

## *Genders and Sexualities in History*

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Palgrave Macmillan's series, *Genders and Sexualities in History*, aims to accommodate and foster new approaches to historical research in the fields of genders and sexualities. The series promotes world-class scholarship that concentrates upon the interconnected themes of genders, sexualities, religions/religiosity, civil society, class formations, politics and war. Historical studies of gender and sexuality have often been treated as disconnected fields, while in recent years historical analyses in these two areas have synthesized, creating new departures in historiography. By linking genders and sexualities with questions of religion, civil society, politics and the contexts of war and conflict, this series will reflect recent developments in scholarship, moving away from the previously dominant and narrow histories of science, scientific thought and legal processes. The result brings together scholarship from contemporary, modern, early modern, medieval, classical and non-Western history to provide a diachronic forum for scholarship that incorporates new approaches to genders and sexualities in history.

Julia Laite's *Common Prostitutes and Ordinary Citizens: Commercial Sex in London, 1885–1960* contributes to debates about the criminalization of prostitution in London between the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 and the Street Offices Act of 1959. She situates prostitution within complex networks of gender and class relations, sexuality, public health, nation and empire, industrialization, and the criminal justice system. Crucially, Laite allows us to hear the voices of the women themselves, as well as those of feminists, anti-vice campaigners, politicians, health officials, police, and magistrates. In common with the other volumes in this series, Laite's *Common Prostitutes and Ordinary Citizens* is meticulously researched and elegantly written. Her intellectual contribution makes this an essential book for anyone curious about the history of gender relations, sexuality, and crime. It is an absorbing read, and is a sophisticated contribution to our understanding of the past.

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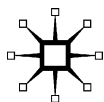
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# Common Prostitutes and Ordinary Citizens

Commercial Sex in London, 1885–1960

Julia Laite

palgrave  
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*To Linda and Stanley G. Laite, with love*



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# Acknowledgements

Researching prostitution is as challenging as it is fascinating: it is controversial, troubling, hard to describe and even more difficult to explain. I have carried this research project with me through a doctorate, several postdoctoral years, and finally a lectureship, and have never ceased to be both deeply interested and profoundly confused by prostitution, the public reactions to it and the debates surrounding it. Moreover, while I wrote this book, public concern about prostitution remained prominent and opinion about it diverse, and I could not help but notice how present-day debates and interventions bore a remarkable similarity to those which I was examining in the past. Much about prostitution discourse appeared to me as it had to feminist contemporaries in the early twentieth century; that is, as 'argument in a vicious circle'.<sup>1</sup> Disheartening stereotypes, injustices, misconceptions and polemics dominate popular and political accounts of prostitution, while women working in the sex industry continue to experience marginalization, stigma and harm.

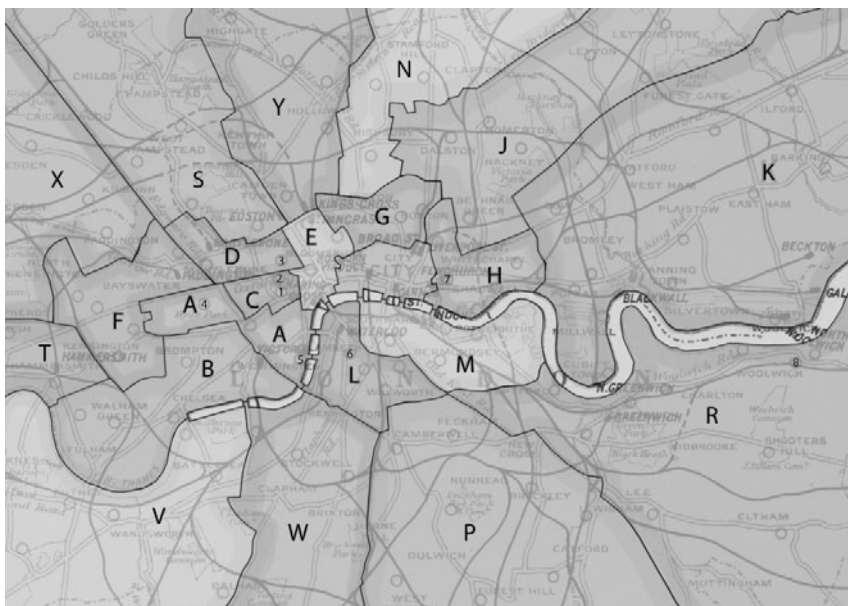
This disappointing lack of change and understanding in popular culture and legislation surrounding prostitution was mitigated for me by the immense support I found in advisors, colleagues and friends. I would like to thank my PhD examiners, Peter Mandler and Lucy Bland, whose feedback and encouragement have extended beyond my doctoral studies; and Judith Walkowitz, Simon Szreter, Helen Self, Philippa Levine, Steve Legg, Ann Summers, Jane Caplan, Lesley Hall, Julie MacArthur, Daniel Grey, Lucy Delap, Catherine Lee, Mary Ann Poutanen and Philip Howell for some helpful conversations farther along the way. I am also grateful to Chris Youé, who has been supportive of my work since my undergraduate years, and to Arn Keeling, John Sandlos and Suzanne Morton, who supervised different stages of my postdoctoral work in Canada. Thanks are also owed to Emma Rothschild, particularly for her comments about 'Nellie Johnson', as well as William O'Reilly and Inga Huld Markan at the Centre for History and Economics; and to those involved with the Gender and History Workshop at Cambridge. Series editors John Arnold, Joanna Bourke and Sean Brady's enthusiasm for this book has been deeply appreciated, as has the encouragement I've received from Ruth Ireland and Michael Strang at Palgrave Macmillan, and the input of the anonymous readers who commented on the manuscript. I can think of no better place to have finished this book than amongst my colleagues and my students at Birkbeck College, University of London, and no better place to have started it than under the supervision of Deborah Thom, whose careful readings and graceful insights helped me, and my research, no end.



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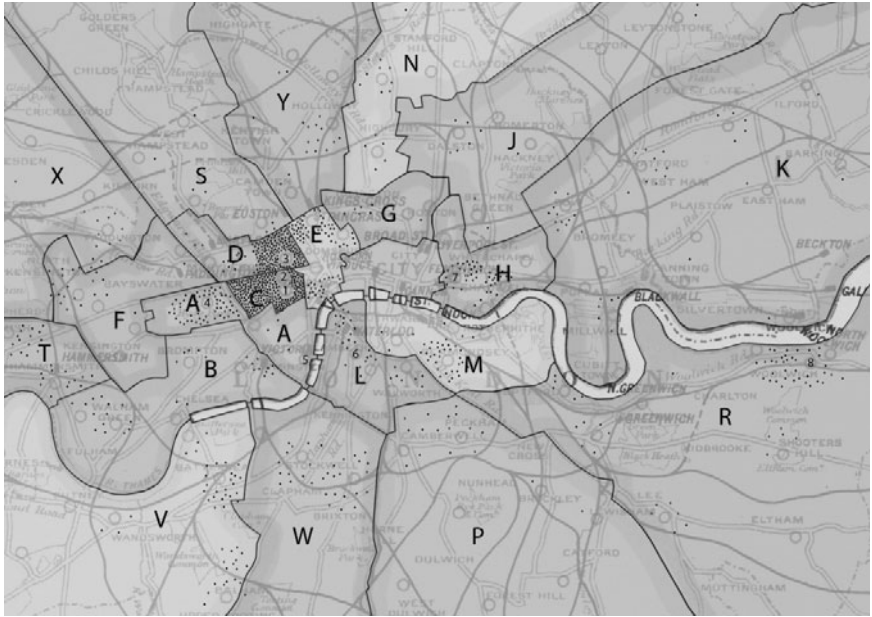


*Map 1* Police divisions in London, c. 1910

*Divisions:* A: Hyde Park and Whitehall B: Chelsea C: Piccadilly and St. James D: Marylebone E: Holborn F: Paddington G: Finsbury H: Whitechapel J: Bethnal Green K: Bow L: Lambeth M: Southwark N: Islington P: Camberwell R: Greenwich S: Hampstead T: Hammersmith V: Wandsworth W: Clapham X: Highgate Y: Kilburn City Police administered separately.

*Key stations:* 1: Vine Street Station (West End, C; later moved to West End Central Station, Saville Row) 2: Great Marlborough Street Station (West End, C) 3: Tottenham Court Road Station (North Soho, D) 4: Hyde Park Station (Hyde Park, A) 5: Canon Row Station (Victoria, A) 6: Kennington Road Station (Waterloo, L) 7: Lemn Street Station (Whitechapel, H) 8: Woolwich Station (Woolwich, R).

*Source:* Based upon a digital scan of 'London's Police Divisions and Railways', *Bacon's 'Citizen Series' Maps of London* (London, 1910); designed by the author.



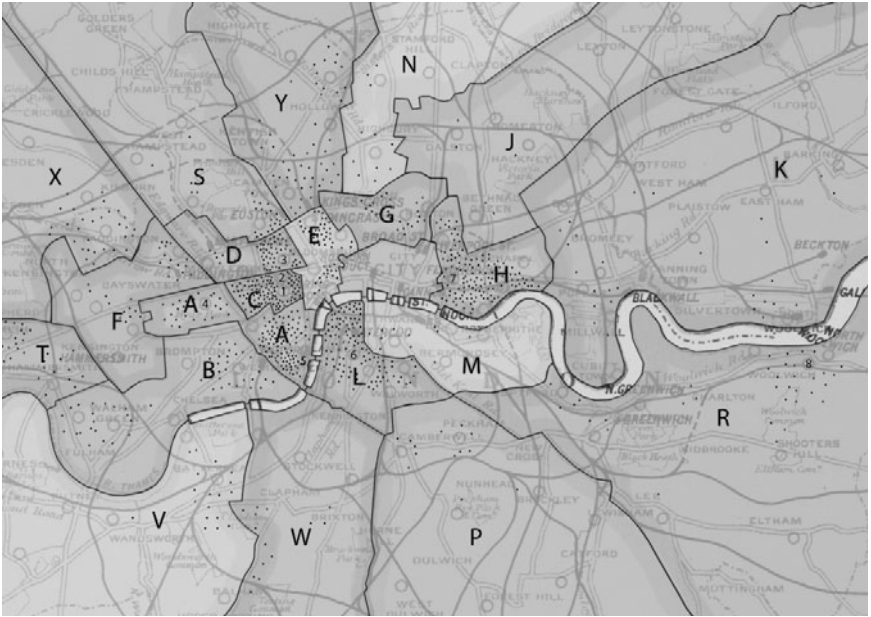
Map 2 Arrests for solicitation in London, 1903–1905

*Key stations:* 1: Vine Street Station (West End, C; later moved to West End Central Station, Saville Row) 2: Great Marlborough Street Station (West End, C) 3: Tottenham Court Road Station (North Soho, D) 4: Hyde Park Station (Hyde Park, A) 5: Canon Row Station (Victoria, A) 6: Kennington Road Station (Waterloo, L) 7: Lemn Street Station (Whitechapel, H) 8: Woolwich Station (Woolwich, R).

1 dot =10 arrests.

*Notes:* Dots are placed randomly according to statistics for each police station and do not represent actual locations of individual arrests.

*Sources:* Based upon a digital scan of 'London's Police Divisions and Railways', Bacon's 'Citizen Series' Maps of London (London, 1910); designed by the author. Arrest statistics from Royal Commission on the Duties of the Metropolitan Police, Return C, 1906.



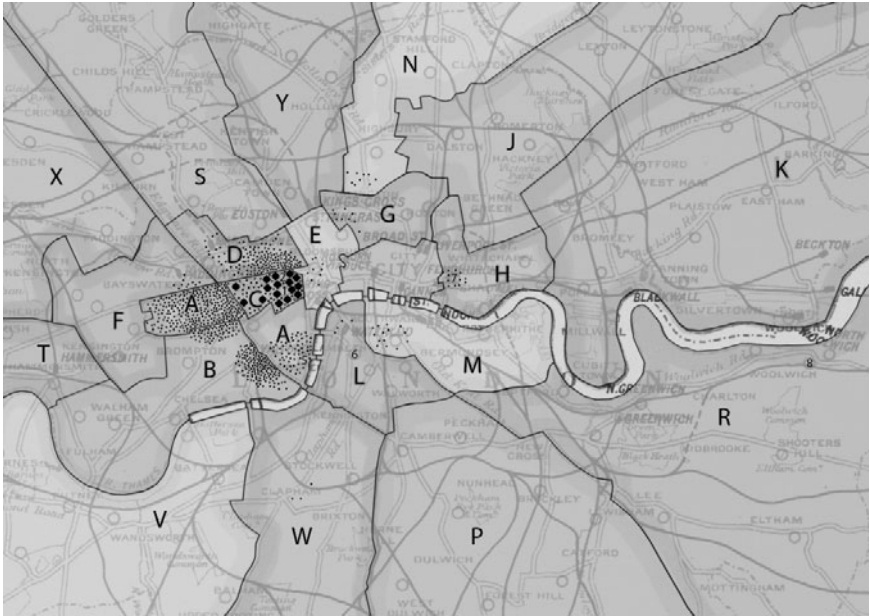
*Map 3* Arrests for solicitation in London, 1914–1916

*Key stations:* 1: Vine Street Station (West End, C; later moved to West End Central Station, Saville Row) 2: Great Marlborough Street Station (West End, C) 3: Tottenham Court Road Station (North Soho, D) 4: Hyde Park Station (Hyde Park, A) 5: Canon Row Station (Victoria, A) 6: Kennington Road Station (Waterloo, L) 7: Lemn Street Station (Whitechapel, H) 8: Woolwich Station (Woolwich, R).

1 dot = 10 arrests

*Notes:* Dots are placed randomly according to statistics for each police division and accompanying descriptions of areas, and do not represent actual locations of individual arrests.

*Sources:* Based upon a digital scan of ‘London’s Police Divisions and Railways’, *Bacon’s ‘Citizen Series’ Maps of London* (London, 1910); designed by the author. Arrest statistics from an unpublished police return, in London, The National Archives, MEPO 2/1720.



*Map 4* Arrests for solicitation in London, 1950–1953

*Key stations:* 1: Vine Street Station (West End, C; later moved to West End Central Station, Saville Row) 2: Great Marlborough Street Station (West End, C) 3: Tottenham Court Road Station (North Soho, D) 4: Hyde Park Station (Hyde Park, A) 5: Canon Row Station (Victoria, A) 6: Kennington Road Station (Waterloo, L) 7: Lemn Street Station (Whitechapel, H) 8: Woolwich Station (Woolwich, R).

1 small dot = 10 arrests

1 large dot = 1000 arrests

*Notes:* Dots are placed randomly according to statistics for each police division and accompanying maps and descriptions of areas, and do not represent actual locations of individual arrests; C Division arrests, which constitute 65 per cent of the total for London over the three year period (16,378 arrests), have been represented with large dots (equalling 1000 arrests) as well as small ones (equalling 10 arrests).

*Sources:* Based upon a digital scan of 'London's Police Divisions and Railways', *Bacon's 'Citizen Series' Maps of London* (London, 1910); designed by the author. Arrest statistics from unpublished police returns in London, The National Archives, MEPO 2/9713.