

## [If markets are this simple and obvious then why the opposition to them?](#) [1]

Written by [Tim Worstall](#) [2] | Monday 27 May 2013

The Daily Mail has a report looking at the plight of the hardworking prostitutes of the country. Economic times are so hard that they're finding it difficult to make a steady living at the [oldest trade](#) [3].

Yet, just like many other businesses up and down the UK, even prostitution is now struggling with Britain's struggling economy. Many sex workers are now saying its almost impossible to make a full time living out of prostitution with rising rents and energy costs and a reduced demand for services. They also complain of a saturated market in which students and those recently sacked turn to prostitution to make money. Like many other workers across Britain, sex workers even complain that immigrants are providing tough competition.

Just for a moment put aside any moral or religious (or even lascivious) thoughts you might have about this sort of trade. Forget even the dubious legality of much of it (prostitution itself is legal in England, most of the activity surrounding it is not, such as brothels, soliciting, pimping and so on).

Look at what is actually happening instead. We have an absolutely textbook example of a market operating. There is a rise in supply of the service thus prices are falling. There's a reduction in demand at the same time, so prices are falling again. The marginal provider is being described as being pushed out of business and being forced into some other trade. Just as those leaving other trades are thinking of entering this one.

My point is that if markets work as advertised in something as simple and basic as sex then why is it that we've vast reams of people insisting that markets simply don't work? Why is it that all can see that markets work for those who want to get laid but not for those who desire to be educated, healed or housed?

Perhaps I should change that a little bit: for as any adult human being knows there's actually nothing very simple about human sexuality at all. It's a horribly complicated area of life even if it is one that endlessly fascinates our shaved ape brains. But that just strenghtens my point: if markets do indeed work as described on the tin even here then why are so many people, including naturally those in PJ O'Rourke's Parliament of Whores, insist that markets do not work, cannot, and must be replaced with something else?

I agree that it's not a particularly deep thought for a bank holiday morning but I do find it interesting. Supply and or demand change, prices change to compensate and bring them into balance. Why is it so difficult for people to get this?

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