Prostitution in Sweden 2007

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Foreword

The Swedish Government mandated the National Board of Health and Welfare in the Women's Safety Bill of 1997/98 to regularly monitor and gather information about the extent and development of prostitution in Sweden. The first report *Prostitution in Sweden 1998-1999* was published in 2000 and followed in 2004 by the second report, *Prostitution in Sweden 2003: Knowledge, Beliefs & Attitudes of Key Informants*. This report is the third in the series on the extent and development of prostitution in Sweden.

The report is based on surveys, interviews and a systematic Web Research Study. We also cite relevant research in the field.

The authors of the report are Annika Eriksson and Anna Gavanas of the National Board of Health and Welfare, Individual & Family Unit. The Web Research Study was performed by Glykol, an independent research firm. Anna Flöjte and Anna Hagman of the National Board of Health and Welfare Statistics Unit assisted with producing and processing the surveys. Beatrice Hopstadius of the Administrative Department and Merike Lidholm of the Individual & Family Unit provided valuable input.

The text was reviewed by the Board's expert advisory panel, Professor Malin Åkerström of Lund University and Charlotta Holmström, PhD, of Malmö University.

Inger Widén Cederberg
Enhetschef Individ- och
familjeenheten

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Summary

The objective of this report was to study the extent and development of prostitution in Sweden. We used various methods to arrive at three sub-studies: semi-structured interviews, questionnaire surveys and follow-up interviews with representatives of Swedish municipalities and police authorities, and a systematic Web Research Study.

Of the municipalities, 17% report that they *know* prostitution occurs in their municipalities and 17% *believe* it does. Of 17 police authorities, 2 report that they *know* and 10 *believe* that people sell sexual services in their districts. Many survey responses and follow-up responses reported that the Web is a common contact zone for prostitution and that prostitution is usually discovered in connection with other matters, such as addiction.

The survey responses also show that prostitution is not confined to urban areas.

The police and municipal social services are actively seeking greater knowledge about methods for combating prostitution and providing supportive interventions.

Forty people were interviewed; about half of them have personal and direct experience of prostitution. In the interview study, the public authorities also reported highly uncertain figures for the number of people engaged in street prostitution: about 200 in Stockholm, 70 in Malmö and 30 in Göteborg. The results show no appreciable change since the last survey, other than perhaps a slight decline in Göteborg and Malmö.

People who buy and sell sex circulate within or among a variety of contact zones, such as street settings, the Web, pubs and restaurants, hotels, massage parlours, apartment-based bordellos, etc. The configuration and organisation of these contact zones vary from region to region in Sweden.

The World Wide Web emerges as an obviously significant contact zone. Some respondents assert that the Web has lowered thresholds as a gateway to selling and buying sexual services. Modes of contact for prostitution are changing in the context of the Web and vary among e.g. websites, forums, blogs, chat sites and dating sites. Such changes are often very rapid and surveys of various actors often vary. Some of the factors that influence traffic in these contexts are government monitoring, legislation, market forces and technical solutions.

Mobile telephony also seems to be gaining particular status as a mode of contact for prostitution; informants describe it as the second-most influential technological development after the Web.

A multiplicity of experiences, perspectives, self-identifications and positions emerge among both buyers and sellers of sex. In addition to ethnicity, age, volition, social/intellectual profile and no requirements for condom use are factors that may be advertised in sex markets.

Perspectives and definitions are also diverse among respondents within the police, social services, researchers and non-governmental organisations.

Informants' opinions about the effects of the Swedish Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services vary, as do attitudes towards the law. Some are

in favour of the law and believe it has had positive impacts, while others focus on the adverse impacts.

There is a lack of general knowledge about unreported cases of children and adolescents who have engaged in prostitution. The empirical material provides only scattered information in the material on adolescents in prostitution.

The Internet has brought new opportunities to sexually molest children by means of "grooming." According to the National Council for Crime Prevention, it is not unusual for teenagers age 14-15 to report that they have been contacted by this means or for minors to be offered money or another form of compensation (such as topping up their mobile phones) in exchange for sexual services.

According to the informants, technological advances such as webcams and mobile phones have also created new gateways into prostitution/grey zones for adolescents.

The surveys and interviews both show that social services and the police have little knowledge about men who sell sexual services. They know that it happens, but lack in-depth knowledge. More than 16% of the sellers of sexual services we encountered in our Web Research Study are men.

Prostitution manifests in various ways in different regions of the country, depending on things like geographical location (proximity to sex markets in neighbouring countries). Migration flows also interact with the sex trade in diverse ways in regions such as northern Sweden, the Öresund region, west Sweden, central Sweden and the Stockholm area.

All sub-studies (the Web Research Study, interview study, survey study) show that ethnicity is a tangible factor in demand for and advertising of sexual services.

In both the interview and survey studies, the police, non-governmental organisations and social services all report knowledge of sellers of sexual services who have migrated to Sweden from certain countries and regions (Eastern Europe, Russia, Africa, Thailand).

The Web Research Study found 304 sellers of sexual services, including 57 men. Age and ethnicity are two key variables in the advertising. Men are the overwhelming target group as clients; 271 of the advertisements are directed at men, but about 20 people in the Web Research Study direct their ads at both men and women, 15 only to women clients and about 10 are directed at male clients and couples. The Web Research Study also shows that some of the people who sell sexual services via the Web apply restrictions with regard to prospective clients, such as upper and lower age limits and ethnic groups. Technological progress seems to have had strong impact on the online sex market (such as the development of payment systems and webcams), likewise the emergence of new actors, such as owners of technology. Another observation is that information about people who sell sexual services has an abiding market value, although the means of communicating such information changes. It also seems that where on the Web prostitution contacts take place is constantly changing. Communications are moving, for instance, away from websites and forums to dating sites and blogs.

Introduction

Mandate

The National Board of Health and Welfare has had a Government mandate since 1998 to continually monitor the extent and development of prostitution in Sweden. The mandate arose in part from the criminalisation of the purchase and attempted purchase of sexual services, but should also be viewed in light of the constantly changing nature of prostitution with regard to ways and means of contact. With this in mind, the Government believes that regular monitoring of the development of prostitution on the national level is a matter of importance. Attention should also be paid to the impact of international developments in prostitution on Swedish conditions in this context.

The Board published the first report in connection with the mandate in 2000, *Prostitution in Sweden 1998-1999* [1]. The second report, *Prostitution in Sweden 2003: Knowledge, Beliefs & Attitudes of Key Informants,* was published in 2004 [2]. The current report is thus the third follow-up of the extent and development of prostitution on the national level.

This report does not discuss social interventions against prostitution in detail, as we did in the previous surveys. The reason for this is that the Board has a separate Government mandate to inventory and describe the methods employed by the social services, the healthcare system and other social actors in their work with people who have experience in prostitution and with victims of trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation. The Board will submit its report on the mandate to the Government on 15 June 2008.

Methodology

Surveying prostitution is a complex task. Much of that which belongs to the world of prostitution is hidden, inaccessible or stigmatised. Studies of prostitution inevitably encounter a variety of obstacles. Consequently, it is impossible to form a precise picture of prostitution and its extent, regardless of the chosen method. All we can do is *identify* the phenomenon from the *perspectives* of various informants. As noted in our previous reports, perhaps the only thing that can be surveyed is *knowledge* about prostitution, or rather the *perceptions* and *assessments* of various informants. It should also be noted that informants' interpretations may be based on mutually contradictory perspectives and definitions.

In response to these difficulties, we have chosen to use a variety of complementary methods and approaches to at least attempt to paint the most complete picture possible. For the previous report, we used the qualitative interview method exclusively, in part because we wanted to shed light on certain specific issues. This report also contains a wealth of interview material, but we have also studied corresponding issues and themes using surveys and performed a systematic study of prostitution contacts on the World Wide Web. The result is a "triangulation" of methods – the surveys, interviews and Web Research Study each verify the findings of the others. We ask similar questions in the three sub-studies and try to shed light on them based on the broadest sample of relevant informants possible.

We chose the methods based on experience gained and lessons learnt from the two earlier studies. The intention is for these methods to be repeatable when the next report is compiled – the surveys, interview guides, etc., were designed with that in mind. In so doing, we improve methodological continuity.

In this report – as in the two preceding reports from the National Board of Health and Welfare – prostitution is defined as occurring when at least two parties buy or sell sexual services in exchange for (usually financial) compensation, which is a basic condition for the provision of the sexual service.

Survey study

Surveys were distributed to all police authorities in Sweden and to a sample of Swedish municipalities. One hundred of the 290 municipalities in the country were randomly selected and distributed among various strata. Of the 100 municipalities queried, 71 responded to the surveys and of 21 police authorities queried, 17 responded. Municipal responses were extrapolated to correspond to all Swedish municipalities.

When performing a study of an unusual phenomenon, random selection may cause instances where the phenomenon actually occurs to be overlooked. On the other hand, instances could have been overlooked in a

non-random selection as well, if we had approached only municipalities where we guess, or presume on the basis of preconceived notions, that a particular phenomenon occurs. The alternative would have been a total study, but the main objective was to estimate incidence on the national level. In addition, we can only measure *knowledge* of prostitution – the number of unreported instances is probably a more serious problem than any that might be caused by random selection. A total survey cannot provide an accurate picture either.

The surveys were brief and limited to a few questions of a rather basic nature (see Appendices 2 and 3). The municipalities and police authorities that had knowledge of prostitution according to the surveys were contacted for a few more in-depth follow-up questions. The follow-up questions also followed a special interview guide (such as questions about perceived changes, specific groups mentioned in the survey responses, contact zones, new recruitment and interventions, if any). A total of 25 municipalities and 12 police authorities were contacted for this purpose.

A number of questions were also asked of a small sample of youth clinics about any knowledge they may have about young people who have experienced prostitution or comparable, but only 2 responded of the 15 queried by e-mail.

Interview study

Interviews with public authorities and non-governmental organisations

As in the preceding studies, several representatives of social services were interviewed, most particularly the social services prostitution teams/centres in Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö (including programmes that target buyers of sexual services, referred to in the report by the Swedish acronym, KAST). We conducted more interviews at the Stockholm Prostitution Centre than in Göteborg and Malmö, since Stockholm has a bigger staff and various specialisations. Representatives of social services in Umeå and Luleå were also interviewed.

Interviews were also conducted with representatives of the police authorities in Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö, Umeå and Luleå, the National Criminal Investigation Department and representatives of a couple of non-governmental organisations. We also spoke with the Stockholm City Mission, the Malmö Needle Exchange Project, Project Europe and Cooperation against Trafficking.[1]

Most of the people we spoke to in these organisations were also interviewed in our previous studies. This maintains a certain continuity as they make statements about prostitution over time.

From the comparative perspective, we also visited a number of organisations in Oslo.

[1] Cooperation against Trafficking – *Samverkan mot trafficking* – is a developmental partnership among local and regional authorities, non-governmental organisations, religious communities, museums and universities.

Interviews with people who have personal experience of prostitution

We interviewed 16 people (including 7 by e-mail) with personal experience of prostitution in Malmö, Göteborg, Stockholm and a number of small towns. Of these individuals, two have purchased sexual services, and thus the majority has engaged in selling sexual services. Reaching and interviewing these individuals was not entirely without difficulty. We posted queries via the Web and posted notices about the study at shelters, etc., asking to talk to people who have personal experience of prostitution. We asked people who work close to prostitution to help us get in touch with appropriate interview subjects, but this was met with some reluctance. People who work at the Stockholm Prostitution Centre for instance believe that they have their clients' mandate to speak for them: "Those of us who work here meet hundreds of people involved in prostitution and we can speak for them." Concerns were also expressed that the individuals could come to harm in the interview situation because our questions might trigger possibly difficult and frightening feelings.

Among those with personal experience of prostitution, we also noticed some initial distrust about our attempts to make contact. We were asked why the National Board of Health and Welfare wanted to talk to them, in particular. Both prostitution teams and sellers of sexual services had opinions about the previous reports. Some women in prostitution confused the Board with the social services, with which they had several associations.[2] Some informants were convinced the interviews would have immediate impact on the law against purchase of sexual services. They simply did not trust how we were going to handle the interview material and how it was going to be used. The people we interviewed with personal experience of prostitution included a few who had been interviewed in other contexts when their opinions had been "deleted" from the final report and they had no wish to repeat the experience. After a couple of initial contacts, however, it seemed as if word spread that people "could trust" us and it became somewhat easier to arrange interviews.

However, this "snowball method" resulted in a rather selective sample of informants. We aimed for greater distribution in a number of areas, such as modes of contact for the transactions and whether the primary arena is the Web or the street, albeit there are no hard and fast boundaries between different forms of prostitution. Through persistent effort, we finally managed to attain a certain distribution among informants with direct experience of prostitution: variation in age; professional background; main occupation; perspective on prostitution; geographical territory; interface with clients (the Web, the street, apartment, hotel, own premises); years of experience in prostitution, etc. We used the Web, research contacts, organisational contacts, etc., which all led to further contacts. Those we spoke thus include people who have been active for a long time and people involved in prostitution for briefer periods. There are people who began at

[2] We also encountered the opposite: people contacted us to provide information they believed we needed – sellers of sexual services, researchers, private individuals and officials.

an early age and people who began later. The group includes people with experience in street prostitution and others who sell sexual services via the Web or apartments and still others with experience of several different modes of contact. The informants also include people who are no longer actively involved in prostitution. Some of the informants have grave problems with addiction, others do not.

Certain groups were too difficult to reach. For instance, in spite of many attempts to make contact, we were unable to interview any men who sell sexual services, victims of human trafficking or recently arrived immigrants who sell or buy sexual services. We were also able to reach only a few people who have left prostitution.[3] It can be difficult to reach the latter group for purely practical reasons, since these individuals may have left the "prostitution world" entirely and are thus more difficult to reach through various actors currently active in the field. People who have left prostitution may simply want to put those experiences behind them. Other studies have also had difficulty reaching that particular group. [3] Readers are urged to keep in mind that important voices are thus absent from this report.

The people we spoke to with personal experience of prostitution express a variety of opinions and perceptions. Some consider it a personal choice and as something that is not inherently harmful to them, but has instead had positive consequences for themselves and others. Others we spoke to are vehemently opposed to prostitution and state that they have been damaged by their experiences in various ways. This theme is the subject of heated debate in certain contexts. Authors and debaters have been accused of presenting a biased view of prostitution, one that is either far too positive or far too negative. Quite often, the criticism is based on the view that researchers have been selective in their sample of informants. For that reason, we believed it was important to try and achieve the greatest distribution possible. However, it should be noted that our mandate is not to study whether prostitution is inherently "good" or "bad" or "harmful" or not, but rather to describe processes in an arena that is difficult to pin down.

Approach

We used a semi-structured interview guide covering several current themes (such as tendencies in extent and development, organisation of the sex trade, impact of technological developments, internationalisation, new and established actors, incidence of men who sell sexual services, incidence of minors in prostitution). The same interview guide was used for all interviews, but the emphasis sometimes varied slightly depending on the type of organisation represented by the informant. Most of the interviews took place in a traditional interview setting in which the interviewer and

[3] According to some actors, the consequences of prostitution do not emerge until the person has left it [2] – thus, if one interviews only people who are actively engaged in prostitution, a positive image tends to be presented, according to these actors. For this reason, it was important to talk with several people who had left prostitution, in order to increase the diversity of perspectives. However, our questions did not pertain directly to personal experiences of prostitution or to whether prostitution is good or bad, instead focusing on general issues related to its extent and development, etc.

respondent meet face-to-face. Group interviews were conducted in a few cases. Some informants with personal experience of prostitution answered our questions in writing via e-mail, sometimes because a meeting was difficult to arrange for practical reasons and sometimes because the informant wished to remain anonymous. The written responses provided detailed information, but we were unable to ask follow-up questions as is otherwise possible in an interview setting (although we were invited to ask further questions in most cases).

The informants represent various institutions and organisations in society, such as public authorities and non-governmental organisations, as well as people with personal experience of selling sexual services. The people involved may have had vested interests in promoting certain information based on their mission, ideological grounds, orientation, experience, need for funding, etc. In addition, the informants approach and respond to prostitution in various ways. This kind of interview material – where representatives of social services, non-governmental organisations, etc., or people who have sold sex via certain modes of contact estimate the extent and development of prostitution – may, in other words, be biased. Tyldum and Brunovskis wrote about this problem in connection to studies of victims of human trafficking and other "hidden populations." [5]. They believe that key informants seldom come into contact with an entirely random sample of individuals. They can thus not be expected to have a complete overview of the entire study population. Consequently, the informants present different and sometimes contradictory pictures and interpretations of the same condition. Qualitative studies make no claims to generalisability and the people we spoke to represent only themselves. The category represented by the informant is not always predictive of the informant's perspective.

As we also showed in the previous report, prostitution is a highly heterogeneous and multifaceted world. According to Pettersson and Tiby [4] it would be more accurate to talk about *various prostitutions*, rather than prostitution. There are among prostitutions a number of dissimilar (both overlapping and separate) sectors, as well as buyers and sellers with mutually discrete conditions, perspectives, habits, motives and experiences. Readers are urged to keep this in mind.

Web Research Study

The Web Research Study was commissioned from and performed by Glykol, an independent research firm. Glykol has performed several studies since 2000 and assisted other local/regional studies on the same theme. This provides opportunities for comparisons and reflections over developments in the area over time. But it also entails a risk: if the same approach is repeated by the same firm/individuals, there is risk that alternative methods and focus areas will not be tested because there are no other studies available for comparison.

Initially, there were about 25 questions to which we were seeking answers, many of which were new to Glykol. They were formulated in dialogue with Glykol and distilled into a few general themes (such as where do sellers advertise; who are the actors and indirect actors; what is the

extent; what is the impact of technology; how is internationalisation evolving; and globalisation in prostitution). Based on these themes, a number of variables were studied, such as gender, age, ethnicity, target clientele, whether or not condom use is required, territory, etc. It is important to remember that some of the information posted on websites that we studied cannot be uncritically accepted as "factual information." Some information may be used for purposes of competition and in other cases, the information provider may modify the content for other reasons. One should thus approach the information and its interpretation with some caution.

The process began by setting up a database for collecting URLs to relevant websites. Through the systematic collection of information, the database eventually contained a register of websites – in certain literature, the term *Web ring* is used to describe a group of websites related to a particular subject. The collection period was followed by a period in which the websites and forums indexed in the database were monitored. During this period, it was also possible to expand the database with additional URLs. Information was collected for six weeks total, full time during the first two weeks, followed by one hour every day between 19th March and 13th April 2007. During the monitoring period, Glykol used software that provides notice if something new has happened on a website – manually monitoring the sites is virtually impossible. It should also be noted that the monitoring period was very brief, considering the complexity of the area. A longer study period and/or an additional period at another time of year might have produced other results.

Duplicate URLs were eliminated, as were duplications with regard to text and other content in order to minimise the risk of counting the same individual twice under different aliases.

The study was limited to information which makes it clear that the objective is physical sexual services in exchange for money. This should not be confused with the type of services where individuals are paid to only disrobe or pose in front of a webcam for one or more people, but where there is otherwise no offer of sexual services that would involve a purely physical encounter. However, this limitation and others are not entirely unproblematic with regard to prostitution.

The object of our study was *information* about physical sexual services arranged online, but where the sexual service is provided elsewhere. The specific focus was the information, or "advertisements." As noted in the National Board of Health and Welfare's previous studies of prostitution, it is difficult to estimate the extent to which these advertisements in fact generate purchases of sexual services.

Another limitation was that the information must be relevant to Sweden as a geographical area; for instance that the information was explicitly directed at residents of Sweden.

Types of information

The information about prostitution on the Web can be grouped into different types of advertisements.

Flyers are distributed in various ways on the net: via e-mail, on websites, as document attachments on forums, etc. They are a simple form of advertisement and contain the most salient information (primarily prices, contact details and pictures) to be communicated between the seller and potential buyers.

Forum posts contain textual information. One person who sells sexual services may appear in several forums, with the same information. There are no pictures, but pictures may be attached or available via a link. Forums are sites where users with common interests can meet, and are sometimes called "communities." Most of the people who use the latter term want to emphasise a kind of social fellowship.

Webshop ads/portal ads. A Webshop is an IT system used to market various products – books, clothing or electronics, for instance, but also what we were interested in – sexual services. The information is not presented in a forum (like the preceding ad type), it is presented on a website intended to sell the product. The ability to search for information and refine the search is a significant feature of these websites. The IT system makes it possible for users to find what they are looking for.

Websites may be composed of a single Web page or several linked Web pages. The Web page is a physical document, such as an HTML document, that is stored on a server. Private individuals and small businesses commonly rent server storage space, that is, they use a *Web hosting* service. Web pages may be simply built and static or sophisticated sites that offer users several options for interaction.

Blogs are a kind of diary on the Web. People who sell or buy sexual services sometimes talk about it in their blogs.

Webcams are used in several ways in the context of prostitution and the Web. Short video clips are sometimes featured on websites where an individual is advertising sexual services. In that connection, communication via webcam may also be offered. A person who sells physical sexual services via the Web may also offer services that include webcams.

All of the above types of advertisements were included in our study of information about prostitution on the Web.

Structure of the report

The study consists of three sub-studies, each of which are each reported separately. The first section of the report covers the results of the questionnaire surveys of police authorities and municipalities, including follow-up interviews. This is followed by an overview of the interviews, including issues such as social aspects, contact zones, the Web, regional differences, diversity among sellers and buyers of sexual services, etc. Finally, we report the results of the Web Research Study pertaining to the development and organisation of online sex markets.

Police and Municipal Knowledge of Prostitution

In order to identify municipal knowledge of prostitution, we chose to collect information via a questionnaire. The survey was sent to a random sample of 100 municipalities/municipal districts. They were asked to answer questions about people who sold sexual services in the municipality in 2006. We received responses from 71 municipalities/municipal districts.

We also studied police knowledge of prostitution. All 21 police authorities were included in the sample and 17 responded. In addition to questions about sellers of sexual services, the police were asked about buyers and promoters.

The data in the collected municipal surveys were compiled and the results computed by extrapolating to the national level. Thus, the figures in the report show the estimated number of municipalities that have knowledge of prostitution in the municipality. See the Quality Declaration in Appendix 1 for a more detailed description of the statistical methods and the quality of the study.

Knowledge of sellers of sexual services

An estimated 17% of Swedish municipalities *know* there were people who sold sexual services in 2006 in their municipality. Another 17% said they *believe* there were people who did so. In the municipalities which report that they know or believe people are selling sexual services, respondents said that about 70% of these individuals are women and about 10% are men. There is greater uncertainty in the municipal responses concerning the incidence of men who sell sexual services; a higher percentage (about 20%) reported that they "do not know," while none responded "do not know" concerning the incidence of women in prostitution. Of those who reported that people are selling sexual services in their municipality, about 25% said there have been incidences of youth under age 18.

Of the 17 police authorities, 2 know and another 10 believe that people are selling sexual services in their districts. Of those who know or believe that prostitution exists in the district, 11 stated that the sellers of sexual services are women, while 1 of the 11 districts also stated that they know of men who sell sex. Regarding men in prostitution, 6 districts said "do not know" regarding men in prostitution (compared to 1 regarding women). The police are thus also more certain about the incidence of women in prostitution. When asked whether sellers of sexual services resided in their districts, 9 said yes.

Only 2 of 16 reported knowledge of promoters (people who directly or indirectly profit by trade in sexual services) active in their districts, while 8 believe this to be the case.

Knowledge about prostitution clients

Of 17 police authorities, 5 state that they *know* people purchased sexual services in their districts in 2006. Seven say that they *believe* this to have occurred. Only 2 police districts state that there has been *no incidence* of prostitution, while three state that *do not believe* there was any incidence. Of the 12 police districts with knowledge of prostitution, 9 reported knowledge of male clients and none reported knowledge of female clients.

Follow-up questions

As mentioned in the section on methodology, the municipalities and police authorities that reported knowledge of prostitution according to the surveys were contacted and asked a few follow-up questions that explored the issues in greater depth. A total of 25 municipalities and 12 police authorities were contacted this way, of which 22 municipalities and 9 police authorities responded to the follow-up questions.

Changes

One question asked in the follow-up interviews had to do with changes, of which none have been observed.

The Västra Götaland Police report that street prostitution is not as prevalent as before, but prostitution arranged by phone and the Web is more common. Clients can ask for a phone number on the street, after which they need not return there. The Västra Götaland Police report having observed one or two Nigerian sellers of sexual services, but that they have not established a firm presence here (which should be compared to the situation in Norway – see the Interview Overview). The police also say there has been a certain amount of "trouble" on the streets, including conflicts between people who sell sex.

The Norrbotten Police have heightened focus on prostitution and are working with the problem in a more targeted way. They state that they have had isolated cases involving purchases of sexual services and procuring, but that reporting tendencies are low and the number of unreported cases high. They also state that new sellers of sexual services were present in the district in 2006, but they do not know how many.

The Kronoberg/Växjö Police say that they have not had prostitution in the past, but believe it now exists. According to informants, women engaged in prostitution appeared in the district in 2006.

Prostitution was a priority issue in 2007 for the Gävleborg Police. Considering the careful investigation and prioritisation of the issue, the police were surprised not to have found evidence of prostitution in Gävle or the surrounding area – nor via social services or the healthcare system (however, Gävle appears in our Web Research Study as a " territory" and "place of abode"). The police have found no traces or signs of prostitution.

The Skåne Police report that the situation has changed since the law against purchasing sexual services was enacted. Street prostitution is not limited to addicts, according to Police informants. Otherwise, they state that

prostitution is arranged via the Web and that there is an unknown number of unreported cases of prostitution contacts in pubs.

Two municipalities mention specifically that issues related to prostitution have recently come up on the agenda. They are talking more openly about prostitution now and there is greater awareness (Motala, Botkyrka).

It was difficult to obtain information about cases where people have stopped selling sexual services. The Västra Götaland Police report that one or two people have left prostitution and particularly mention one case in which the individual was provided support by the police and social services. The Farsta City District (Stockholm) report that three or four individuals stopped selling sexual services in 2006.

Contact zones

Contact zones for prostitution vary in Sweden, depending on whether or not there is a large city in the district or in a nearby district where street prostitution exists. The police in Västra Götaland and Skåne cite the street and the Web as contact zones, along with pubs and bordellos in Skåne (the police have e.g. raided a tanning salon where women of foreign origin sold sexual services). The modes of contact mentioned by the police in Norrbotten and Västerbotten are the Web (for instance, one case in 2005 when a woman in Gällivare advertised online), mobile phones, "word of mouth," and rumours about prostitution at hotels and pubs/restaurants.

The Kronoberg/Växjö Police also cite the Web as a mode of contact. The Södermanland Police mention that the prostitution may take place in another town as a sort of contact zone, which may apply to similar regions (response via e-mail):

> It is perhaps important to consider the perspective of regions surrounding the biggest cities in Sweden. That is, we may have residents of Södermanland County who are clients or prostitutes who buy or sell sexual services in Stockholm County. We are fairly sure that both the people reported for breaking the law against purchasing sex and the target population for the Stockholm Social Services outreach programme often live in neighbouring counties.
>
> There is no obligatory information sharing with other counties concerning Södermanland County residents who buy sex in other counties, and even less so concerning prostitutes from Södermanland County.
>
> One might say that the questions on the survey presume locally active (and detected) prostitution. It is unlikely that sex purchases and prostitution are the sole province of the major cities. But it seems logical that someone who wants to buy or sell sex and lives near a large city (for instance, within the Mälar Valley region but outside Stockholm), would choose to

do so in the relative anonymity of the city rather than in his or her own smaller home municipality.

Certain municipalities/municipal districts also cite the Web as a contact zone. One municipality and one city district (Alingsås, Malmö/Husie) have observed greater incidence of prostitution on the Web. Farsta, Svalöv, Heby, Motala, Bollebygd, Hässelby and Göteborg/Bergsjön also cite the Web. Göteborg/Bergsjön reports one case in which a teenage girl, age 14 or 15, had made contact with a man via the Web and provided sexual services in exchange for gifts. A couple of city districts (Östermalm/Stockholm, Bergsjön/Göteborg) have also encountered human trafficking cases. Bergsjön specifies that they have had cases of pimps bringing young Eastern European women to apartment-based bordellos. Apartments/commercial premises are cited as contact zones for prostitution by Östermalm/Stockholm, Motala, Göteborg/Bergsjön and Hässelby. Bollebygd also mentions the phone as a mode of contact. Some municipalities also state that nearby cities function as contact zones (Lessebo, Alingsås). We will return to the theme of contact zones in the Interview Overview.

Internationalisation

The police report that internationalisation is a significant factor in prostitution, but some of what they know is based on rumours. The Västra Götaland Police say that most women engaged in street prostitution are Swedish, but some of the women are from Poland, Africa and South America.

The Skåne Police also state that people engaged in street prostitution are Swedish (addicts), but that they do encounter people with other origins in other arenas, such as the Web and pubs. The police also report human trafficking in women from Romania, Hungary, Poland and the Baltic countries.

The Gotland Police report that the sellers of sexual services of whom they are aware have been “Swedish”.

The Kronoberg/Växjö Police report cases of seller of sexual services from the former Soviet Union.

The Södermanland Police have encountered African women who have come to Sweden via Italy to sell sexual services, as well as trafficking in women from Latvia.

The Västerbotten Police say they received no reports involving prostitution in 2006, but informants have told them of women from the former Eastern Bloc, Poland, Thailand and Africa suspected of selling sexual services.

The Norrbotten Police report that most sellers of sexual services they know about are of non-Nordic origin, migrants from for instance Eastern Europe and Thailand now residing in Sweden.

Informants from the municipalities/municipal districts of Heby, Bollebygd, Bromma, Alingsås, Svalöv and Malmö/Husie report that the women in prostitution they know of are of ethnic Swedish origin. In

addition to those of Swedish origin, Motala also reports sellers of sexual services from Chile and the Czech Republic.

The city district of Farsta reports that known sellers of sexual services have been of Swedish and Russian origin. Östermalm/Stockholm and Göteborg/Bergsjön report women from Russia/the former Eastern Bloc, and Hässelby reports sellers of sexual services of ethnic Swedish and Iranian origin.

One issue that came up in several small municipalities and police districts is prostitution among asylum-seekers, at refugee reception centres and among unaccompanied minors seeking asylum. There have been suspicions that prostitution has occurred in these contexts, but there is no evidence and such suspicions and speculations must be regarded with considerable scepticism.

Initiatives

The orientation of police initiatives differs somewhat. Norrbotten, Skåne and Södermanland particularly mention initiatives to fight human trafficking. The Södermanland Police report for instance that they monitor suspected human trafficking, procuring, or other traffic in prostitutes that may be occurring via Skavsta Airport.

Initiatives related to human trafficking were taken in Norrbotten in 2006. The police were better prepared than before and focused on investigating rumours concerning prostitution in the region in 2002-2003. The police feel they have a high level of awareness of the problem.

The Västerbotten Police report that they have not taken any initiatives per se related to prostitution, but the intelligence squad has talked about the phenomenon with, in particular, security guards and police, pub and restaurant personnel and hotel personnel.

A continuing effort against street prostitution and human trafficking is ongoing in Skåne. Initiatives reported by the police include a major bordello investigation in 2006 and targeted initiative at the racetrack and Jägersro. The Västra Götaland Police report that they are working with method development and networks. They are also taking preventive action by disrupting prostitution activities on the street, the Web and in strip clubs.

All of these police authorities report that they assist sellers of sexual services in making contacts with other actors. Depending on the situation and need, this may involve contacts with social services, healthcare, women's shelters, addiction care, men's crisis centres, KAST and crime victims' programmes.

The municipalities usually encounter prostitution in connection with other matters, such as addiction and economic assistance, or via police reports. Depending on the specific situation, the authorities refer individuals to the relevant units in social services, prostitution teams, addiction care, etc. Lessebo, Bromma and Halmstad report preventive initiatives in schools.

Addiction

Some police authorities mention the connection between prostitution and addiction, such as Gotland, Kronoberg/Växjö and Skåne with regard to street prostitution. Västra Götaland also reports a connection, but believes it is relatively unusual in Göteborg.

The municipalities seem more often to observe a connection between prostitution and addiction. The Eskiltuna social services report that they do not know what the situation is like with regard to prostitution, but they know that women who are part of the subculture of addiction submit to exploitation to gain access to drugs. A number of municipalities/city districts report that knowledge of prostitution emerged in connection with addiction care: Hässelby, Bromma, Motala, Lessebo, Malmö/Husie, Norrtälje, Östermalm/Stockholm and Botkyrka. Social services in Farsta, Svalöv and Haninge also believe addiction is part of the picture among people who sell sexual services. Informants in Halmstad and Göteborg/Bergsjön assume that prostitution occurs in certain circles in connection with addiction, criminality and social disadvantage, but otherwise have no information about or knowledge of prostitution in the municipality.

Minors

Two police authorities report recent incidents involving minors. The Västra Götaland Police have encountered three or four girls, age 13-14, who offered sex for compensation. They were quickly handed over to social services and legal guardians. Youth cases are prioritised in Västerbotten to enable the earliest possible intervention if young people end up in at-risk situations. Signals were picked up in the early spring of 2007 that young girls were being exploited by older men. Detective work led to a few arrests and interventions from the relevant social authorities. The city district of Farsta reports that there have been new incidences of young women in prostitution in 2006.

According to reports from a few social services offices, interventions for minors may involve placement into care (voluntary or compulsory) and/or police reports (Botkyrka, Göteborg/ Bergsjön, Malmö/Husie, Farsta).

Men

Only two of the police authorities that answered follow-up questions have data about men in prostitution. Västra Götaland reports an increase in the last year of transsexual men on the street and on the Web. Norrbotten reports that they have no known cases involving transsexual persons (former men) in prostitution, but they have had one or two cases where prostitution was suspected in connection with battery of transsexual persons (former men).

Likewise, only two municipalities/city districts report knowledge of men in prostitution. Isolated cases (transsexuals) have been found in Östermalm/Stockholm and in the Municipality of Lessebo, where

informants have suspected that a teenage boy might be engaged in prostitution.

Needs

Several police districts feel a need for action and resources to facilitate the fight against prostitution. The Skåne Police believe the law against purchasing sex makes it difficult to get at certain phenomena and the Västra Götaland Police would like to see tougher penalties for purchase of sexual services, human trafficking and promotion. They believe there is too much focus on victims and that more attention needs to be paid to the perpetrators. The Kronoberg/Växjö Police feel a need for more knowledge in order to detect prostitution. The Södermanland Police note that "Generally speaking, there is probably reason to truly analyse the implications of the internationalisation of prostitution and the impact on our capacity to intervene." The Västerbotten Police report that there usually are no financial and human resources available to assign personnel in smaller policing areas outside the metropolitan district. Detective work and targeted/active intelligence are both required. They would also like more knowledge and experience regarding how best to fight prostitution and how prostitution is developing. The Gotland Police would like to see legislation that would enable action against prostitution contacts made via the Web.

Several municipalities/municipal districts (Motala, Bromma and Alingsås) are seeking knowledge and information about how they should work with prostitution and possible alternative supportive interventions. Haninge also sees a need for information initiatives via youth clinics in the schools. The informants believe the schools have a tremendous responsibility and that there is a need for the kind of interagency action devoted to female genital mutilation, patriarchal families, etc. Representatives of Östermalm/Stockholm believe there is a general lack of knowledge about prostitution. They also believe it is difficult to reach and manage human trafficking and prostitution via the Web. The Municipality of Botkyrka expresses a need for more knowledge about the implications of the phenomenon of prostitution, how it is detected, and interventions. This applies in particular to the more complex cases, such as women addicts who are victims of violence and involved in prostitution. Others believe that they do not need additional support, since they feel they do not have a problem with prostitution or already have adequate resources: Heby, Lessebo, Bollebygd, Halmstad, Göteborg/ Bergsjön and Malmö/Husie.

Interview Overview

A broad spectrum of perspectives

Prostitution is a diverse phenomenon the positions and experiences of actors vary widely. It is important to note this diversity, especially among men and women who sell sex. Sex markets vary in terms of social organisation, power relationships and the conditions for individual actors [6]. Price differences among women in prostitution, for instance, tend to reflect beliefs about which groups have the highest and lowest status in society [7]. Meanings and experiences of prostitution also vary depending on who is buying and selling the sexual service and in what context: the gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc., of the individuals involved [8]. Ethnicity, nationality, biological sex and gender are some of the "products" sold in the sex trade [9, 10].

Prostitution is associated primarily with heterosexual interaction and focused on women who sell sexual services. Men who sell sexual services have thus far been relatively absent from Swedish research and debate, and are traditionally not characterised as victims and/or exploited persons to the same degree as women [8]. The importance of avoiding generalisations about people who *buy* sex emerges in the interview overview: they, too, represent a multiplicity of conditions, living conditions and perspectives.

The media, researchers, government agencies, legislation and non-governmental organisations have an influence and are involved in setting the frameworks for prostitution arenas. Accordingly, they may be regarded to a certain extent as co-actors in a field also made up of sellers, buyers and promoters of trade in sexual services [11]. As evident in the interview overview, government agencies, non-governmental organisations and other directly and indirectly involved actors often have discrete definitions and perspectives on what prostitution is and the driving forces behind it, as well as appropriate attitudes to sex markets. The perspectives and agendas of organisations, groups and actors vary even with respect to human trafficking [12, 13].

The organisation of prostitution and conditions for the actors are also affected by internationalisation in relation to global stratification, migration, tourism, neo-colonialism and exotification [7, 9, 14, 15]. Technological progress is yet another factor that has an impact on the organisation of sex markets [16].

The following interview overview focuses on central themes relevant to the extent and development of prostitution in Sweden:

- Diversity and experiences among people with experience of prostitution[4]
- The organisation of the sex market and the impact of technological developments like the Web, mobile telephony and new payment systems
- Internationalisation and regional differences
- Swedish legislation and opinions on the consequences of the law against purchasing sexual services.

To shed light on these questions, 40 actors were interviewed (in groups or individually) who have direct or indirect knowledge of prostitution in Sweden (Malmö, Göteborg, Stockholm, Luleå, Umeå and small towns in central Sweden). The informants were: 14 sellers of sexual services (including 6 interviewed by email, of whom 5 have a history of street prostitution and 1 who has left prostitution), 2 clients, including 1 interviewed by e-mail (clients were not the primary target group for this study), 6 representatives of the police, 14 representatives of municipal social services, 4 representatives of non-governmental organisations and 2 former "promoters" ("net pimps").

Social aspects

Sexual services are often advertised, performed and sought in terms of an "authentic" social and "personal" service [9]. Several of our informants believe that the sex trade encompasses many other aspects beyond the exchange of services for pay. Most of the informants explain that the sex trade, both online and on the street, is a context encompassing both social and market aspects. Some informants describe the street setting as more permissive of that which in other contexts may be regarded as deviant. The boundaries between intimacy and the market relationship, the public and the private, are fluid here [9, 14, 16].

For instance, prostitution teams tell of sellers of sexual services who have been engaged in street prostitution for 30 years, for whom the street functions as a "living room" and where the top priority may not be to earn money. In the Board's previous report, prostitution was described as, in part,

[4] In this text, we variously use terms like "prostitution," "the sex trade" and "the escort business." Such terms may have negative connotations for certain actors, while they are preferred by others. Some people with experience of prostitution prefer to be called "prostitutes", while others would be offended by the term and prefer words like "escort" or "sex worker." As an example, two networks in Sweden use different terms: "prostitute" (Prostituerades Revansch i Samhället – PRIS/*Prostitutes' Reintegration in Society*) and "sex workers" (Sexsäljares och Allierades Nätverk i Sverige – SANS/*Sex Workers and Allies Network in Sweden*) in their names. We often use the term "seller of sexual services," which refers to a person with experience of selling sexual services and may include both "escorts" and "people with personal experience of prostitution". The corresponding terms for the other party in prostitution are "client" or "buyer", which refer to a person with experience of buying sexual services. The terms "seller of sexual services" and "buyer of sexual services/client" underline the fact that the object of study is a market relationship, and that trade in sexual services is something people *do* and not what they *are* and are defined by otherwise. Nevertheless, we alternate between words like "experience of prostitution", "prostitution market" and "sex market" out of consideration to the connotations of all of these terms, depending on the perspectives of various actors.

a way for some women in prostitution to relieve loneliness and social isolation [2]. The informants relate that there are actors online and on the street who neither buy nor sell sexual services. More online traffic does not necessarily mean more purchases of sexual services are taking place. In the interviews with prostitution teams, such actors are referred to as "oddballs" or "strange characters."

There are also online forums where buyers and sellers socialise and discuss issues that have no direct connection to the sex market, although such social interaction may also be used as an aspect of marketing sexual services. For instance, the "*Sekreterarakademin*" ("Secretarial School") site is directed at people who sell and buy sexual services, but is also a social community. One informant with experience of prostitution describes the topics on the site as "everything under the sun." People also warn others about unpleasant clients and share their experiences. According to another informant with experience of prostitution, sellers of sexual services have their own forums, mailing lists, and group meetings on the site, which fill both a social and a practical function. Sellers of sexual services report that they tell each other and advise one another about various online forums that are open only to them. On other sites, clients may share information and recommend escorts to one another.

Gateways to and exits from prostitution

In the previous study [2], informants describe a number of gateways to prostitution: the opportunity to make money, random online contacts, the influence of boyfriends, approaches at cafés and pubs, prostitution as an element of addiction, youth who are offered things in exchange for sexual services, etc.

Women with experience of prostitution we spoke to for this study also relate that they have come into contact with the escort business or indoor prostitution by chance, in situations where it did not become clear until later which services were wanted. For instance, one woman applied for a job as a foot masseuse, but it turned out during the interview that what the "employer" really wanted was sexual services. Another informant reports applying for work as a model, only to be invited to sell sexual services.

Other informants describe transitions from working in strip clubs or in phone sex operations. Other informants (sellers of sexual services) mention invitations on the Web and in chat forums, for instance, as their gateway into the escort business/prostitution. Informants mention the Web, webcam services, tourism, and companies that arrange escorts for their employees as gateways to *buying sex* [17].

Experiences of prostitution vary widely among people in prostitution. Some have financial reasons for continuing regardless of whether that was the original plan, others feel they are doing something meaningful and/or satisfying. Others feel they have suffered damaging emotional, physical and social consequences from their prostitution experiences [18]. The previous study described research into possible reactions when someone decides to leave prostitution – crises, processing of experiences and feelings of shame, questions that arise in close relationships, ambivalence and "recidivism" [2].

Trying to find one's way out of prostitution can be difficult because the settings for prostitution may inherently feel both secure and appealing.

One female informant with experience of selling sexual services relates that it can be difficult to leave prostitution once one has entered the market (even when drugs or financial needs are not involved). She is still contacted and offered money (which can sometimes be difficult to resist). "Johns" (her term for clients) still contact her occasionally and refuse to accept that she has stopped selling sexual services, because they believe "prostitute" is something a person *is*, not something a person *does*. The informant also relates that prostitution has an impact life after leaving it behind, because the former prostitute has a secret that is often perceived as shameful and may have consequences for his or her family and other loved ones. Another informant (seller of sexual services) remarks: "Once you're into it, it's hard to get out; it's like a drug I guess. This is really not something anybody really wants to do with their lives."

Contact zones

Contact zones and forms of prostitution are in a constant state of change. As described in previous studies [1, 2], there are a number of contact zones for parties to prostitution: street settings, mobile telephony, restaurants, hotels, massage parlours, etc. The Web can also be described as an environment that constitutes a contact zone for actors in the sex trade. One informant with the police calls the Web the "biggest procuring engine" and the largest source of information concerning prostitution.

Technological developments and the Web have, according to some informants, led to the marginalisation of certain media in the sex market, such as printed magazines and sexual services via the phone, which some informants say has begun to be replaced by "Web-based voice sex".

Sexual services are also advertised by notes dropped on the street. According to one informant at the Stockholm Prostitution Centre, this has been replaced by the posting of notes with phone numbers on telephone poles.

Casinos are another contact zone for prostitution mentioned in the interviews. We have been told that sexual services are sold at casinos to gamblers and travelling businessmen, etc. In this way, the Casinos Act undermines the law against purchasing sex, according to one informant in Göteborg.

Various informants at the Stockholm Prostitution Centre report that certain taxi drivers are also involved in the sex market.

Other contact zones mentioned by informants, but which are difficult for outsiders to penetrate, are ferries and apartment-based bordellos. The informants also report that prostitution contacts are made in nightclubs.

Street prostitution is often described in the literature and by prostitution teams as the lowest on the "prostitution totem pole" and on "social ladders," where services can be bought that no one else is willing to perform. Individuals who sell sexual services on the street usually, as one representative of social services puts it, have few options and are exploited based on their disadvantages. According to a representative of the

Stockholm Prostitution Centre, some women in prostitution who had greater opportunities and access to another basic structure disappeared from the street when the Web became available as an arena for the sex trade. But the informant points out that not everyone has access to the Web – the homeless and heroin addicts in particular.

Opinions vary among informants with personal experience of prostitution regarding the advantages and drawbacks of various marketplaces. One seller of sexual services in Malmö, for instance, says that she prefers the street to the Web as a contact zone. It is hard to tell who you are dealing with before you have met the client, and making contact online is a bit "like buying a pig in a poke." She does not believe selling sexual services at nightclubs and restaurants is "straightforward" enough. Another informant who is active in central Sweden likewise believes it is more difficult to evaluate clients via the Web or over the phone than face-to-face. It can also be more difficult to reject a client after the client has arrived at a date arranged over the Web.

Conversely, a third woman with experience of selling sexual services in western Sweden prefers to sell sexual services via the Web. Formerly engaged in street prostitution, she believes the clients there are "too strange" and that the clients are better on the Web; they pay better and behave better.

Yet another informant from western Sweden prefers to sell and perform services indoors in her own premises, because it is more organised and sanitary. She also believes that she would not be able to compete with younger women who advertise on the Web, since she is more than sixty years old. She says that the Web has made prostitution more covert, and that "anybody with a studio apartment can advertise." She says sellers of sexual services lower their rates as a result and "go along with anything."

The Internet and mobile telephony have lowered thresholds

As mentioned in the previous study [2], some actors believe the Web may have lowered thresholds for buying or selling sex, but it is still uncertain and difficult to assess whether or not the Web has led to an increase in the number of sexual services sold since its advent. For instance, the Web (and advertisements for sexual services) may be used as a form of pornography that does not necessarily lead to purchasing sex [16].

All categories of informants (government agencies, non-governmental organisations, sellers and buyers of sexual services and promoters) say that the Web has lowered the bar for both selling and buying sex. One person at the Stockholm Prostitution Centre expresses it by saying that accessibility via the Web leads "borderline groups" of men to purchase sex. According to one client informant, the Web makes it easier to gain an overview, make a selection, preserve anonymity and "get to know" potential prostitutes. An informant (seller of sexual services) says the Web makes it easier for clients to screen "candidates", get information, prevent misunderstandings and gain time to change their mind. The World Wide Web makes it easier for people in prostitution to reach a different type of client, those who would never go to the street, according to another informant (seller of sexual services). Clients on the Web are more "average Joes" than are street prostitution clients.

However, informants at KAST in Malmö report that there is no evidence of female clients on the Web.

New patterns for Internet contacts

According to a recent study performed by KAST in Malmö [17], the role of online prostitution forums as a contact zone has declined compared to communities and dating sites, which have become more important. Several informants state that client blogs, escort blogs and forums for (and among) sellers and buyers of sexual services are important new channels in Internet development, such as "oneforums".

According to many informants, forums, chat sites and dating sites are all playing a larger role than websites run by sellers of sexual services because it has become more difficult to advertise. Several actors report that Swedish dating sites/Web hosting services are increasingly banning advertisements for prostitution. Sellers of sexual services report that the alternative is to post ads on foreign sites or post veiled "girlfriend" ads or "FB" (fuck buddy) ads. According to one actor (a former net pimp), there used to be a website where many sellers of sexual services in Göteborg posted "banners." The site generated very high traffic and thus high advertising revenues. In order to increase traffic even further, servers waited two or three days before deleting the ads. Another actor (seller of sexual services) describes chat sites as a new marketplace, like Rosenlundsgatan (the most notorious street in Göteborg for the sex trade), but online. She says that sex ads are everywhere, including on Text TV. Yet another informant describes how the development of pricing and payment systems on advertising portals via the Web is affecting terms and conditions in the sex market (written response via e:mail):

> Online advertising is often essentially uncontrolled in various advertising forums. But the large advertising portals now charge for the girls to openly display their numbers – about SEK 55,000 a year. Usually only guest workers in Sweden (I dare not speculate as to whether that is voluntary or due to trafficking) or escorts with some kind of good relationship with the site administrators keep their ads up all the time. Most never pay and content themselves with the fact that clients on this site, the biggest one, can pay about SEK 35 to get their number via text message. Due to this new invention, many independent escorts in Sweden have started prioritising their own websites even more. That was pretty unusual before and was limited to very well-established, independent and tough girls. These days, a lot more girls are putting up websites immediately – and they stop working again after a few weeks or months.
>
> Online advertising in Sweden used to be free ... other than Web hosting services and things like that. Now the sites are starting to profit from the trade. This is already a fact in Norway, where the girls lay out about NOK 10,000 a month, according to a few long-term guest workers in Oslo. The costs of advertising push up the working

> pace for sex workers, who have to accept more clients to reach their goal.

Clearly, this person has a different view of the relative significance of websites than the foregoing informants. This may be due to differing perceptions – based on differing positions and horizons – but may also indicate rapid changes in this arena.

One informant (seller of sexual services) reports that pimps also advertise on the *Sekreterarakademin* site, which according to many informants was the biggest online contact zone for the sex trade in Sweden for many years. According to one informant (seller of sexual services), an intellectual profile and political involvement are key components of the marketing on *Sekreterarakademin*. According to the same informant, Web administrators dare not permit ads for prostitution on Swedish Web hosting sites, but this is not a problem on foreign sites, as long as one has the knowledge and the money.

Mobile phones and e-mail key modes of contact

Sellers of sexual services employ a variety of methods for making contacts. They may use mobile phones, e-mail addresses, both or neither. One informant prefers to manage contacts via e-mail, since it allows her to plan better and results in more legitimate clients. She requests a listed phone number and identification from clients, which demands trust on the part of the client (since they are committing a crime under the law against purchasing sexual services). According to another actor, the e-mail address is the key aspect and the phone is used only for confirmation. They do not answer calls if the number is withheld.

All categories of informants describe mobile telephony as the most influential technological development after the Web. Prostitution is no longer confined to the street or the Web when sellers of sexual services need only give their mobile phone numbers out. It is impossible to measure the extent, but the use of mobile phones as a mode of contact, instead of the Web or the street, seems to be increasing. Sellers and buyers of sexual services and promoters can save phone books on their mobiles, and such lists may have a market value (see the Web Research Study).

Some informants point out that one effect of the use of mobile phones is higher risk for isolation and less social control, which may entail greater risks for people engaged in prostitution. As discussed in the previous study [2], certain informants report that advertising via mobile telephony or the Web may entail greater risk. For instance, some may begin working in the sex trade alone and in isolation via these modes of contact and thus without guidance from others, such as concerning how they should set limits on what they are willing to do.

Security

Informants (women in prostitution) report that it is not unusual for them to organise their own security, for instance by having an acquaintance who drives them and is prepared to intervene if protection is needed from violent clients, for example. One seller of sexual services in the Göteborg area had two friends, one male and one female, who in addition to helping with her website also provided protection. They were not paid for this in cash or sexual services. Another Stockholm-area informant's husband provided protection and help with her website; he also had no purely financial interest in providing such assistance.

Organisation

Technological developments, legislation, police methods and the competitive situation are some of the factors that combine to influence the terms, conditions and organisation of the sex trade. One informant sold sexual services in the 1990s via the street in Göteborg, as well as from a minibus that was driven to Rosenlundsgatan. She says this is no longer possible because clients are afraid of being filmed (and arrested for purchasing sex). She now sells sexual services via the Web. She says online business was good in the period of 1999-2002, with a large number of client contacts per day, but competition has become fiercer in recent years and it has become more difficult to advertise.

Local conditions also affect the sex trade. According to certain informants, sellers of sexual services from small towns organise their activities based on conditions unlike those in Malmö, Göteborg and Stockholm. Those from small towns sometimes go "on tour" and advertise their schedules so that clients can make appointments (see also the Web Research Study). According to the people we spoke to, women in prostitution who live in small towns often prefer to sell sexual services in nearby towns and/or their own apartments. One actor in western Sweden (a former net pimp) says that the public in small towns generally have a better idea of "what's going on" and that children sometimes yell "whore" after known sellers of sexual services on the street. He also emphasises that it can be difficult to sell sexual services in hotel bars, because hotel proprietors do not want obvious prostitution on their premises, yet sellers of sexual services must look like stereotypical "whores" so that potential clients "get the message that it will cost them."

The sex trade can also be influenced by changes in criminal networks. Several actors report that (a certain part of) prostitution is linked with procuring and crime (such as gun running, the drugs trade and various forms of human trafficking). According to one informant at the "Authorities Cooperation Against Trafficking", human trafficking is highly organised and is run like a company in which things like fraud, theft, begging and narcotics are part of doing business. This informant believes that no distinction can be drawn between human trafficking for sexual exploitation or other purposes, since the same individual may be sold for different purposes over time, depending on which activity is most viable for the

moment. Likewise, an actor at Council of Europe's Project Against Trafficking in Human Beings relates that criminal organisations are changing their operations as they are being tracked down, and employing new tactics when police and other public authorities are successful. Their main purpose is to engage in activities that produce the highest profit at the lowest risk.

Regional differences

The face of prostitution changes from region to region, depending on factors such as geographical location (proximity to markets in neighbouring countries) or the development of the narcotics trade in the particular part of the country. Some actors in northern Sweden believe the proximity of Russia affects the incidence of migrant women in prostitution. For instance, the previous study referred to reports that Russian women from Murmansk were being transported to Sweden, Norway and Finland as part of the transnational sex trade [2]. Informants representing the police and social services in Umeå and Luleå report anonymous tips and rumours that sellers of sexual services are travelling around the region and contacting clients via restaurants, pubs and the Internet.

Buyer (and sellers) of sexual services sometimes move across the border between Malmö and Copenhagen [19]. One informant from the social services in Malmö reports that Skåne is a transit zone for migrant sellers of sexual services en route to Oslo and Copenhagen. Some informants state that bordello operations and human trafficking are less common in Malmö than in the rest of Sweden because the regional sex market is dominated by Copenhagen, where there is also a larger client base.

According to a representative of the Göteborg prostitution team, the sex market in Oslo is over-saturated. As a result, according to this informant, it is not unreasonable to presume that migrants who have sold sexual services in Norway are moving on to Göteborg/Sweden. Several informants in Göteborg express concern about this. The prostitution team in Göteborg also report that there are fewer heroin-addicted women in prostitution in Göteborg than in Malmö and Stockholm. Another actor claims that prostitution in Göteborg is "kinder" and "friendlier" than in Stockholm and Oslo; the social climate is not as tough, which the informants believe is partly due to that there are fewer addicts engaged in prostitution in Göteborg. The Göteborg prostitution team also stated in the last study that there had been a decline in the number of addicts in street prostitution. At that time, the Göteborg Police reported that the majority of heroin addicts were under 25, but were not frequently involved in street prostitution [2]. According to KAST in Malmö, the people who sell sexual services on the street in Malmö have addiction problems.[5] In the last study, the Malmö prostitution team estimated that most active sellers of sexual services in the city were heroin users and that they were between 20-25 years of age [2]. Informants from the police and social services in Umeå and Luleå cite cases

[5] However, our interview study includes at least one exception, since one informant who is actively engaged in street prostitution in Malmö reports that she does not use drugs.

of minor girls selling sexual services in exchange for alcohol. Hash and amphetamines are the most common drugs in Luleå according to the police. Heroin is considered an urban drug but according to police informants, it has “sneaked up” to Skellefteå and Piteå. According to intelligence, there is limited access to heroin in Luleå.

Increases and decreases of street prostitution

As mentioned in the section on methodology, it is not unusual for actors and researchers to cite figures on human trafficking and prostitution with no critical review of the sources that produced the figures [12]. The figures stated by the following informants should for that reason be viewed with caution.

The extent and development of street prostitution since the enactment of the law against purchasing sexual services is described in Stockholm, Malmö and Göteborg by government agencies and non-governmental organisations in similar ways. The overall picture emerging from the interviews is that the sex trade virtually disappeared from the street during a brief period immediately after the law went into effect. It later returned, albeit to a lesser extent. For instance, representatives of the Stockholm Prostitution Centre say that prostitution initially vanished from the streets when the law was passed, only to later return at about half the former extent. Now about two thirds of street prostitution is back, compared to the situation before the law against purchasing sexual services went into effect.

There were about 150 sellers of sexual services in Stockholm street prostitution in 2005. According to these informants, there were about 200 in 2006. The Prostitution Centre reports that they currently encounter 15 or 20 sellers of sexual services a night, compared to the 30 to 60 they encountered prior to the law against purchasing sex. In another interview, a group from the Prostitution Centre state that they encounter about 5-25 people in street prostitution every night. In comparison with the figures reported by the Stockholm prostitution team in the previous study [2], no noticeable change seems to have occurred. Then as well, the team reported that they encountered 25-30 people a night and that they knew of 180-200 people engaged in street prostitution.

The prostitution team in Malmö were in contact with 130 sellers of sexual services in 2000, compared to 66 in 2006. Before the law took effect, they were in contact with about 200 women in prostitution a year, according to informants with the Malmö prostitution team. Compared to the previous study, when 135 women were reported to be engaged in street prostitution in Malmö in 2003, about 30-35 a night [2], the current figures (66 people) represent a decrease. However, the Malmö Needle Exchange Project reports that they were in contact with 150-200 people in 2006 who are heroin users and have experience of prostitution. Informants also provide conflicting information about whether the average age has risen or declined among heroin addicts who sell sex in Malmö.

A representative of the City Mission in Göteborg reports that there were about 30 women in street prostitution in 2006, including 4 who were born as men. KAST in Göteborg estimates that there are some 20-30 people in street

prostitution and that most of them are remnants of "the old days." The prostitution team in Göteborg say that they observe about 10 or 15 women on the street per night. The Göteborg police (trafficking squad) says that they see 5 or 6 women a night in street prostitution, but seldom more than 10. In the previous study as well [2], the Göteborg prostitution team reported that they encountered about 10 or 15 people engaged in prostitution per night. Conversely, they then reported that there was a total of about 100 people working in street prostitution. This data would indicate that the total number of people in street prostitution has declined between the two studies (from 100 to 30).

Supply, demand and preferences among sex workers and clients

Preferences among clients

Preferences among prostitution clients, according to informants, often have to do with age and the thrill of novelty: the younger and the newer on the market a seller of sexual services is, the more desirable. New pictures and advertisements garner the keenest interest on the Web, according to informants at the Stockholm Prostitution Centre. They report that certain variables/services are in particular demand: "shemales," oral sex without a condom, youthful age/appearance, women who are new to the game, and "willingness to go a bit further." Informants (sellers of sexual services) report that clients often want "the usual," which they define as company, acknowledgement, sexual services and touch. Another seller of sexual services observed that the GFE (the "girlfriend experience") is a common preference among clients, which may involve integrating the sexual service into a social context, wherein the parties first eat dinner. Yet another seller of sexual services, who is past 60 and has been working for more than 30 years, says that "the guys" (the clients) want it as "whorish" as possible, but also "that mama thing."

Ethnic preferences among clients

One representative of the Göteborg prostitution team calls ethnic preferences among clients "racist prostitution." What he means is that Swedish prostitution clients may see foreign sellers of sexual services as so essentially different from Swedish women that they are not considered real human beings. According to this informant, clients with such ethnic preconceptions and preferences believe that this makes it acceptable to buy sexual services from foreign women living in poverty. They persist in this belief even though they would perhaps never consider buying sexual services in Sweden or from women defined as ethnically Swedish. According to the informant, the clients legitimise their actions through the belief that they are "helping" foreign sellers of sexual services; that is, they believe they are practising some sort of charity. As representatives of the Stockholm Prostitution Centre put it: "It may ease the conscience to buy (sexual services from) foreign women if one believes one is helping them." A representative of the Göteborg Police also discerns a certain cynicism

among clients who liken purchases of sex from foreign sellers of sexual services to "humanitarian aid." Representatives of KAST in Malmö confirm that it is not as clear to (certain) clients abroad that the purchase is a business transaction made on unequal terms. They observe that it may provide a "post-colonial thrill" to "consume ethnicity" and that Thai women, for instance, give "added value" because they represent "the other" woman compared to Swedish women. According to Anderson and O'Connell Davidson [20], racism, xenophobia and ethnification are common elements of prostitution clients' legitimisation of the exploitation of people from groups regarded as poorer and less "developed"/civilised than themselves.

Representatives of the Stockholm Prostitution Centre report that many women in prostitution on the net state a particular ethnic background, which they would not do if they did not believe it was significant. This is also confirmed by our Web Research Study.

Ethnic preferences may also be significant *within* ethnic groups, according to an informant with the National Criminal Investigation Department. Sellers and buyers of sexual services may come from the same foreign region and make contact with one another in neighbourhoods in Sweden where many residents are of similar ethnic origins. It is reasonable to presume that the equivalent would also apply in neighbourhoods defined as ethnically "Swedish." There is (which we will return to in the Web Research Study) a tendency among clients who define themselves as Swedish to look for women engaged in prostitution who are also defined as ethnically Swedish, often on the basis that they can thus be sure that they are not buying services from women who are victims of human trafficking. In Sweden, Eastern European countries are often, according to prevailing ethnified stereotypes, associated with organised crime. For that reason, promoters and sellers of sexual services from these countries avoid talking directly about ethnicity when for instance advertising online. According to one informant at KAST in Malmö, this is done to allay any suspicion of human trafficking.

Preferences among sellers of sexual services

Sellers of sexual services, not only clients, also have ethnic preferences and many of our interviews provide examples. "Immigrants" have a reputation as bad clients among women who sell sex: they are believed to have a "negative view of women" (especially people from "Arab countries"), to be inclined to bargain down the price or otherwise cause trouble with money and to be "unpleasant and threatening." Several informants (sellers of sexual services) state that they do not accept foreign clients, which was confirmed by our Web Research Study. Prostitution clients younger than about age 25-30 are not popular among sellers of sexual services either. In certain contexts, clients who buy sexual services on the street or from people who obviously have not made a personal choice to sell sexual services (e.g. addicts or victims of trafficking) are also regarded as a lower class of client. Certain informants (sellers of sexual services) also reject clients with

addiction problems. Sellers of sexual services generally have varying target groups. One informant who describes her price class as higher than average reports, for instance, that she prefers serious, affluent clients between 30 and 60 years of age.

Conditions and perceptions vary

As shown in the previous study, prostitution is characterised by tremendous heterogeneity with regard to actors' conditions, motives and gateways into, out of and between markets [2]. A broad spectrum of conditions, sectors and forms of prostitution emerges in interviews with sellers of sexual services. One "escort" (her self-identification) informant sells only "social" services via a transnational firm. She has, for instance, been flown business class to the great cities of the world to act as a companion at high-society events. Some informants believe they need the money they earn to support themselves, others do not. Some sell sexual services occasionally, sporadically, or combine the sale of sexual services with other occupations, studies, or (sickness) benefits, while others see it as their main source of income. One female informant with experience of prostitution reports that only a few people see the escort business as their main occupation and that the majority consider it a second job/hobby that helps make ends meet. She considers "full-time" to be at least a couple of dates with clients three days a week, depending on the price level, which she believes is possible only in the urban regions. The varying conditions are also reflected in prices and opportunities to select among clients, etc. Pricing may vary with factors such as the extent of the person's network, arena, ethnic profile, age, socioeconomic status and the particular service [17]. One seller of sexual services in central Sweden reports that SEK 2,500 per hour plus/minus SEK 500 is the going rate for escorts in Sweden. Another woman who sells sexual services from her own premises in Göteborg says she charges SEK 1,200-1,500 for intercourse and SEK 700 for sexual massage (see also the Web Research Study).

The varying statuses of women in prostitution are reflected in the range of price classes and client categories. One informant, a middle-aged, Swedish-born seller of sexual services, accepts only affluent clients and advance bookings from abroad (business travellers, etc.). She says that other sellers of sexual services, such as Eastern European women, are willing to take immediate bookings at a cheaper rate. The same informant also says that the range of clients available in small towns is different from those available in large cities, and that they have to travel a great deal to make enough money. The business is more anonymous in Stockholm.

A number of informants with experience of prostitution formerly worked in the healthcare system, industry, etc. They report that they prefer to sell sexual services, since they do not find the work as arduous, physically demanding, stressful, low-paid, and the hours are not as inconvenient. Various categories of sellers of sexual services do not necessarily identify themselves as part of a common industry, and their paths may never cross. Some prefer to call themselves "sex workers," others "prostitutes," others "escorts," and a few use words like "whore" or "good-time girl." One

female informant calls her business "a high-class escort service combined with household services in the local community and at hotels elsewhere in Sweden." Another prostitute (self-identification) informant does not see prostitution in terms of market-based services. She thinks prostitution cannot be distinguished from private life in the same way one can with a traditional job, because it affects people's personal lives in ways that a job cannot. For that reason, nor can prostitution be regarded as a job.

Women with experience of prostitution interviewed for this study thus report varied conditions for people in different positions in the sex market: they say you cannot paint everyone with the same brush. For instance, they believe certain actors who receive a great deal of media attention generalise about the harmful impact of prostitutions. According to these sellers of sexual services, stigmatisation is a strong contributory factor to any unhappiness or depression among women in prostitution. Some informants emphasise that people who are actively engaged in prostitution have entirely different perspectives than do those who have stopped selling sexual services. Many informants believe that only strong and balanced individuals can handle prostitution and that it may not be a suitable activity for everybody.

According to most of our interviews, most sellers and buyers of sexual services are opposed to human trafficking and minors in the sex trade. On the other hand, few of the informants who are engaged in prostitution object to adults who choose to sell sexual services. They believe this should be distinguished from discussions about human trafficking and minors in the sex trade. But one informant, a former prostitute (self-identification), believes the opposite, that prostitution is always harmful and that there are clear links between prostitution and human trafficking.

Women informants with experience of prostitution report varying motivations for selling sex. One reported that she "prostituted herself" (her words) directly as a result of a traumatic experience. Some report that they sell sexual services/escort services as a hobby alongside a job or studies, and that they reap sexual satisfaction in return, over and above the financial rewards. Others believe that prostitution cannot possibly be an expression of sexuality and that it is impossible to become sexually aroused when selling sexual services. The two informants who also use heroin stated that they sold sexual services to get money for drugs. One individual regards her sale of sexual services as a political act.

Men who sell sexual services

In conjunction with the previous studies, experience, knowledge and information was largely unavailable among the actors involved regarding *men* who sell sexual services. The preceding overview could have been enriched if we had had the opportunity to talk to men engaged in prostitution. As reported in the section on methodology, various attempts were made, but without success. Only a few relevant Swedish studies have been done [e.g. 21, 22]. Considering that we have encountered about 50 men who sell sexual services via the Web (see Web Research Study), more knowledge about this group would obviously be useful. Our survey study

shows that neither municipalities nor police districts focus on men who sell sexual services, which most likely contributes to the invisibility of this group. All prostitution centres/teams in Sweden focus on *women* in prostitution – not men, aside perhaps from isolated projects that concerned men who sell sexual services.[6] Generally speaking, police and prostitution teams say that they know men sell sex, but they lack knowledge about it; the interview responses concerning the subject are based largely on hearsay. Informants often presume that sex markets in which men are both the sellers and buyers of sexual services are different. For instance, an informant at the Stockholm Prostitution Centre says that they have not studied "gay sites" on the Web (as opposed to websites directed at heterosexual men, where they have encountered a number of "shemales"), but that there may be a "different culture" among men who define themselves as gay. KAST in Göteborg speculates that male-to-male prostitution is more similar to the dating market than to the sex-for-pay market. They believe there are two images of homosexual prostitution: on the one hand, that there is no difference compared to heterosexual prostitution and on the other hand that homosexual men – in line with the myth of the stronger male sex drive – are more interested in sex and casual relationships.

A representative of the Göteborg Police is aware that men are engaged in prostitution via the Web and on the street, and that male/female couples sell sexual services to men, women, or other couples. Another informant in Göteborg says that men have their own street corner in the city where they sell sexual services and that certain male sellers of sexual services have moved their business to Hisingen. This informant says he has only observed men who sell sexual services to men, but that men who sell sexual services to women can be found at dance halls, where everybody knows that "it's not free if you go home with someone." A representative of the Stockholm Prostitution Centre reports that the men engaged in prostitution she has encountered have worked at bordellos, had their own business in an apartment, sold sexual services at video clubs or in connection with striptease and pornography, but that they do not see many men in street prostitution. Another informant from the Stockholm Prostitution Centre says that male prostitution takes place at the central station and via the Web and video clubs.

Most actors knowledgeable about the online sex market report that there are men who sell sexual services in this arena, which is also confirmed by our Web Research Study. One woman engaged in prostitution who is a busy operator on the Web says for instance that there are more men who sell sexual services than is commonly believed and that there are several in the forums she frequents. She observes that the average age among male sellers of sexual services is younger than among females, age 25-30, and that men selling sex online present themselves as educated and personable. A representative of the Stockholm Prostitution Centre believes that the percentage of men engaged in prostitution is increasing on the street and online, but adds that demand may have not have risen, but only become more apparent.

[6] However, there are organisations that deal with men as buyers of sexual services.

With regard to men and boys marketed within human trafficking for sexual exploitation, the National Criminal Investigation Department reports that they have encountered no such cases in Sweden. One police informant reports that Europol has observed that boys are marketed for sexual purposes to "Arab countries" rather than Europe. The trafficking police in Göteborg report that men/boys are marketed within human trafficking for purposes other than sex.

According to certain actors (two informants, one a seller of sexual services and the other a former net pimp), Sweden is a poor market for men who sell sexual services to women: men have a greater chance of obtaining female clients abroad. As one former woman prostitute (self-identification) puts it: "guys *pay* – nobody (female) pays to be with them." Another informant had been invited by a male sex worker to sell sexual services together. This "colleague" was paid SEK 30,000 to 40,000 for a weekend, while she is paid SEK 1,000 per half hour.

The incidence of male addicts who sell sexual services is another phenomenon that is hard to pin down. In the previous study [2], the Stockholm prostitution team reported that about 20 men were active in prostitution and that they were known due to addiction, homelessness or mental illness. The Stockholm Prostitution Centre now reports that 10% of their clients are men who sell sexual services, down from the peak figure of 25%. A representative of the Malmö Needle Exchange Project reports that there are men who use heroin and sell sexual services, but that this is not spoken of openly because heroin users are so "macho." One actor in Göteborg believes it is common that men who sell sexual services do so due to drug abuse. He is aware of a few men who have sold sexual services to men in the public toilets in a park (*Bältesspännarparken*) and says that "you can deal with almost anything if you are dependent on drugs." He adds that a sense of shame is associated to a greater degree with male prostitution and that it does not take place in "such pleasant settings" as female prostitution.

The Göteborg prostitution team was in contact with about 10 or 15 transsexual (former men) sex workers per year in the 1990s. They now observe fewer of these individuals in street prostitution, and none at all in recent years (unlike the Västra Götaland Police, who reported in the survey that they have observed more of these individuals). A representative of the prostitution team believes that transsexual sellers of sexual services are specifically driven by identity issues, and speculates that nowadays such issues are played out online.

It would have been useful to compare conditions and patterns among women, men, transsexuals, and transvestites who sell sexual services to various target clientele, but unfortunately we did not have such a basis for this study. One woman with personal experience of prostitution believes that it would have been another matter entirely to ask for money and set boundaries vis-à-vis a female client compared to a male client, where the balance of power is different. She also believes the balance of power between male sellers of sexual services and male clients is utterly different (more equal) than between women who sell sex and male clients.

Youth in prostitution

We sent queries to 15 youth clinics in Sweden (randomly selected from among the clinics that have a social worker/counsellor on staff) in order to investigate the incidence of prostitution among youth. We asked whether the clinic had become aware in the last year of adolescents/youth in prostitution, for instance via the Web, or if they had other related experience. Only two clinics responded. One stated that prostitution should be discussed more often at the clinic. The staff have run into borderline cases in which youth had made contact with men online who wanted sex, as well as had had sex in front of a webcam, for which they were paid with pay-as-you-go mobile phone cards. That clinic reports contact with 5-10 young people a month with experience of prostitution. The other youth clinic that responded reported that they have had no direct cases of prostitution in recent years, but that prostitution occurs in the municipality.

We also contacted the National Board of Institutional Care, which interviewed adolescents in special approved homes for youth. The 791 interviews conducted in 2005 show that 89% answered no when asked whether they had ever had sex in exchange for money, drugs, alcohol, a place to stay, etc. The question was not relevant for 4% and 2% declined to answer the question. Of the remaining 5% (34 adolescents), 23 girls and 11 boys answered that it had happened once on average.

Attitudes among youth toward selling sex in exchange for compensation/money seem to have become less negative, according to a survey study, *Ungdomars sexualitet – attityder och erfarenheter ("Adolescent Sexuality – Attitudes and experiences")* [23]. Of 4,343 young people surveyed, 60 (23 girls and 37 boys) answered yes when asked whether they had offered or sold sex in exchange for compensation/money. That corresponds to 1.4% of respondents: 1% of the girls and 1.8% of the boys.

Worries about adolescents in the grey zones of prostitution are also found in our interview material. Informants from the police and prostitution teams generally believe that the younger the seller of sexual services, the more popular, and the more human traffickers can charge. According to one representative of the Göteborg prostitution team, certain risks related to technological developments apply to youth in particular, such as webcams, online chats, mobile phones and "virtual destructive sex," and that young people can be paid for sex by topping up their mobile phone accounts. The Stockholm Prostitution Centre reports that there are special youth sites on the Web where pictures can be taken and posted in pornography and prostitution contexts, such as *hard.se*, *porrig.se* and *snyggast.se*.

According to representatives of the Stockholm Prostitution Centre, the age distribution in various sectors of the sex market is such that trafficked women are often younger and the average age on the net is 20-25 (those under 18 are deleted on various websites). The average age is highest among the people engaged in street prostitution. Another representative of the Stockholm Prostitution Centre says that they seldom see minors in street prostitution and when it does occur, the prostitutes are teenage runaways. In addition, "everyone" reacts if a minor is encountered – according to the

informant, no one wants to see them on the street – other than prostitution clients.

Informants from the Göteborg Police trafficking unit report that the youngest persons they have seen in the sex trade is 16 years, while the Stockholm police trafficking unit have encountered girls as young as 15.

The age issue is also relevant with regard to *buyers* of sexual services. According to one informant (seller of sexual services), there has been an increase in e-mail from younger boys/men who are presumptive clients.

Buyers of sexual services

Interviews with sellers and buyers of sexual services and others show that it is important to remember that prostitution clients are also heterogeneous actors whose social, financial and living conditions vary. In the previous study as well, informants reported that prostitution clients "run the gamut" [2, 18]. When we have asked women engaged in prostitution and others about people who buy sexual services, we have often been told that clients cannot be categorised into any particular type. For instance, one informant (seller of sexual services) in this study said that clients may be men who are busily climbing the career ladder, men who have chosen not to have conventional relationships, men with small children, or older married men with dormant sex lives. Informants with experience of prostitution describe clients as everything from "billionaires, nobility and businessmen to 'average Joes' and working men to 'rich old ladies'." However, KAST reports that they have observed no female clients on the Web [17].

As a group, the views of clients are seldom heard in Swedish debate, perhaps in part because the purchase of sex has been criminalised. As one informant at the Stockholm Prostitution Centre puts it: "There are no activists openly calling for the legalisation of their sex purchases." One informant, a former prostitute (self-identification) believes that it benefits clients if "Johns who haven't got the picture" are silenced, leading to prostitution being cast in a favourable light. Conversely, KAST in Malmö believes that clients are demonised in public discussions when they are characterised as driven by contempt for women. Representatives of KAST in Göteborg also state that the balance of power between clients and sellers of sexual services is not as clear-cut as it might seem: the buyer does not always have the upper hand and the seller may also be in the power position, or the balance of power may vary.

There are examples in various online forums of clients who argue that purchases of sex should be normalised in relation to a social climate that condemns the phenomenon. According to KAST in Malmö, posters in these forums insist that it is more ethically acceptable to buy sex on the Web than on the street (and from women of non-Swedish origin). In agreement with British sociologist Julia O'Connell Davidson [6], representatives of KAST in Malmö note the connections between purchases of sex and brotherhood (male social bonding), which they have observed during their studies of client forums on the Web [24].

Representatives of KAST in Göteborg report that the clients who approach them do so because they do not feel morally comfortable with

buying sexual services, that the purchase of sex does not provide the expected relief of anxiety, or because a partner has demanded that they stop buying sex. Common for all the KAST offices is that they come into contact mainly with heterosexual men. A few men who have purchased sexual services from men, but no women thus far have sought help from KAST in Malmö due to problems connected with purchasing sex.

Clients are usually careful to note in interviews and online forums (see Web Research Study) that they would never consider buying sex from women who are victims of human trafficking. But an informant from the Göteborg police trafficking unit avers that prostitution clients are often "naive, stupid and blind": they simply do not see that Russian women for instance have come to Sweden involuntarily and they are unaware that they are supporting criminal organisations.

Internationalisation, migration and human trafficking

Ethnicity is a central factor in the marketing, demand and purchase of sexual services [17, 25].[7] The sex trade is a global/transnational phenomenon that crosses national borders [7, 25, 26, 27, 28]. The sex trade is also regional and local; certain regions in Sweden are points of destination and origin for sellers and buyers of sexual services to and from specific regions, and informants report that there is a local sex trade in certain neighbourhoods. Swedish women and men also participate in sex tourism. One informant from the organisation *Cooperation Against Human Trafficking* points out that greater geographic mobility among Swedes could result in many young people making their first purchase of sex abroad. Sex tourism may be defined here as when tourists (regardless of gender) use their economic power (whether or not they are aware of it and intend to do so) for sexual interaction with the local population, often in economically disadvantaged regions [6].

According to a representative of the Stockholm Prostitution Centre and the National Criminal Investigation Department's latest report [29], sellers of sexual services from abroad can now be ordered via the Web. Escort businesses based abroad, such as in the United Kingdom or Italy, that send Swedish escorts abroad or arrange escorts for travel to Sweden are another manifestation of the transnational organisation of the sex trade. We also found examples of this in our Web Research Study. According to one informant who works as an escort for a company based abroad, such transnational actors advertise in forums for businessmen, such as the International Herald Tribune. An informant at the National Criminal Investigation Department reports that human trafficking is also organised via the Web and women in prostitution are chauffeured to the client or sold indoors, because there is greater risk of being apprehended on the street.

When actors use terms like human trafficking and human smuggling, they may, as mentioned, have different definitions of these phenomena and base

[7] Ethnicity is defined here as a social construction, which, like skin colour and migration history, is linked to several associations in this context.

their actions on different perspectives and methods [12, 20]. There are for instance people who believe that prostitution and human trafficking are synonymous, both with regard to organisation and content [13]. There is a wide variety of experiences of transnational prostitution and human trafficking for sexual exploitation [17]. Actors interviewed for this study remark that human trafficking for sexual purposes may have always existed, but the problem was not talked about in the same way until recently. One representative of the prostitution team in Göteborg remembers that many Latin Americans came to Sweden in the 1980s and 1990s who were engaged in street prostitution. Human trafficking/smuggling or migration in connection with sale of sexual services may not, in other words, be new phenomena, even though the terms have only recently become common. As far back as the 19th century, there was a great deal of talk about "white slavery," a phenomenon in which English women – or so it was claimed – were abducted and sold for sexual exploitation abroad [30].

Another informant who worked in the Göteborg prostitution team in the 1980s and 1990s says that sellers of sexual services of foreign origin have always been over-represented, but that the nationalities involved change. For instance, a number of actors with many years of experience of street prostitution in Göteborg report that there have been about 20 Brazilian women who have been selling sexual services in the city for about 20 years. According to one of these informants, the Brazilian women originally ended up in Sweden because they met a Swedish man or have relatives in Sweden. They have supported themselves in a variety of ways in addition to selling sexual services.

Traffic crosses national borders in many directions in a transnational sex market in the Malmö region [19]. Clients travel from Sweden to buy sexual services in Copenhagen, but clients also come to Sweden. One informant (seller of sexual services) working in Malmö relates that German tourists buy sexual services in Malmö during the summers.

A representative of the prostitution team in Malmö reports that there about 10 women from Sweden who sell sexual services in Copenhagen. A woman engaged in prostitution who lives in the Malmö region relates that she and five Swedish girlfriends sell sexual services by working for instance as escorts in Copenhagen and Helsingör.

The transnational nature of the sex market in Malmö is also reflected on the Web, where for instance there is a Danish prostitution site with a sub-forum for Swedish clients [17].

Countries of origin

Informants from the police believe that the fall of the Soviet Union and enlargement of the EU are the primary factors that have influenced prostitution and human trafficking in Sweden since the 1990s. A representative from the National Criminal Investigation Department reports that they observed an increase in prostitution in conjunction with EU enlargement. Some informants (women engaged in prostitution) also mention greater competition from Eastern European women, whom they say are younger and charge less. The most common countries of origin of sellers

of sexual services /victims of human trafficking are according to an informant from the National Criminal Investigation Department Estonia, Russia and Poland. There are also a few sex workers from Romania, Slovakia, Kosovo and Macedonia. This informant says that migration in connection with the sex trade usually takes place within Europe, but that some sellers of sexual services also come from Thailand. Sweden is described by an informant from the police as a transit country from the Baltic countries and Russia en route to Norway or the rest of Europe, in some cases also from Germany and Denmark en route to Norway. Informants state that human trafficking is carried out via organised networks between Sweden and another country.

Northern Sweden

Joint prostitution initiatives are ongoing in the northern regions of Sweden that involve actors including the police and social services in Russia, Finland, Norway, and the Norrbotten and Västerbotten regions of northern Sweden. One informant in Umeå reports that it is becoming increasingly common for Swedish men to travel to Finland or other countries and buy sexual services and for migrant sellers of sexual services to come to the region. The phenomenon is constantly changing. There used to be frequent ferry traffic from Umeå to strip clubs in Vasa, Finland, but several informants report that the ferries to Finland are no longer viable for the sex trade.

One informant from the Umeå Police reports that Russian women who sell sex may come singly or in pairs, in which case they work at bars and hotels in the region and may post advertisements. He mentions that it is also conceivable that clients cross borders and "bring someone home" for sexual services. However, suspicions of women in prostitution of migrant origin usually come to the knowledge of the police only in connection with violent crime.

Another group of informants from the Umeå Police report that they have received information that prostitution is occurring at restaurants and pubs, where women of foreign origin are suspected of selling sexual services. As well, one man is suspected of bringing Thai women to Sweden on tourist visas to sell sexual services. We were also told that the police are watching men who travel to the Baltic countries and Thailand.

They also report that there are ads on *Sekreterarakademin* about women who work coastal towns. There are many clients on the net interested in finding women in this region but according to the informants, female sellers of sexual services believe the customer base is too small.

The informant from the women's shelter in Luleå mentions "imported" women from Thailand, Sri Lanka and Iran who "marry someone" and are later "resold." In this informant's estimation, about half the women who come to the women's shelter are of migrant origin and the shelter encounters about 10 cases of human trafficking a year.

As in Umeå, the Luleå Police mention "grey zones" where men invite Russian women to Sweden or travel to Thailand or Stockholm to buy sexual services. The Luleå Police also speculate that there is some organised

transport of men who travel to Russia and the Baltic countries to buy sexual services, but add that there is no known organised transport of women in prostitution to Luleå.

Southern Sweden

In the preceding study, the prostitution teams estimated that sellers of sexual services of migrant origin were engaged in street prostitution in Stockholm (percentage unknown), Göteborg (30-40%) and Malmö (about 25%). A representative of the Göteborg prostitution team now reports that one or two women of migrant origin are seen in street prostitution, primarily "black women" (nationality unclear) or Polish women. An informant from the Göteborg Police trafficking unit reports a recent increase in black women in prostitution and that five or six women engaged in prostitution arrived relatively recently from Nigeria, via Italy. The Göteborg police relate that these women from abroad come in waves. Another informant from Göteborg says a group of Estonian women has arrived and that they have been engaged in prostitution for a few months.

Several informants in Malmö and one representative of the police report that Romany women are selling sexual services in the region. Informants from the Stockholm Prostitution Centre report an increase in recent years of migrant women from South America, Thailand, the former Eastern Bloc (Romania, Bulgaria, Belarus, Ukraine) and "black women" (nationality not stated) who are engaged in street prostitution. Sellers of sexual services from the Baltic countries are, according to the Prostitution Centre, representatives of the Russian minority and do not have EU passports. These informants report that Latvia (previously a country of origin) has also become a destination country for Russian women who sell sexual services (see Polyakova [27] for a discussion of EU membership and positions in prostitution). The informants believe that sex workers whose origins are defined as other than ethnic Swedish are more difficult for the prostitution teams to reach; they believe this is because these individuals are warier of the authorities. Since summer 2006, the Stockholm Prostitution Centre has also noticed that trafficked women from Eastern Europe are to a greater extent being chauffeured to the street by pimps. According to information provided, Stockholm is the biggest market for the sex trade from Estonia, Russia, Poland and Rumania.

Women who were trafficked or came to the Skåne region voluntarily are mainly from Rumania, Poland and Slovakia, according to the Malmö Police trafficking unit.

An informant from the Göteborg prostitution team reports that more migrant sellers of sexual services come to Göteborg from the southeast (Kosovo, Moldavia, Poland) than from the Baltic countries and Russia. According to a representative of the Göteborg Police, human trafficking is organised by the Russian and Kosovan mafias, which employ financial blackmail rather than violence: "You cannot sell a girl who has been beaten to a pulp."

When discussing prostitution and "grey zones" to prostitution in connection with various kinds of migration, as we have done in the

foregoing section, it is important to note that there are risks of exaggerated suspicion of people of foreign origin.

Asking questions about whether and how foreign origin co-varies with conditions in the sex market also presents a variety of problems. Informants also note that the definition of "Swedishness" is arbitrary. Is someone who came to Sweden ten years ago from Finland, Russia or Latvia considered Swedish? Is a Pole who has lived in Sweden for forty years considered foreign? Regardless, the Swedish sex market is a component of internationalisation and globalisation.

Perspectives on the law against purchasing sexual services

We have determined in previous reports [1, 2] that prostitution is a multifaceted phenomenon that is affected by several interacting factors. No causal connections can be proven between legislation and changes in prostitution. It is also difficult to identify the impacts of legislation because social processes are affected by several complex and situational factors.

Among informants, opinions vary on how (or indeed, whether at all) the law against purchasing sexual services has impacted prostitution in Sweden. Some believe it is an indispensable instrument in the fight against prostitution and human trafficking, while others believe the impacts are mainly harmful. Women active in prostitution tend to be opposed to the law, according to one informant from the Malmö prostitution team, while former sellers of sexual services tend to support it. In the interviews, both the prostitution team and the Needle Exchange Project in Malmö mention the adverse impacts of the law, while representatives of the Stockholm Prostitution Centre focus on the positive consequences. Informants from the Stockholm Prostitution Centre compare the law to the law against corporal punishment of children and believe the law "empowers the women" because it expresses the social judgment that buying sexual services is wrong.

Beliefs about the impacts

As shown in the 1998-99 [1] by the National Board of Health and Welfare as well as the interviews in this study, street prostitution declined or disappeared in all three major cities (Malmö, Göteborg, Stockholm) immediately after the law against purchasing sexual services was enacted but later returned, albeit on a lesser scale. According to one informant in Göteborg, those who had the opportunity (and access to the Web, mobile phones, hotels and help from taxi drivers) left street prostitution when the law was passed, while those who remained were "at the bottom of the totem pole" – about 30 women whose lives were "in an uproar" for various reasons. This informant has observed that a few new individuals have appeared in street prostitution since the law took effect, but they are usually gone very quickly after exchanging phone numbers with potential clients. The informant relates that female secondary school students used to show up on the street in Göteborg in May-June after the end of the school year. He believes the law has reduced this and other types of new recruitment of

young women, but has opened a door to pimps of foreign women who are in Sweden temporarily. While, according to the same informant, Swedish-born women do not remain in street prostitution for long nowadays, migrant women from e.g., Poland, tend to linger.

A representative of the Göteborg prostitution team says that the customer base (potential clients) has not changed since the law took effect, but that the law has had an impact on attitudes. For that reason, they observe less "cruising" by potential clients on the streets now compared to the situation in the mid 1990s. An informant from KAST in Göteborg believes that the law has at least temporarily impeded the establishment of human trafficking. The law acts as a barrier and an additional threshold, but this may be sustainable only while the law is new. The same informant believes the law against purchasing sexual services may prevent new recruitment to prostitution, but has only marginal impact on prostitution clients. An informant from the National Criminal Investigation Department disagrees and is convinced that without the law, the situation in Sweden would be the same as in Norway, where the number of foreign women engaged in prostitution has multiplied many times over. Since 2004, the number of Nigerian women in street prostitution in Oslo has increased and they are now the largest group of migrant sellers of sexual services. Hundreds of women have arrived within only a few months, often via Spain or Italy [31]. The informant from the National Criminal Investigation Department believes the law has spared Sweden from a great deal of prostitution and that it is an effective instrument in the fight against prostitution.

An informant from the Göteborg Police says it is difficult to determine the impacts of the law or whether it has decreased the number of people selling sexual services. One effect this individual nevertheless reports is that pimps believe the customer base is poor and that it is more difficult to advertise in Sweden. One informant (seller of sexual services) claims that the law has led more sellers and buyers of sexual services from Sweden to go to Denmark, but a representative of the Göteborg prostitution team does not believe the law has generally resulted in the sex market moving abroad.

Promoters, pimps, profiteers and other middlemen

The previous studies [2] reported that there are people connected to prostitution who profit directly or indirectly by trade in sexual services: pimps (thought to be uncommon in Sweden) as well as taxi drivers, property owners, hotel proprietors, hotel and restaurant workers, people who help others produce websites, owners of technology, and so on ("promoters").

According to one informant in Göteborg, there are probably more pimps involved in prostitution nowadays. The informant says the law against purchasing sexual services has resulted in a larger role and market for pimps, since prostitution cannot take place as openly.

A woman engaged in indoor prostitution in Göteborg relates that when the law took effect in 1999, about ten women engaged in prostitution from various Eastern European countries approached her business because they wanted to hide indoors. Informants from the Stockholm Prostitution Centre also mention that the law has opened the door to middlemen (pimps),

because it has become more difficult for sellers and buyers of sexual services to make direct contact with one another. Informants believe that pimps are mainly connected to "foreign" women in prostitution and that "Swedish" women would not accept such an arrangement.

Attitudes for and against

Several informants from the Stockholm Prostitution Centre believe the law against purchasing sexual services makes sense because it focuses on demand as the fundamental problem. A representative of the Stockholm prostitution team disagrees with those who believe the law has made things worse for women engaged in prostitution and believes that, on the contrary, they are taken more seriously as victims of battery, etc. However, some of the sellers of sexual services we spoke to aver that they do not need the law in order to report battery and other abuse because there are already laws for that purpose. One informant believes the law has had adverse impact because clients are now afraid to report trafficking cases, because the clients themselves have committed a crime. On the other hand, the Göteborg Police for instance report that they have received anonymous tips from clients who suspect human trafficking. One woman engaged in prostitution in central Sweden believes that there may be fear among clients that makes it harder to use safe meeting places. Instead, the meeting places have become more out of the way, such as wooded areas, isolated stairwells and office premises, where clients do not risk discovery.

One informant involved in the Göteborg City Mission states that no one chooses a life of prostitution. In his view, women engaged in prostitution would rather have a different life – other than perhaps a few women in the escort and "high-class call-girl" business. For that reason, he avers that the fact that it is legal to sell sexual services does not help sellers of sexual services. According to him, many women engaged in prostitution – in the discussions that preceded the law – were in favour of criminalising the sale of sexual services because it would have given more people an avenue for leaving prostitution.

One informant, a former prostitute (self-identification) believes the law against purchasing sexual services may act as a deterrent and that this is a good thing; the more difficult it is to "prostitute yourself" the less common the phenomenon will become. She says that she would be furious if the authorities accepted prostitution and that to do so would be the height of contempt for humanity. According to her, people in prostitution (who sell sexual services) have the same rights as other citizens. There is nothing stopping them from starting a "massage business" and selling sexual services under such a cover. She also says that the "whore stigma" would not disappear if prostitution were legalised. However, there are also sellers of sexual services who criticise the law in terms of the creation of taboos, weakened legal protection and vague tax laws. According to one informant, these combined shortcomings generate fear among sellers of sexual services of involving the authorities, e.g. when they have been the victims of swindling or abuse (interview response via e-mail):

> About violence: of course there are crazies who look for girls they can get sex from for money. We are, so to speak, pretty much open targets. But overall there are few cases of violence or rape. However, I have been the victim of theft, rape – with elements of coercion and minor violence and swindling – in connection with working as an escort. Threats are rare, but it has happened. It is also common for people to try and find out our real identities, to put us in our place or show us how vulnerable we could be – this often feels a little scary and disturbing. The main problem is that we are afraid to contact the police about things like this, even if we are suffering from it. The fear is related to going through a trial where I, as a private person, am exposed to the public as a whore, plus you can become unpopular as an escort if you out clients to their families in a court trial. It might be better to put up with theft a few times, even if it's not right. The perceived weak legal protection is a problem. This is based on the fact that purchasing sex is illegal, and so there is a double taboo against it. Since the tax regulations are clear on one point – that people engaged in business as whores are supposed to generate tax revenues for the state – but unusually vague as to how that is supposed to happen, girls are also worried about involving the authorities when they are abused.

The same informant quoted above also believes it should be possible to register a company and pay tax in order to openly sell sexual services. The law against purchasing sexual services makes it difficult to keep books, receipts and customer registers. According to her, this may cause the worker to gain a bad reputation among clients and make doing business impossible. However, some informants from social services note that all women engaged in prostitution may not be willing to pay income tax, even if it was easier to do so.

As shown in the foregoing, opinions differ about the law against purchasing sexual services. Some actors support the law, while others believe it has had adverse impacts. There does not appear to be any direct connection between the opinions and what the informants represent. Some representatives of social services are for the law, others against – and the same applies to sellers of sexual services and other informants.

Public discussion and accepted beliefs

Prostitution is a subject of sometimes heated debate in Sweden, regularly recurring and with various overtones [32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37].

Virtually all women engaged in prostitution who were informants for this study (regardless of standpoint) perceive difficulties with being considered, heard, and correctly interpreted in public debate, which is also reported by sellers of sexual services in other interview-based studies [19, 35]. From various perspectives, the women engaged in prostitution we spoke to discuss what they consider misunderstanding among the public. Some believe there is a misconception that all prostitution is synonymous with trafficking, or that all sellers of sexual services are addicts or victims of some kind of

exploitation. In our interviews, some women engaged in prostitution emphasise that they are opposed to human trafficking but not prostitution, and that the two cannot be considered the same. Others criticise the notion that prostitution is ever voluntary and can be regarded like any other job. According to the latter, prostitution is instead comparable to rape or assault.

An informant who is a former prostitute (self-identification) expresses concern about the modern prostitution debate, which she feels is misleading and trivialises the inherent suffering of prostitution and the harm caused to people in prostitution. She believes that prostitutes who paint a rosy picture of prostitution have a vested interest in repressing the harm being done to them and in legitimising their life choices. She feels that voices critical to prostitution, those who say it is not good and should be combated, are not given enough credence in the debate. Other informants (sellers of sexual services) aver that, on the contrary, it is the favourable opinions and experiences related to prostitution that are censored and silenced.

Discussion of actors in sex markets often revolve around the labelling of women engaged in prostitution as victims. The informant above (the former self-identified prostitute who is critical of prostitution) believes the debate has swung in the other direction, that the burden of proving that she or he has been harmed is now on the individual with a history in prostitution. According to this informant, those who claimed that prostitution resulted in adverse experiences used to be accepted and supported without question. In her view, not being taken seriously is worse than being considered a victim.

A representative of the Göteborg Police trafficking unit relates that trafficked women may take offence at being depicted as victims by authorities and other actors. He says they do not want pity and emphasise that they have, at least in part, made a personal choice.

A seller of sexual services in the Göteborg area says that women engaged in prostitution come in for negative reactions in media and public debate when they say they are doing just fine and do not believe they have been exploited or consider themselves victims. She emphasises that not everyone suffers from prostitution and doubts whether there is a human being alive who has never been exploited in some way or some context.

Stereotypes of powerless, innocent victims (women who sell sex) and all-powerful perpetrators (men who buy sex) can, according to KAST in Göteborg, blind the public eye to people who do not fit the image. As a result, accepted beliefs help conceal certain phenomenon, such as women who buy sexual services or men who sell sexual services.

Talking about prostitution is taboo

Informants from social services believe prostitution is such a sensitive, taboo subject that professionals in social services, education, and therapeutic settings lack the capacity to identify or handle related issues (see also the survey section). Similar problems also emerged in the previous study [2]. Informants then reported that people with experience of prostitution had been in contact for years with social services, psychiatric care and other public agencies without any of these agencies becoming aware of the history

of prostitution. If the prostitution had become known, problems managing it would have ensued.

Representatives of KAST in Göteborg report that sex education teachers and therapists are frequently unequipped to deal with conversations about purchasing sex and similar themes. For instance, the family counselling service in Göteborg refers heterosexual couples to KAST because they feel unable to help in cases where the husband uses pornography and the couple is seeking treatment for the problem.

A representative of the Stockholm Prostitution Centre tells of problems that can arise when social services and the police lack the courage to acknowledge that underage boys are selling sexual services because it is a sensitive issue. Like other actors, representatives of KAST in Göteborg point out that stereotypes about who sells sex and who buys it blind people to the fact that boys and men sell sex too, not just people who are thought to fit the accepted image of the seller of sexual services.

Surveying prostitution online

Development and organisation of online prostitution

The database prepared for the study contains data about 299 unique URLs (website addresses) where people working in various parts of Sweden sell sexual services. Most are single-person sites. Four contain information about more than one individual – in one case, two women and in three cases, male/female couples. The Web Research Study found a total of 304 sellers of sexual services: 247 women and 57 men.

We might have found more sellers of sexual services if the data collection period had been longer or if we had collected the data during another time period. A survey of online prostitution limited to the Stockholm area [38] in the period of 1 March-31 August 2005 (six months) found 327 people, including 272 women and 55 men. (However, it is uncertain whether all of these individuals live in Stockholm. The survey may also have included people staying temporarily in Stockholm.) This survey thus found a somewhat higher number of sellers of sexual services in a more geographically limited area than ours did. A survey of the Öresund region found 65 different people who sold sexual services via the Web [19]. Data was collected for that study during an eight-month period in 2006.[8] On this basis, one can presume that we probably would have found information about more women and men engaged in prostitution if we had extended the data collection period. We say "probably" because certainty is impossible: the differences may also be due to interpretations, predefined limitations, and perceptions of that which "the eye sees."It may also be that there are actually fewer sellers of sexual services now than there were a year or two ago on the websites studied. People who sell sex may have moved their information to other sites that were not identified in our study. Individual websites and the World Wide Web as a whole are also changing. For instance, the portal that has been predominant in the field has implemented a payment procedure so that it now costs money to access information about sellers of sexual services. We have been told that this has caused the portal to lose ground in the competition with other websites.

Marketing

Some of the websites provide information about ethnicity or the like that gives some clues about the ethnic origins of the sellers of sexual services. "Asian," "Brazilian," "English," "Latin American," "natural-born Swedish,"

[8] Note that all three sub-studies – the earlier ones in Stockholm and the Öresund region and our Web Research Study – used similar methods, since they all consulted Glykol and are to that extent comparable.

"exotic," or variations on "of colour" and "dark-skinned" are examples. This type of information is found for both female and male sellers of sexual services. Among the women, there are also those who state other physical attributes that may be intended to indicate ethnic origin, such as "brunette" or "blonde." Sellers of sexual services may use this type of information for marketing purposes and clients may base their choices on such information. Ethnicity has been shown in various contexts to be a central factor in the preferences of both sellers and buyers of sexual services [14, 20, 25]. The language used in the advertisements is mainly Swedish. Although about one third of the ads are in English, it is nevertheless clear that the individuals are based in Sweden.

Most of the websites (271) provide information about the *age* of the advertisers. About 150 of the women state that they are between 18 and 30 and about 70 women say they are between 31 and 50. A few (three) state that they are older than 50. About 30 of the men state they are between 18 and 30 and 20 say they are between 31 and 50. Thus, most sellers of sexual services claim to be between 18 and 30. None claim to be under 18, but we do not know whether this reflects the truth of the situation. This age distribution is familiar from other studies of online prostitution. In the aforementioned survey of the Stockholm area, more than 80% (247 people) were in the 17-30 age group.[9] Most individuals in the Öresund survey were also in the age range of 21-30 [19].

Age can also be used for marketing purposes, as becomes apparent in discussions among sellers and buyers of sexual services in various forums. Some of the people here claim that some clients prefer older women, while others claim younger women have the advantage. Clients sometimes discuss the women's age in terms of "false advertising" – meaning that women claim to be younger than they really are.[10] [19]

Target clientele

Most of the websites – 271 – clearly indicate the preferred target clientele, and most are directed at men. About 20 are directed at men and women, while 15 or so are directed exclusively at women. About ten women offer sexual services to men and couples and a few women offer services to couples and other women. There are also a handful of examples of men and women who sell sexual services as a couple. These couples offer services to men, women and couples. About ten men state clearly that they are transsexuals and offer their services exclusively to men. About 25% of male sellers of sexual services are interested in other men as clients and ten offer their services to men, women and couples.

In some cases, there are also restrictions and limitations placed on the target clientele (also confirmed by our interview study). About 15 of the ads contain such restrictions regarding age. One ad states an upper age limit: the individual does not want clients older than 50. Others state a minimum age limit. Most commonly, sellers of sexual services do not want clients under

[9] Only one individual claims to be under 18 – a 17-year-old male.

[10] However, we have not encountered similar discussions of age regarding men who sell sex.

30, but 18, 20, 25 and 40 are also mentioned as minimum ages. Age restrictions were also mentioned in the Öresund study, which included interviews with a few women who sell sexual services via the Web. Most of them preferred clients over 25 and referred to "maturity." According to these women, clients under 25 can be far too disrespectful and insecure. Another web research study from the same region contains similar data, with examples of women who prefer to date only clients older than 30: "Men over 30 know how to please and treat a woman" [24].

Yet another noticeable restriction refers to the clients' ethnicity/background, which is confirmed by the people with personal experience of prostitution whom we interviewed. There are sellers of sexual services who clearly state in their ads that they accept only "Swedish men" as clients. Others show evidence of beliefs about men defined based on a certain ethnicity/nationality when they specify the clients whom they do not accept, such as "Muslim men," "Southern European men," and "Arabs." In Olsson's study of the Öresund region, a former escort, "Ellen," talks about this:

> Almost all escort girls set limits when it comes to origins. They avoid the Baltic countries, Arab countries and Africa. Slavic countries are often avoided too. They do this because the men have a tendency to want to bargain down the price and in many cases they are disrespectful to the women. Even though not everyone from these countries is unpleasant to deal with, a lot of them are, and escort girls who are concerned about their safety avoid these clients for that reason. [19]

Thus, supply and demand in sex markets is often organised according to ethnic stereotypes [20]. Such beliefs about men of varying background (primarily defined as "non-Swedish") exemplify how sex markets are structured; actors are ranked according to social status [7]. In other words: one person's sexual services may be for sale to social groups who are higher than that individual in social hierarchies, but not to those who are considered inferior. From the seller's side, this may also entail an attempt to minimise the risks, since they prefer to avoid clients perceived as disrespectful.

Geographical territory and place of abode

Prostitution arranged online seems to have a certain geographical distribution across Sweden. Most of the advertisements (276) state the territory of the person engaged in prostitution – that is, where the sexual service can be performed (which does not necessarily mean the seller's place of abode is in the area, see below). Stockholm is the stated territory in 159 ads, Göteborg in 33, Malmö in 16, Örebro in 5, and Västerås and Sundsvall in 4 each. Other Swedish cities named are Arvika, Borås, Eskilstuna, Gävle, Helsingborg, Jönköping, Kalmar, Karlstad, Landskrona, Linköping, Luleå, Lund, Motala, Norrköping, Nässjö, Oskarshamn, Skövde, Sundsvall, Tidaholm, Uddevalla, Umeå, Varberg, Vetlanda and Västervik.

Sellers of sexual services are occasionally very specific and state a certain city district as their territory, but a considerably larger area is more commonly stated, for instance a region like "Greater Skåne."

About thirty of the ads use the term "willing to travel," meaning that the person can travel to the desired location. It is not clear whether this refers to travel within Sweden or internationally, although about ten ads contain specific information about international travel. Destinations specified in the ads include Oslo, Copenhagen, Italy, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Denmark, France, Greece, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Spain, the Netherlands, the United States, Australia, Canada, Scandinavia, Europe, Paris and the Middle East.

A number of people state that they are active in several cities within a particular region. These ads usually state the dates upon which the seller will be in a particular city. There may be a calendar where the client can see the times, places and dates already booked and those that are available for booking. In some cases there are also detailed routes described, when the seller of sexual services may be in one city for a certain number of days before moving on to another, etc. Once the route is finished, it may begin again. Examples of such routes specified in advertisements include:

- Jönköping – Borås – Göteborg – Skövde – Tidaholm – Uddevalla – Nässjö – Vetlanda
- Copenhagen – Malmö – Lund
- Copenhagen – Malmö – Stockholm
- Norrköping - Jönköping – Kalmar – Västervik - Oskarshamn

Similar routes were found in the aforementioned survey of the Stockholm area. There was no information found there about routes that included Malmö, though, which the authors of the study questioned. The different results of this study versus the earlier Stockholm-based survey may be due in this respect to different search strategies, or sellers of sexual services whose territories extend to Malmö may have entered the market.

The foregoing examples were taken from advertisements by women engaged in prostitution. The men's routes are different: 29 of the men state they are willing to travel, including 25 who travel abroad.

The descriptive texts indicate that the actual encounter usually takes place at a hotel. Another variation is that the person engaged in prostitution comes to the client's home, but this seems to be relatively unusual. Going to the client or the client's hotel room is referred to as "outcall" in the ads, while seeing the client in the seller's own premises is referred to as "incall."

Most of the ads (279) also state the seller's place of abode, which usually coincides with the information about his or her territory. Accordingly, most of the people engaged in prostitution found in the Web Research Study live in Stockholm, followed by Göteborg and Malmö. A few mention Örebro or Västerås as their place of abode. Other Swedish cities mentioned are Borås, Eskilstuna, Gävle, Haninge, Halmstad, Helsingborg, Jönköping, Kalmar, Karlstad, Kiruna, Linköping, Luleå, Lund, Motala, Norrköping, Nässjö, Sundbyberg, Sundsvall, Säve, Torslanda, Uddevalla, Uppsala, Umeå, Varberg, Västerås and Växjö. Some state a region as their place of abode,

such as Skåne, Halland or Norrland (northern Sweden). Others state that they live outside Sweden, such as in Brazil, Ghent, London, Helsinki or "Southern Europe."

Condom use

There is no indication on 187 of the websites as to whether or not condoms must be used and thus, we know nothing about whether these individuals have any requirements concerning condoms and, if so, what they might be. Such information is provided on the remaining 112 sites. The majority, about 70 sites, state a condom requirement, but 40 state that condoms are not required for oral sex. There are also isolated examples where condoms are required at first or "sometimes." A few are willing to consider sexual contact without a condom if the client "has a health certificate." Of the women, 66 require condoms for all sexual contact, 4 offer the possibility of unprotected sexual services and 36 offer oral sex without a condom. Five of the men mention condom use. Two require condoms for all sexual contact, two offer oral sex without a condom and one states that he "sometimes" requires a condom.

The pattern is familiar from the other web studies we cited previously. There is no information at all on a large percentage of sites, many individuals state that condoms are required for all sexual contacts, while a relatively large percentage do not require condoms for oral sex.

Modes of contact

The websites provide various ways for buyers to contact sellers. There is a Web form provided on 18 sites, where the user (the client) can post a message directly on the Web page, which is later sent to the recipient (the seller). But the most common method seems to be to post one or more telephone numbers (206 sites) and/or an e-mail address (124 sites) that clients can use.

The sellers of sexual services who provide neither an e-mail address nor a phone number are mainly those who are members of a forum whose users must pay in advance to access contact details. On these sites, users are requested to send a text message to a certain number, and receive a code in reply. When the code is entered on the Web page, the user is moved to a website containing further details about the individual who is selling sexual services. E-mail addresses and/or phone numbers are also posted. This technique is now used, as previously mentioned, on one of the (formerly) most well-established prostitution-related websites, *Sekreterarakademin*.

Charging for information in this way is called *gated information services* – there is a gate and the user has to pay to access the information. The actors that own the information and the technology company that enables payment via text message commonly agree to a 50/50 revenue split. Using *Sekreterarakademien* as an example, this means the actor who owns the portal earns SEK 15 and the technology provider earns SEK 15 every time a user buys a seller's contact details. This is an example of how a direct actor (the owner of *Sekreterarakademien*) and an indirect actor (the technology

provider) make money on brokering contacts between sellers and buyers of sexual services.

Naming the activity

We have previously remarked on the types of services that are offered and the language used to inform the market. Regarding the activity, "escort" is a common term – it is used by 232 people when they describe what they do. But about forty people also use expressions that imply that the escort business is a minor aspect of their lives. One finds phrases like "hobby escort" (the most frequent) and expressions like "student," "moonlighting as," "sideline," "part-time," "in my spare time," "extra income," "second job," and "spare-time occupation," in connection with the word "escort" in the advertisements. Such expressions may be a sales argument, since they could be interpreted to mean that the seller enjoys offering sexual services (which some informants report is a popular aspect that appeals to clients), or a way for people engaged in prostitution to denote that they are not selling sex against their will, for example that they are not victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation. In certain cases, one could possibly likewise interpret expressions like "natural-born Swedish" that also occur when sellers describe their origins. It is often assumed that there is greater risk that women engaged in prostitution of migrant origin are selling sexual services involuntarily. There may be a confluence of the buyer's and seller's interests here. First, there may be reason for sellers to make it clear they are not victims and secondly, there seems to be a belief among clients that people who buy sex from victims of human trafficking are morally inferior clients [24]. Naturally, this discussion can be problematised if one also includes those who are victims of this kind of trafficking, or who are for other reasons involuntarily engaged in prostitution.

There is also another discourse wherein "the Other" is exotified and wherein foreign origins can be an inherent sales argument. As mentioned, ethnicity is in several ways traditionally central to sex markets, especially with regard to exotifying "the Other," both in Sweden and internationally [10, 15].

Technology

Of the sellers of sexual services in this study, 119 (106 women and 13 men) have their own websites. In their study period in spring 2003, Månsson and Söderlind [16] found between 80 and 100 Swedish women who ran their own websites for sexual services. No significant change in this respect can be seen between their study and ours.

As mentioned in the methodology section, there are different kinds of websites. Some are ordinary HTML pages – simple, static pages containing text and images. The information has to be placed on a server, and the site owner usually uses a Web hosting service, which may cost between SEK 30 and SEK 100 a month. There are both basic and very sophisticated websites – and a broad spectrum in between. A sophisticated website may include features like a guestbook, options to leave comments or rank the site, a

calendar, slide show, video, newsletter, audio files, video files, flash animations, etc. However, the plethora of technical solutions does not always determine the overall impression of the site, which also has a great deal to do with content and design. Some websites have an amateurish aesthetic, while others demonstrate a highly professional one. This may also have to do with the target clientele and preferences of the men and women engaged in prostitution.

Certain forums are clearly dominant: we find 54 of the 299 advertisements on "Stockholm City Escorts," 49 on "*Sekreterarakademin.*" There are 41 ads on "Sexyescorts," followed in descending order by "*Stockholmstjejer*" (35) "Razboards" (21), "Adultforums" (18), "Escorts Sweden" (14) and "Escorts Thumblogger" (14). The remaining 53 advertisements are scattered and fall within the "Other" category.

Remarks on development

As mentioned, Glykol (the firm commissioned to perform the Web research component of this study) have performed and assisted with several surveys of online prostitution [e.g. 16, 39]. This circumstance provides an opportunity to reflect over a few significant issues, as well as the development of prostitution over time.

Information and technology

One central aspect in this context is that *information about people who sell sexual services has a market value.* The value is in the organisation and compilation of the information – separate parts or pieces of the information may be free. But how this information is communicated changes over time. A 2000 study of online prostitution conducted by the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU) showed that there was a market for lists of telephone numbers of people who sold sexual services [39]. Marketing consisted of being able to offer "the most up-to-date phone list." Customers could get the phone list by e-mail after paying SEK 300 into a postal giro account. In a later study, the "Net Sex Project" at Göteborg University conducted in 2003 and 2004, sales of this kind of phone list had virtually ceased [16]. The phone lists were replaced by lists of websites. In turn, e-mail lists and newsletter lists were replaced by forums and other online "communities" – which is consistent with developments in information and communication technology otherwise.

The communities' finances are advertising-based. Here, the value lies in the user's attention. The advertiser may for example pay a fee for every visitor who clicks on an ad (the CPC model – *cost per click*), or pay a fixed fee for every 1,000 visitors who are shown the ad (the CPM model – *cost per mille*). Commission sales are a third variant: the website owner is paid a fixed percentage of the amount the visitor ultimately spends on the advertiser's website (the CPA model – *cost per acquisition*) [16]. In this way, the user's attention is converted to a monetary value.

From a broader perspective, one could thus say that the Web is having continuing impact on prostitution as it develops. The 2003/2004 Net Sex

Project observed a number of simple, proprietary and amateurish technical solutions. Webcams, then in their infancy, are one example. Today, webcam usage is well-developed and integrated in other technology. The development of payment systems has also had an impact on the sector. As outlined above, payment systems via mobile phone (text messaging) has achieved a breakthrough with regard to opportunities for actors to charge for information about people who sell sexual services.

Delimitation

The omnipresent *delimitation problem* is a key aspect that can be related to the development of prostitution. We have limited ourselves to surveying information on the Web about *physical sexual services that are sold for money*. However, grey zones abound in this area in the online world. One such are the websites where people interested in sexual contacts go to find likeminded individuals. There is a relatively large flow of advertisements on these sites, and in some cases they can be interpreted to mean that compensation is exchanged in connection with these contacts, although in most cases they probably have to do with non-market contacts. However, there are websites in the industry whose tone suggests that they may have to do with contacts approaching grey zones to prostitution. This was confirmed by our interviews with sellers of sexual services who posted veiled advertisements as potential "girlfriends" or "fuck buddies," since websites for prostitution are often rapidly taken down from the Web (see the interview section).

Another example of a grey zone is when people, mainly youth, display themselves in sexually charged situations on webcams in exchange for payment. As previously discussed – how should these types of services with sexual content in exchange for payment be regarded, since there is no physical contact?

Grooming

Various kinds of delimitation problems were discussed above. Yet another example, which we did not study, is the type of forum were adults seek contact with children and adolescents for sexual exploitation*, i.e., sexual grooming*. The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention has issued a report that takes a closer look at the problem. We present some of the results and arguments here that may be relevant in relation to our study.

Grooming refers to a process in which a perpetrator creates an opportunity to sexually molest a child by first winning the child's trust. This can be regarded as a process of manipulation that serves several purposes: to break down the victim's resistance to sexual acts, to create a situation or situations in which sexual molestation can occur and simultaneously make it less likely that the child will report the molestation to others. The expansion of the Web has generated new potential for this type of contact [40].

The National Council for Crime Prevention's study shows that it is far from unusual for adolescents age 14-15 (girls in particular) to report that they have been the target of contacts they perceive as sexual in nature from unknown individuals whom they know or believe to be adults. Most of these

contacts are made online. The study also showed that the adolescents who are probably the most at-risk for agreeing to meet adults with sexual intentions are probably a relatively vulnerable group of individuals. Among these adolescents there is for instance an over-representation of those who report patterns and behaviours of social interaction regarded as integral to a general tendency to take risks. Problems at home and in school, as well as bullying/victimisation and a history of crimes against property and persons are also considerably more common in this group.

The National Council for Crime Prevention study also included a Web study to more closely examine the nature of these online contacts. Among else, it showed that webcams have become extremely popular among men who use the Web to make contact with children for sexual exploitation. There are examples of adults who have attempted to persuade children to pose in front of the webcam or participate in webcam sex (examples of this were also found in police reports reviewed by the Council). Perhaps most relevant to our study is that there are also examples of how adults have attempted to meet adolescents offline – "in real life" – by offering money for sexual services. However, the sample of adolescents is not representative, so the extent of this practice cannot be estimated. One can however conclude that these types of contacts do occur, which is also illustrated in the police reports reviewed by the Council, which studied nine such reports in which the victims of crime were age 14-17 and seven out of nine were girls. The perpetrators were between 25 and 49 years of age. Slightly less than half the girls were victims of the same perpetrator (the "Alexandra Man"). In two cases, the contact was made via a dating/friendship site on the Web, in other cases via ordinary chat sites or communities.

There are other studies relevant to this issue. In a study by the Swedish Media Council [41], 15% of adolescents answered in a survey that they had been subjected to sexual talk online against their will, 10% said that it had happened "once or twice," and 76% said that it had never happened to them. Girls are the targets significantly more often (23%) than boys (7%). The percentage who have had someone talk about sex with them against their will has declined, however; in 2006, 76% answered "no" to the question compared to 63% in 2005.

Of the young people who responded to the survey, 9% have met a person in real life with whom they had previously had only online contact. That number rises to 16% among heavy internet users. [41]

Increasing numbers of children and adolescents are being confronted – voluntarily and involuntarily – with hardcore pornographic material on the Web. Several young people reported feeling worried, afraid and violated and wish that they had never run into this kind of material.

Young people are also personally offering sexual services over the net to a greater extent, both posing using webcams and direct contact [42]. "Amateurs" are prized within pornography, sometimes more so than the pros. This interest is finding new channels online through "do-it-yourself porn" – posting pictures of themselves or their partners, nude or engaged in sexual intercourse, on the net [43].

Mobility

The tremendous *mobility on the Web* is described in various contexts (see for instance the National Board of Health and Welfare's previous reports). Websites change constantly, new sites pop up, others are shut down, the technology advances, etc. The same individual may advertise on several different websites under different names. In this study, we were able to observe how advertisements on the portals change places and URL's from one day to the next. This may be a way to get the user – the client – to perceive greater "action" on the websites than is actually the case. In addition, it becomes more difficult for outsiders to monitor the area during a defined period, that is, to perform a survey in the way we have done. One gets the impression of vast, ungraspable fluidity that makes information about prostitution contacts difficult to pin down. One way of counteracting this perception may be to visit the setting regularly for an extended period, thus making it easier to determine whether new actors have in fact shown up, or whether the same actors are simply switching forums. The online environment can be perceived as insurmountable and unstructured primarily in the context of brief and occasional strikes.

Marketing

Certain *marketing strategies* can also be discerned among the advertisements we found. Competition among sellers creates a need for marketing. The individual's appearance and the services he or she offers are two key variables in the context, but there are others.

As mentioned, ethnicity is an attribute suggested to a greater or lesser degree in several of the advertisements we studied. This is a way for people engaged in prostitution to imply that they are unusual and exotic, but we have also regularly seen sellers who accentuate their "Swedishness." This may be an attempt to respond to client preferences for "Swedishness," or a way of allaying concerns that they may be victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Along the same lines, one can also see messages from sellers of sexual services that they are doing this of their own free will, that there is no coercion involved, that they do not sell sex full-time, but only as a hobby, etc.

Being "new to the game" also seems to be a positive attribute in this setting. We have seen examples of expressions like "new girl in Skåne" and "new and willing woman in Stockholm."

However, price competition is not as clear-cut. Prices for the same service can certainly vary somewhat, but the primary sales argument in these cases is that of offering a more expensive service. Selling a certain service more cheaply than others do in order to attract more clients does not, as far as we can see, occur on the Web for services in Sweden. What we can determine is that certain services are more expensive without a condom than they are if a condom is used.

What the sellers emphasise also seems to be what the buyers are interested in. A Norwegian study of buyers of sexual services analysed various discussions on the Web. That which prostitution clients discussed

most were the sellers' "bodies, services and ethnicity" [44]. Another frequent topic, which is connected to the foregoing, is whether or not the women - primarily the foreign women – have pimps. The study showed clearly that clients in the Norwegian study did not consider it good form to buy sex from people who are being coerced by pimps – coercion contradicts notions of an equal, market-based relationship.

Closing Remarks

The objective of this report was to survey the extent and development of prostitution in Sweden. This is the National Board of Health and Welfare's third study on the subject. As in the two previous studies, it was difficult to obtain a clear and unambiguous picture of the extent, that is, the number of people engaged in prostitution. Various voices in the empirical material speak from their respective horizons, activities and positions and the information is consequently sometimes contradictory.

It is also difficult to discern any clear trend of development: has the extent of prostitution increased or decreased? We cannot give any unambiguous answer to that question. At most, we can discern that street prostitution is slowly returning, after swiftly disappearing in the wake of the law against purchasing sexual services. But as said, that refers to street prostitution, which is the most obvious manifestation. With regard to increases and decreases in other areas of prostitution – the "hidden prostitution" – we are even less able to make any statements. There are voices who say boundaries have been moved and thresholds lowered, which could make it easier for people to both buy and sell sex. But we do not know whether or not more people are in fact selling or buying sex due to this. What we do know is that prostitution has developed along with society otherwise. New technology is leaving its mark on the modes of contact and organisation of prostitution – buyers and sellers of sexual services now make contact with each other by multifarious means.

The globalised world is also making a mark. Trade in women is taking place across borders, between regions and across continents. Women and men migrate; for some of these people, prostitution may become a necessary reality. Some women and men in prostitution may have the world as their territory. Buyers of sexual services are also globalised actors – this may for instance be a matter of shifting moral boundaries when one arrives in a new country, or of consuming ethnicity.

We also know that prostitution is multifaceted. That became apparent in the first study [1], when we said that it would be more accurate to talk about *prostitutions*. This analysis was expanded in the second study [2], where various pictures emerged of the people who sell and buy sex and the driving forces behind the practice. The picture was further problematised in this study. We show a variety of perspectives, experiences and conditions among the people who sell sex. The opinions of representatives of public authorities differ and they approach prostitution in various ways. Prostitution manifests variously in different regions, conditions vary between cities and small towns, are affected by proximity to other countries, etc.

The multifaceted world of prostitution – with varying conditions for the people involved and a mutable nature – is the most conspicuous in the three studies performed thus far. This also imposes demands on public actions

and interventions: are we equipped to respond to the various needs that may exist and manage the changes?

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Appendices

Quality Declaration on Statistical Methods

Introduction

The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare has been mandated to continually monitor the extent and development of prostitution in Sweden. One aspect of this study was to collect information about what Swedish municipalities and police districts know about prostitution. This quality declaration is a basis for assessing the quality of data collection.

Data collection

Data were collected via an electronic survey with two reminders. The questionnaire and an information letter were distributed by e-mail. The data were collected in spring 2007.

Statistical content

Population

The target populations for the study were municipalities/municipal districts in Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö and police districts nationwide.

Statistical measurements and reporting groups

Stated figures and percentages in the municipal study were computed by weighting them to the national level. A sample error arises because the estimates were based on a sample. This error can be estimated because the municipalities/municipal districts were randomly selected with known probabilities. A confidence interval is used to describe the sample error.

Reliability

Sample

The municipalities/municipal districts were divided into four strata and an unrestricted random sample was taken from each stratum; see Table A below.

Table A: Population and sample per stratum

Stratum	Stratum description	Number of municipalities/municipal districts in the population	Number of municipalities/districts in the sample
1	Stockholm	18	10
2	Göteborg	21	10
3	Malmö	10	5
4	Other cities	287	75
Country		336	100

Frame coverage

When assessing the quality of a study, it is important to observe how well the frame population coincides with the target population, that is, how well one has reached the objects one intended to measure. Data for this study were collected from municipalities/municipal districts and from police districts. Frame coverage is complete with regard to municipalities and police districts. However, certain municipalities may be divided into municipal districts based on various respects; in this study, municipal districts in Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö were asked to provide data separately, while other cities were asked to provide data for the entire municipality.

Measurement

Measurement errors may arise in connection with data collection. The sources of these errors vary and may include the measuring instrument, the information system and the method of collection. In order to reduce measurement errors, the questionnaire and letter were designed jointly by an expert on the subject, a survey designer and a statistician.

Non-response rate

Of the sample of 100 municipalities/municipal districts, 71 responded to the survey. One municipality notified us that they lack any basis to respond to the survey. Their decision that they were unable to answer the first question was accepted.

If the municipalities that constitute the non-response rate differ from the respondents, the picture will be distorted. One cannot be certain that the municipalities that constitute the non-response rate have the same knowledge about prostitution as the respondents.

Of 21 police districts, 17 responded, corresponding to a response rate of 81%.

Processing

Errors can also arise when the material is processed. Procedures and final verification of the results were used to prevent such errors.

The questionnaires sent to police districts were not statistically processed; only the number of response alternatives has been presented. The municipalities may have stated multiple response alternatives to questions 1, 3 and 6.