workers. Actors' identities as workers are not questioned in the same regard; they are workers because they work (i.e., perform).

Actors “domascularity” in a variety of ways, which provides them with greater access to “do work.” While doing masculinity entails conforming to expectations of male prowess, being masculine assists in their identity as workers, and as workers, it is assumed that they are interested in career development and advancement. These assumptions can facilitate their advancement to other jobs in the industry. The connection between masculinity and worker identity is noted in several respondents’ explanations as to why actresses do not move ahead in the industry. In answer to this question, most respondents invoked gender expectations, such as women are not as strong, secure, and/or confident as men, and the lack of the skills and socialization to act as ambitious workers. Or, in the words of the respondents, most actresses lack both “broad shoulders” and “big balls.”

While the work of porn is not sex segregated, respondents’ comments suggest it is *sex stratified*. Similar to many occupations (see for example Dixon and Pestrong 1996), actresses and actors can be found performing different tasks within the industry. For example, after “retiring” from performing, those actresses who remain in the industry typically move to traditionally male coded positions, such as those involving food and makeup. In contrast, actors who retire from performing and remain in the industry are more likely to advance to traditionally male dominated positions, such as editor, director, and producer. Interestingly, evidence of sex stratification does not appear to have influenced actresses’ career goals, as many voiced that they were interested in making this transition to production. Actresses’ continued interest in production, even in the face of differential opportunities, suggests a possibility for change within the industry.

A troubling consequence of sex stratification, however, is that it becomes difficult to change worker compositions within the industry, particularly in jobs which rely heavily on informal networks. In regard to the porn industry, the presence of more male directors and producers has resulted in more actors being trained for these positions through their contacts with other men in the industry. This has formed a type of “old

boy” network, which has been noted in several occupations, along with the influential strength of informal connections and networks.

In sum, this research suggests while careers in the porn industry share some patterns with other occupations, there are some important differences. Ironically, many of these differences are in sharp contrast to some feminist arguments regarding the exploitative nature of sex work. For example, per project, women are paid more than their male co-workers, and actresses have more access to securing outside work, such as stripping or nude modeling. In addition, many actresses and actors have a great deal of control over their careers, deciding such things as who they will work for, what they will charge for various scenes, and whether to accept a contractor work as an independent. However, some patterns of gender stratification noted elsewhere in a variety of occupations, such as differential opportunities for career advancement, benefits from sex segregated informal networks, and job security, can be easily observed in the porn industry. In many ways, therefore, women who perform sex in the porn industry frequently find themselves encountering a glass headboard.

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