
PROSTITUTION CONTROL AND GLOBALISATION

Report from Pro Sentret's 20th anniversary conference
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PROSTITUTION CONTROL AND GLOBALISATION

The prostitution markets in Europe are becoming globalised grounds. As a result, current debates about the control of prostitution are concerned with the transnational character of prostitution today. What are the practical consequences of the different strategies for control?

In the year 2003 The Pro Centre celebrates its 20th anniversary. We wanted to dedicate our anniversary conference to some of the dilemmas related to prostitution control today.

The conference was generously sponsored by the Ministry of Justice through Norway's Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Women and Children. The plan of action is available on <http://odin.dep.no/jd/norsk/publ/handlingsplaner/012101-990364/>.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Trygve Wyller is a Professor at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Oslo. Among his research interests are professional ethics and theories of caring. He is particularly concerned with interpretations of marginalized groups in modernity.

Jo Doezema is a board member of the Network of Sex Work Projects, an international NGO dedicated to promoting the health and human rights of sex workers. She is a former sex worker and currently a PhD candidate at the Institute of Development studies, UK.

May-Len Skilbrei is a sociologist and senior researcher currently holding a post-doctorate fellowship at the Institute of Criminology and Sociology of Law at the University of Oslo. Her current research interest is Nordic prostitution policies.

Tatiana Sullini is Counter Trafficking Project Manager IOM Pristina, Kosovo. The IOM (International Organisation for Migration) is an intergovernmental

organisation dealing with migration management activities throughout the world.

Dag Stenvoll is a political scientist and a senior researcher at the Rokkan Centre (Rokkansenteret) in Bergen. His research interests include political aspects of sexuality, abortion and biotechnology.

Ursula Berge is a political scientist and was the political adviser to the Swedish Minister of Gender Equality when the law prohibiting the purchase of sexual services was prepared and passed in 1998. She is currently director of the Think Tank Agora.

Jan Visser is a PhD in sociology and has worked with prostitution issues for many years. He is currently at the Rode Draad, a Dutch NGO working for the interests of sex workers. Visser is particularly involved with questions related to the implementation of the new Dutch legislation.

A NOTE ABOUT THE EDITING

The articles published in this report are based on the speakers' written manuscripts. These may not correspond entirely to their contributions at the conference. Most of the articles include academic references. Contact information is included for each speaker.

We have been able to record and transcribe most of the debates. Due to technical problems with the recording equipment, we unfortunately lost the first interventions in the final debates. We are sorry for not being able to include these important contributions. The transcripts may contain mistakes due to misunderstanding and difficulties in the transcribing process, and we encourage the readers to bear this in mind. The debates are kept in the oral style in which they took place, but we have edited the interventions where it was necessary to make the message clearer.

OPENING WORDS

LIV JESSEN, DIRECTOR OF THE PRO CENTRE

Hello everybody. My name is Liv Jessen and I am the director of Pro Sentret. Since we are celebrating our 20th anniversary, we took the opportunity to invite you all to this conference.

Topics like prostitution and trafficking are not simple questions that can easily be solved. Historically, all societies have tried without any evident success. That goes for nations who follow a strict abolitionist policy – like Sweden who has banned the buying of sex or Thailand and Lithuania where prostitution as such is forbidden – as well as for societies with a more liberalistic approach, like Holland and Germany. They all strive to control the prostitution market.

This conference is meant to shed light on different paths to follow – or perhaps we will be able to find our own way? At least I must say that I believe that a fundamentalist answer to such difficult questions will lead us astray. Today I am more afraid of people who possess the whole truth about prostitution than I am of those who have the courage to doubt.

At any rate I am very pleased to see you all and especially pleased to welcome those of you in the audience who have experience in selling sex. It is seldom, at least in Scandinavia that those in question are particularly invited. *We* speak on behalf of *them* – they are the *others*. It is of the utmost importance that prostitutes or sex workers are given the opportunity to speak for themselves without being censured. We must stop objectifying them and make them subjects in their own life. I will start this day by quoting one of my favourite Norwegian philosophers, Hans Skjervheim. He says:

By objectifying the other person, you attack the other person`s freedom. You turn the other person into a fact, an object in your world. In that way you can gain control of the other person. The person who objectifies the other in the most sophisticated way is the master.

Here lies a huge future challenge.

I will now give the floor to the minister of Justice Mr. Dørum to open the conference.

MINISTER OF JUSTICE ODD EINAR DØRUM , THE LIBERAL PARTY (VENSTRE)

First of all I would like to congratulate Pro Sentret with the 20th Anniversary. As being an advocate for protection and dignity for people in prostitution, a centre for support and advice, and not least a distinct voice to be heard and listened to during the process of outlining the Norwegian Plan of Action against Trafficking in Women and Children, I think you deserve a great celebration.

The Norwegian Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Women and Children was launched on the 12th of February. The Action Plan contains measures designed both to prevent, detect and prosecute crimes linked to trafficking in women and children, and to protect and assist those who have been and are victims of such crimes.

Measures will be implemented on the basis of our obligations under international law and human rights principles, and the gender equality perspective. The special needs of children will be taken into account in all our efforts. In keeping with international goals, the Government will fight poverty and strengthen the rights of women and children through its development co-operation.

As a Minister for Justice and the Police, my special responsibility is to ensure that there is a legal basis as well as competence to effectively combat the traffickers and the organised crime groups and to ensure that these efforts are carried out in a way that attends properly to the protection of victims and their human rights. But it is also important to ensure that we, at the same time and on a more general level are able to protect members of the prostitution community against exploitation and violence from clients, pimps and organisers, whether they are trafficked or not.

I am pleased to be invited here to celebrate your anniversary with you, and I appreciate that you have chosen to use this opportunity to arrange a conference to discuss an issue that brings us into the heart of a complexity which challenge our requests for efficient methods in order to combat trafficking in women and minors; prostitution control.

I wish you all a successful conference.

SECTION 1: PROSTITUTES AS VICTIMS: THE PROBLEMS OF A CATEGORY

COURAGE AND INTEGRITY: PROSTITUTION AS A MODERN DILEMMA

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I

The title of this lecture is very impressive, but the intention is not so impressive. I want to say something about the conditions for civil rights and citizenship for women in prostitution in late modernity. This is an intention I probably share with many of you at this conference. But my contribution is this: You find the conditions for civil rights and citizenship first of all in specific forms of life, in a praxis where you listen to the other and take care of what she says to you. What this means I shall try to elaborate in this paper. But the point is: When you work for citizenship and civil rights you must pay strong attention to the forms of life. These are more important than the law and the juridical rights. This is the point, now the arguments can begin.

II.

The title of the latest book by the British-Polish professor in sociology Zygmunt Baumann is *Liquid Love*. It is not a book on prostitution. It is a book on modernity, as all the books by Baumann are books on modernity. But the title could have been on prostitution. *Liquid Love*. It is a title which triggers the fantasy and opens our minds. Love is moving around, it is not stabile, it is liquid, everywhere and anywhere. Is that good? Professor Baumann provokes us to think.

He means that liquid love is the metaphor of modernity. There is a liquid modernity, which in fact was the title of the second latest book from 2001, *Liquid modernity*. And there you have it all in one sentence. Given that Baumann is right, everything in modernity is moving and not solid. How are we then to find the foundation for citizenship and civil rights? Can there be anything basic in the liquidity of love?

Baumann argues like this: Among the most common tendencies in modernity is the tendency to not being linked to family and to life-long marriage. Love which once was the category for a permanent institution has become liquid. There are no really borders left. We are able to everything, but we are also prepared to experience everything. Modernity also means an increase in autonomy and this is positive. But the negative still remains. Love has become liquid.

In this way Baumann can be commented from the point of view of the Norwegian anthropologist Jorun Solheim who distinguishes between two ways of understanding the word border in modernity. The borders can be closed – with exclusion as result: You do not belong here. Or they can be totally open – with the experience of the unlimited as the opposite result. There is nothing to prevent me from invading you. Old borders mean exclusion. The new borderlessness means invasion. To use Solheims words on Baumann: Liquid love is the metaphor for modernity as the unlimited space. Everything is possible, you can move everywhere and everybody can come as close as they want to you. In other words: Prostitution is not first of all a question of morality. It is most of all a question of the temperature of modernity. How borderless do we allow it to be? The problem is like this once again: How are we to develop something solid as citizenship if the conditions are liquidity? In postmodernity invasion is a bigger problem than exclusion. How can we establish citizenship in a condition of liquidity? Or to say it more precise: What makes us so committed that we experience the good life and not the invading life?

III

I will answer by presenting a practical case. The struggle for civil rights for women in prostitution goes on in many parts of the world. One of these movements I have met twice in Porto Alegre in Southern Brazil. They call themselves NEP – Nucleo Estudios de Prostituaçô – that is: Center for the investigating of what it means to be a prostitute. One of the principal objects of the NEP is to contribute to the citizenship of the women working as prostitutes in the big city of Porto Alegre. When I met them they told us about the beginning of the movement which started as a reaction against the brutality of the city police. The women organized, received public support and succeeded in changing that brutality. Today they organize more than 2000 women in the city, they give courses, take part in public discussion and has become one of the institutions in the civil society of Porto Alegre.

The only non-prostitute in the NEP is their charismatic women leader who started the movement. All the others are either still active in prostitution or have worked until recently. Porto Alegre is a city with a strong political leftist movement. Some years ago the city government offered the NEP status as a NGO – non governmental organization. For the politician this was meant to be the important sign of official recognition. But for the women the result was conflict and big trouble. They were afraid of the consequences of becoming a NGO. The skeptical fraction won the battle. They did not want to be dependent on the official authorities. They wanted to continue their autonomy, being a totally independent movement run by prostitute women for prostitute women. What the NEP women were worried about when they were offered the status of an NGO was to lose this special status. This was a privileged position for them, not the position of a NGO.

IV

Both times when I visited the NEP I thought I was experiencing something most unique. This is the place where the victim language has no roots. There are no victims, there are only women claiming citizenship, like everyone else claims citizenship. Most confusing

for a theologian from the very moralistic Norway, very encouraging for a theologian looking for other concepts of people in the margins than the concept of victims. NEP rose on my top ten and have stayed there. Until I was preparing for this lecture and had to read something more. Now I understand that NEP is the opposite of unique. NEP is one of the most influencing ways women in prostitution now organizes themselves, especially in what we call the third world.

This is a tendency which I suppose that most of you present knows from professional experience and from reading. Large groups of women active in prostitution claim to be recognized as citizens and tax-payers. They go to work like everyone else, they have rights like everyone else, and they want to be treated like any other profession in the late modern civil society. What is most common to all this – they claim to be citizens and not victims. They want to change one kind of language with another kind of language.

Before answering the question it is important to register what kind of language the third world women do not want any more. It is the language of the Victorian feminists. This is one of the most difficult and paradoxical tradition I know. They are Victorian – that is morally and politically conservative. This is the tradition before everything became liquid. There were nothing liquid for the Victorian. Love belonged to marriage, and the prostitute women was the victim of evil men and morally degenerated society. But they were also feminists. Contributing to the first wave of struggle for equal opportunities for women, every adult women should participate in public election and so on. And of course – one of the main things was to save the women from being victims of prostitution.

It is exactly this tendency which the women in many parts of the world want to leave. The battle for civil rights and citizenship is the battle against the concept of victim and the tradition of the Victorian Feminists. The whole concept of being a victim is the critical problem. Because it leads to the tendency of exclusion which Jorun Solheim teaches us about. The victims are the objects outside. They are excluded, strangers. Some of us want to help, but this is only the confirmation of exclusion. We help them. Subject-object.

I know a Danish pastor who is in charge of a very interesting church based institution for street people in Copenhagen. This work is based on a high number of voluntaries who come every day to do a job in this institution. And my Danish pastor friend interviews all the people offering themselves as volunteers. And he told me: If a person in the interview says that he or she has come because she wants to help someone, they do not become a volunteer in this institution. The pastor explained me that this was because the possibility to help at all is very small in this part of Copenhagen. So you have to avoid the helping language. Because this language develops the misunderstanding that it is possible to do many concrete things for theses clients. The pastor thinks it is not possible. But still he is there, but avoiding to help. I think that the importance of avoiding the helping language is the same as the importance of citizenship for women groups. Both the helping concept and the victim word leads to an us/them dualism. And the us/them leads to the false conclusion that you must “do” something for the women.

The lesson from Brazil is exactly the same. You shall not *help* anybody. The non-helping position is the only one which avoids the Victorian trap – that is treating the women like victims and thereby as different from us, as objects we should do something with. This is the important explanation why the movement for prostitutes civil rights has grown that

strong. They will move from victimization and exclusion to citizenship. The problem is that the culture is changed. Liquid modernity.

IV

I have to tell one more story from Porto Alegre. It is too simple and too naive. But still. It serves as an illustration. In one of my meetings with the women in Porto Alegre one of them – her name was of course Carmen - told me that she now had left the life of an active prostitute. The last years she had spent as a student in sociology at the university. There she had written a master thesis on prostitution and violence. And therefore she recently had been invited to give lectures about prostitution for the police force in Porto Alegre. “It was rather strange”, Carmen said. “Before these people used to beat me up in their cars and behind the corners. And now I am giving lectures on violence to them”. She smiled and seemed more than happy about this significant change of position.

This idyllic short story is for me the illustration of the change from victim to citizen. But the important thing is to understand in detail how Carmen is founded as a citizen. It comes from the relation between her and the police. It is not a relation of exclusion. She is accepted. But it is also not a relation of invasion. She is respected and not mentally touched. The language of the citizen Carmen is the language of a person talking with someone about something. She gives a lecture to the police and the police is listening to the topic she is talking to them about. They are interested in the topic she is talking to them about. Violence in the police force regarding prostitute women. The victim language is different. I have said several times that this is the language where someone is turned into an object, a thing which we can do something (helping) with. The difference to the language of citizenship is obvious. There you have a language where you listen to what the other person says.

This means that the struggle for civil rights for women working in prostitution today first of all has to do with finding something not liquid within the liquidity. The relation where you meet someone, listen to her, and take her seriously is one kind of such relations. The civil rights have to be founded in experiences and relations like this. The best way to integrate people is to listen to them, admit them their civil rights and by this end the process of victimization. The invaded person is the person never listened to seriously, never reckoned as someone who can give us something.

This is the common impulse from the different philosophers and theologians who belong to the school of phenomenology. This is a difficult word and sometimes it is even more difficult to explain what phenomenology is. In this lecture only this is important. Phenomenology has to do with the thinking that You and Me share something. We belong to a common lifeworld, and we share something. What we share are different things, but we share and we meet, and when we do this we keep developing the other as a subject and we experience that we are also subjects in the eyes of the other. The way to become subject is not to claim it. The way to subjectivation goes through the recognition that we share a common world and to listen to what the other says about this common world.

The diagnosis of Zygmunt Baumann is not the last word on modernity. Love is liquid, but not all the time, and not everywhere. There are movements and people who give us lessons of the more lasting and permanent love in late modernity. I think the group of women I met in Porto Alegre in Southern Brazil belongs to this pattern. For the quality

and future of the ethical reflection on the field of prostitution, I think it is important to work with a more profound understanding of what the contribution from these women really is. I will conclude with five points:

1. The movement working for civil rights and citizenship among women in prostitution is important not only because of its use of human rights concepts. The movement is important because it sometimes develops a praxis within the movement where women can develop a non-invading way of life. They work together with civil rights and citizenship and through this work they develop another way of living. They are paid respect to, and meet each other as subjects who have common things to discuss and experience.
2. The work for citizenship among women in prostitution is therefore not only important because of the work for civil rights. It is important because the civil rights movement is founded in a specific way of life, a form of life. And it is from this form of life the citizenship movement becomes convincing and lasting, that is: not liquid.
3. On this background the citizenship movement is not a “construction” of subjectivity and civil rights. Because the movement is founded in a life form, it is this form of life which gives the content and the emotionality of the civil rights movement. The contribution from the women in Porto Alegre and everywhere come from the praxis which should be more elaborated. How are we to understand this form of life? As something given? Then it is more than a construction.
4. It is important that we -in this - locate a contribution to civil rights from groups that normally are labeled “marginalized”. May be the only convincing and lasting – NB: not liquid! - contribution in this field comes from the people on the margins.
5. In this lecture I wanted to say that the ethical challenge from the field of prostitution has to be discussed within the discussion of the view of man in modernity. I hope to have shown that this ambition is difficult, sometimes abstract, sometimes very concrete, but always very important. It makes a difference if you say that most of the things are always liquid, or if you say that the possibility for the permanence of love remains in late modernity. In the first case you can construct everything, in the second case there are some life forms given.

SECTION II: GLOBAL AND NORDIC PROSTITUTION CONTROL: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

NO ALTERNATIVE? FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN

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INTRODUCTION

My presentation will look at the often fraught relationship between feminism and prostitution, or more specifically, the relationship between feminism and the politics of sex worker rights. This relationship is a very personal one for me, as a former sex worker and a feminist. I began my career in sex work in Amsterdam, and as a good young feminist I headed straight down to the Red Thread, the Dutch prostitutes' rights organisation, almost as soon as I started work in the brothel.

The Red Thread was very strongly rooted in a feminist vision of women's sexuality and autonomy: in short, that the stigma and discrimination that society dished out to sex workers was a way of controlling the sexuality of all women. This feminist vision supported sex workers in their struggle for recognition as workers and for respect for their human rights.

This position, of course, is not the only feminist position on prostitution. Another version of feminism argues that all prostitution is violence against women, and thus prostitution can never be viewed as work. The clashes between these two feminist positions have been particularly bitter. In my presentation today, I am going to focus on these opposing feminist visions of prostitution and on their consequences for sex workers. I am going to do this by looking primarily at one arena in which these positions clashed head-on: the negotiations around the UN Trafficking Protocol¹ in Vienna in 1999 and 2000.

ANTI-TRAFFICKING LOBBIES IN VIENNA

The Trafficking Protocol was the subject of intense lobbying by transnational networks of feminist anti-trafficking NGOs. What is particularly interesting about the Vienna process is that the transnational networks of feminist anti-trafficking NGOs were bitterly divided in their approach to trafficking in women. In effect the lobby was split into two 'camps': both framing their approaches to trafficking in feminist terms, in agreement about the size and scope of the problem, and univocal in demanding an international response. Both groups were made up of feminists and human rights activists from the

¹ The Protocol to Suppress, Prevent and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementary to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime

developing and the developed world. Yet these similarities proved meaningless in the face of the deep ideological divide that split the lobby groups. The essence of this ideological divide concerned the relationship between ‘trafficking in women’ and ‘consent’.

One of the lobby groups was spearheaded by the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), an international NGO with strong local affiliates in South-East Asia. This lobby group referred to itself as the ‘International Human Rights Network’ (IHRN). CATW is an ‘abolitionist’ organisation: they argue that prostitution is a form of sexual violence which can never be consented to or chosen as a profession. CATW co-director Dorchen Leidholdt writes: ‘The sexual exploitation of women and children by local and global sex industries violates the human rights of all women and children whose bodies are reduced to sexual commodities in this brutal and dehumanising marketplace. While experienced as pleasure by the prostitution consumers and as lucrative sources of income by sex industry entrepreneurs, prostitution, sex trafficking, and related practices are, in fact, forms of sexual violence that leave women and children physically and psychologically devastated’ (Leidholdt 2000:1). In keeping with this view, CATW advocates for measures to make prostitution illegal and to punish clients as well as brothel owners and other ‘third parties’ (IHRN 2000). If all prostitution is violence, it follows that anyone involved in helping a woman move from one place to another to engage in sex work is a trafficker.

The other lobby group was headed by the International Human Rights Law Group (IHLRG) with the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW) and the Asian Women’s Human Rights Council (AWHRC). Like CATW, IHLRG and GAATW are international NGOs with strong local affiliates throughout the world. Yet their vision on trafficking and consent couldn’t be more different: inspired by the global sex worker rights movement, GAATW sees prostitution as labour. Accordingly, for GAATW, trafficking is characterised by the use of force during the migration process and/or the consequent labour or services. ‘Traffic in persons and forced prostitution are “manifestations of violence against women and the rejection of these practices, which are a violation of the right to self determination, must hold within itself the respect for the self determination of adult persons who are voluntarily engaged in prostitution.”’ (GAATW 1994). This configuration of transnational lobby groups called itself the Human Rights Caucus.

PAINFUL POSITIONS

While there are some similarities in their representations of the ‘third world trafficking victim’, the abolitionist lobby group in particular viewed ‘third world prostitutes’ as helpless victims in need of rescue. I will argue that the abolitionist feminist construction of ‘third world prostitutes’ is part of a wider western feminist impulse to construct a damaged ‘other’ as the main justification for its own interventionist impulses. I will demonstrate that the ‘injured body’ of the ‘third world trafficking victim’ in international feminist debates around trafficking in women serves as a powerful metaphor for advancing certain feminist interests, which cannot be assumed to be those of third world sex workers themselves. The term ‘injured body’ is drawn from Wendy Brown’s *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (1995). In this work, Brown argues that modern

identity politics are based on a feeling of 'injury' caused by exclusion from the presumed 'goods' of the modern liberal state².

The notion of 'injured identities' offers a provocative way to begin to examine how and why CATW feminists are positioning the 'trafficking victim' in their discourse. Brown's examination of the historical formation of late modern politicised identities places the problematic of 'logics of pain in the subject formation processes'(1995: 55) central. This has immediate resonance: CATW's campaign against trafficking in women constantly reiterates the literal, physical pain undergone by 'third world prostitute' bodies. If 'politicized identity's investment...in its own history of suffering' (Brown 1995: 55) is a constituent element of late modern subject formation, this may help explain why CATW and Barry rely so heavily on the 'suffering' of third world trafficking victims in their discourses of women's subjugation. It also raises questions about CATW's efforts to seek protection for trafficking victims through 'protective' legislation.

Wendy Brown examines the genealogy of late-modern political identity formation in North America in terms of the ways in which identities such as those of gender, race, or homosexuality are constructed on the basis of perceived historical 'injuries'. Abolitionist feminist analysis of the role of prostitution in women's oppression proceeds along the same 'injury/identity' nexus analysed by Brown. In abolitionist feminist analysis, women's subordination is the result of sex. Sex is defined as 'the condition of subordination of women that is both bodied in femaleness and enacted in sexual experience' (Barry 1995: 278). Women's subordination is seen as analogous to that of class subordination, that is, women's 'class position' is one of sexual subordination to the dominant 'class' of men. The 'injury' of sex is thus that which constitutes the 'class' of women.

For abolitionist feminists such as Kathleen Barry, Andrea Dworkin, Sheila Jeffries, and Catherine MacKinnon, sex is power: male power over women, and prostitution is the ultimate expression of male dominance. Seen in this way, prostitutes 'pain' becomes the foundation of the identity 'woman'. 'Prostitution makes all women vulnerable, exposed to danger, open to attack. To be vulnerable is, by definition, to be "able to be hurt or wounded or injured"' (Barry 1995: 317). 'Woman' thus becomes an 'identity' solely constituted through the 'injury' of male sexual power; as the most 'injured', the prostitute is most fully identified as 'woman'.

CATW AND THE PRESENCE OF PROSTITUTES

Though CATW's entire reason for existing is to protect and fight for 'prostituted women', the presence, the existence, of actual sex workers is a great problem for them. 'Prostituted women' who agree with CATW's analysis of their piteous situation don't present a problem. It is the vocal and often politically active sex workers around the world that present a conundrum for CATW. Utterly convinced that self-identified 'sex workers' are either hopelessly deluded or venal collaborators with the patriarchy, CATW feminists wring themselves into tortuous and righteous shapes attempting to account for these very mouthy workers. The technique of accusing sex worker rights advocates of being mouthpieces for the vast international industry of pimps is a favourite way of dealing with the uncomfortable presence of sex worker activists. At the Vienna

² For a fuller analysis, see Doezeema 2001.

negotiations, the accusation was spread claiming that the Human Rights Caucus was 'funded by the "European prostitution mafia"' (Ditmore 2001: 12). Human Rights Caucus members were referred to as 'pro-prostitution advocates'. As fellow NSWP member Melissa Ditmore observes "This language is akin to the use of the "pro-abortion" rather than "pro-choice" by activists who seek to ban abortion' (Ditmore 2001:12).

If one reaction to the presence of these 'naughty children' who insist on proclaiming a sex worker identity is to attempt to write them off as the pawns of the porn industry, another is to intimate that they are unable to think for themselves. CATW's ambivalence towards prostitutes is exacerbated through class, post-cold war and post-colonial biases. Liddle and Rai argue that orientalist power is exercised when 'the author denies the subject the opportunity for self-representation' (1998: 512). Referring to third world sex workers, CATW's founder, Kathleen Barry, writes: "Sex work" language has been adopted out of despair, not because these women promote prostitution but because it seems impossible to conceive of any other way to treat prostitute women with dignity and respect than through normalizing their exploitation (1995: 296). If first world sex workers are both pitied and blamed for advocating a policy of sex worker rights, third world sex workers are not even credited with knowing what sex worker rights are all about. It is by no means only western feminists who treated third world sex workers as child-like and unable to speak for themselves. Third world anti-trafficking activists also take a 'matronising' stance towards sex workers. This was clearly illustrated at the October 2000 meetings, when a spoken intervention by a member of the Philippines delegation who was also a director of CATW 'seemed intended to define prostitutes as children' (Ditmore 2001:9).

This denial of the legitimacy of the identity of 'sex worker' is the direct and necessary result of CATW's epistemology of sex work. CATW advocates claim to base their analysis on the 'true' experiences of prostitutes. According to Kathleen Barry, sex in prostitution 'reduces women to a body' and is therefore necessarily harmful, whether there is consent or not (1995: 23). Consequently, prostitutes 'true' stories of pain and injury serve both to demonstrate the rightness of her theory and are claimed as the empirical basis for that theory. The testimonies of prostitutes thus assume the status of absolute truth. However, only certain versions of prostitutes' experience are considered 'true'. Barry constructs the 'injury' of sex in prostitution in a circular manner. Prostitution is considered always injurious because the sex in it is dehumanising. However, the sex takes on this dehumanising character because it takes place within prostitution. In this neat, sealed construction, there is no place for the experiences of sex workers who claim their work is not harmful or alienating. For Barry and CATW, the notion of a prostitute who is unharmed by her experience is an ontological impossibility: that which cannot be. This is the ultimate exercise of power: to deny sex workers our very existence, to insist that we cannot be.

The metaphysical 'disappearance' of the sex worker was echoed by the physical absence of any prostitutes in CATW's lobby group. According to CATW, there are no sex workers, only 'prostituted women'. If 'sex worker' is a fictional (illegitimate) identity created by the international networks of pimps, (and supported by governments in their pay) it follows that those of us who adopt this false identity are either deluded or frauds. Prostitution is dehumanising, and self-identified sex workers, according to CATW, embrace our dehumanisation: we thus collude in our own disappearance. There is a hole where the prostitute should stand: a member of CATW recently characterized prostitutes

as 'empty holes surrounded by flesh, waiting for a masculine deposit of sperm.'³ Hoigard and Finstad, (1992) whose work is held up as exemplary by Barry, refer to sex workers' vagina's as 'garbage can[s] for hordes of anonymous men's ejaculations' (quoted in Chapkis 1997: 51). Barry herself says that prostitutes become 'interchangeable' with plastic blow-up sex dolls 'complete with orifices for penetration and ejaculation' (1995: 35) More than the most rampant version of patriarchy they could dream up, CATW feminists identify the prostitute with her vagina. This echo within CATW of the patriarchal and especially the pornographic is notable (see Brown 1995). The prostitute thus not only lacks-consent, will, desire- she *is* lack. What CATW feminists most want of sex workers is that they close their holes-shut their mouths, cross their legs- to prevent the taking in and the spilling out of substances and words they find noxious.

PROTECT OR PUNISH

According to Wendy Brown, the result of strategies that are based on demands to the state for redress of injured identity, can end up re-inscribing, rather than neutralizing, the injured identity itself. As examined in the first section, the 'politics of protection' are particularly dangerous for women because of the way they have been used to control and divide women. Brown suggests that we should be even more cautious about attempts to protect women sexually: 'if the politics of protection are generically problematic for women and for feminism, still more so are the specific politics of sexual protections, such as those inherent in feminist antipornography legislation and criminalization of prostitution...such appeals for protection...involve seeking protection from masculinist institution against men, a move more in keeping with the politics of feudalism than freedom. Indeed, to be "protected" by the same power whose violation one fears perpetuates the very modality of dependence and powerlessness marking much of women's experience across widely diverse cultures and epochs (1995: 165)'.

Abolitionist feminists configure their demands for an end to 'injury' in terms of an appeal to the universal ideal of human rights. Yet their political goals betray the extent to which demands for protection mesh with attempts to discipline the very 'suffering bodies' whose 'injuries' are seen as the very stuff of the identity 'woman'. At the Vienna negotiations, CATW's lobby group backed a definition of 'trafficking in women' that would severely restrict women's ability to migrate both within a country and between countries. They call for all those who assist a woman to migrate, when at the end of the migration the woman works in the sex industry, to be charged as 'traffickers' (CATW 1999). This means that a relative who drives a potential sex worker from one city to the next, or even an airline on which a potential sex worker flies, could be charged with 'trafficking' (Jordan in Soriano 2000). It is not difficult to see how these restrictions fit in with notions prevalent in much of the world about keeping women close to home and hearth. In another example, Barry cites as a model a 1993 policy adopted by the Vietnamese Government to eradicate prostitution. Prostitutes who were 'willing to lead a normal life' were offered an unspecified amount of money to do so (Quy quoted in Barry 1995: 300). However, 'unwilling' prostitutes were 'gathered in special centres for reformation for at least a minimum of six months' (Quy quoted in Barry 1995: 301). Barry champions the imprisonment of sex workers in the guise of 'protection'- this is indeed a chilling illustration of the politics of protectionism at work.

³ This statement was made by Evelina Giobbe during the NGO Consultation with UN/IGOs on Trafficking in Persons, Prostitution and the Global Sex Industry: "Trafficking and the Global Sex Industry: The Need for a Human Rights Framework" 21-22 June 1999, Palais des Nations, Geneva

The final definition of trafficking in persons in the Protocol was a compromise: it condemned trafficking for the 'exploitation of the prostitution of others'. Footnotes to the text make it clear that the Protocol does not equate trafficking with prostitution. Nonetheless, abolitionist feminists are claiming that the definition represents a victory for their position. From a sex workers' perspective, this victory is hollow indeed/ The international panic around trafficking has given a new lease on life to the abolitionist position, with states busy not only implementing their own abolitionist policies, but intent on exporting these through their development programmes.

THE THREAT TO SEX WORKERS' RIGHTS

The overwhelming effect of feminist-inspired anti-trafficking policies and programmes has been catastrophic for sex workers, especially those in developing countries. As we are all well aware, it was the concern around trafficking that gave Swedish feminists the political opportunity to enact legislation that penalises the customers of sex workers. In the United States, feminists worked hand in hand with anti-abortion activists to influence US trafficking policy. As a result, the US development agency USAID now refuses to give any funds for anti-trafficking to organisations that support the idea of 'prostitution as work'. Most recently, under the US Global Aids Bill, in which the Bush administration committed 15 Billion dollars to fight AIDS globally, all organisations which receive money are required to adopt a policy that is expressly against sex work as labour. This was the direct result of the lobby efforts of the abolitionist feminist-Christian conservative lobby.

The Network of Sex Work Projects (www.nswp.org) issued a press release when the Bill was announced. It read 'This measure could have potentially devastating effects on sex workers, their families, and the wider communities in which they live. Projects working with sex workers throughout the world do not 'promote' sex work as 'lifestyle'. Especially in poor countries, projects work with the twin aims of empowering sex workers to protect themselves from HIV, while at the same time helping sex workers to discover other means of generating income. This projects have a proven track record when it comes to reducing HIV among sex workers. Denying them funding is likely to have serious impact on infection rates among the poorest and most vulnerable' (NSWP 2003).

At a recent conference that I attended of the National Network of Sex Workers in Kerala, India - attended by over 500 sex workers - the international fight against trafficking was unanimously declared to be the single biggest threat to sex worker rights. In countries like India, hundreds of new NGOs have sprung up to grab the funding that sex workers themselves are no longer eligible for. These NGOs operate so-called 'rescue and rehabilitation' policies. The 'rescue' policies they advocate have been condemned by international human rights organisations as a major cause of violence against sex workers, yet they continue to be supported by abolitionist feminists, Former Coalition Against Trafficking in Women director Donna Hughes calls 'report and rescue' a 'bold new method'. She describes it as follows 'under this approach aid workers have a duty to catalyze a rescue. They can do so through the official report, or by notifying a nongovernmental or faith-based group that specializes in rescuing enslaved women and girls' (Hughes 2003). She goes on to attack the Network of Sex Work projects for its policy on sex worker rights.

In a statement released in response to this article, NSW member Empower Foundation in Thailand responds to Hughes' article: 'Far from being a 'bold new method' as is being proclaimed, Empower Chiang Mai has been dealing with the issue of "raids and rescues" of women working in brothels for the past 11 years' (Empower 2003:1) Empower goes on to record one such 'rescue' that occurred in May 2003: 'Journalists and photographers also accompanied the police and "rescue team". Photos of the women were taken without their consent and appeared in the local papers...Women who were "rescued" understood they had been arrested. They had their belongings taken from them. They were separated from each other. They were unable to contact friends, family or Empower...In all 28 women were "rescued". Some of the women were not employees of that brothel but were simply visiting friends when they were "rescued". Women were transported by Trafocord and the police against their will to a Public Welfare Boys Home. Nineteen women were locked inside and have remained there for the past 31 days. We have no information on the whereabouts or situation the other ten women' (Empower 2003: 2). This is just one example of many abuses that occur around the world in the name of 'protecting' women.

THE FEMINIST ALTERNATIVE?

It is clear that sex worker organisations reject the abolitionist feminist perspective. But what of the 'feminist alternative': the position taken by the Human Rights Caucus at the Vienna negotiations, and reflected in the final definition in Vienna, which 'recognises the difference between forced (or involuntary) and voluntary adult participation in sex work' (Jordan 2002: 32)? Shouldn't sex workers support this position? After all, the distinction between 'forced' and 'voluntary' prostitution was one of the earliest political foundations of sex worker rights.

As a conceptual framework for understanding sex work, the 'voluntary/forced' model, with 'consent' operating as the hinge between coercion and choice, had (has) a number of distinct advantages. As 'consent' had become the standard by which heterosexual sexual behaviour had come to be determined as harmful or not, as illustrated by the 'brilliant literalism' of the feminist slogan 'no means no'(Haag 1999:xiii), sex worker rights activists and theorists were taking familiar concepts and applying them in unfamiliar territory. Combined with the 'pro-choice' abortion rhetoric familiar to a generation of feminists, sex workers and their feminist supporters were able to carve out a space in which certain sex workers could convincingly argue, using acceptable liberal feminist terms, for recognition of their liberal rights-as well as create a space for the 'forced' prostitute, denied her liberal right to 'free choice' of sexual contact *and* labour.

However, the 'recognition' of voluntary prostitution in the Trafficking Protocol stops short of a recognition of the rights of 'voluntary' sex workers. It says nothing about those states whose treatment of prostitutes contravenes international standards of human rights (see Bindman and Doezema 1997). The definition of trafficking thus leaves 'room' for sex workers to exist only outside of the protected space carved out for trafficking victims. The sex worker is banished to the margins, left to a precarious existence without the cover of international law.

CONCLUSION

The distinction between ‘forced’ and ‘voluntary’ prostitutes, when put into practice by states, means ‘protection’ for ‘victims’ willing to cooperate with states in prosecuting trafficking, and arrest and deportation for ‘willing’ sex workers, those who break immigration restrictions and those who refuse to cooperate with the police. In distinguishing between ‘trafficking’ and ‘voluntary prostitution’ through the qualifier of ‘consent’, the Trafficking Protocol offers nothing to sex workers whose human rights are abused, but who fall outside of the narrowly constructed category of ‘trafficking victim’.

The limitations of the ‘forced’ vs. ‘voluntary’ model of prostitution have been recognised before today by myself and by others in the movements for sex worker rights. Yet we continue to use it, to advocate for it, because it seems that any retreat from this position will allow an advance for those who deny that consent to sex work is possible. And this is where an irony comes in, at the point where the opposing visions of abolitionism and a particular vision of sex worker rights share common ground: they both argue that basing policies on the ‘consent’ of a sex worker leads to an unacceptable split between the ‘willing’ whore who should be punished and the ‘victim’. Of course, the consequent visions of the implications of this realisation couldn’t be more different. Sex workers rights advocates argue that the recognition of sex work as labour will go the furthest towards ending abuses of sex workers’ human rights.

Yet I believe that we as advocates of sex workers’ rights have something to gain from following through on the political consequences of recognising the limitations of ‘consent’ or ‘voluntary vs. forced’ prostitution as the grounds for demanding rights. This means treading on uncharted ground, for the notion of ‘consent’ as the legitimisation for sexual and labour relations is firmly embedded in the liberal tradition (Haag 1999). Is it possible to envisage a feminist view of prostitution that is not based on ‘consent’ and that yet recognises and works towards the goals of the sex workers’ rights movement? I believe that it is not only possible, but necessary. However, this does not mean that it is simple or straightforward, especially when translating this into policy. I don’t have a complete answer to the question of moving beyond the limited framework offered by current approaches to ‘trafficking’, but I do believe that the way forward must be found within three key principles, all of which have been articulated by previous speakers this afternoon. Firstly, as Liv Jessen said, we must constantly be aware of not objectifying sex workers. We must constantly keep in mind the huge variations in sex work, between women, men and transgenders. Secondly, as both Liv and Trygve Wyller said, we must base our response on listening to sex workers. And finally, what the cause of justice for sex workers most needs can best be summed up in Trygve Wyller’s words: ‘not helping’ but responding to demands based on claims to citizenship.

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FAR AWAY, SO CLOSE: PROSTITUTION CONTROL IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES

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I am doing a project on prostitution control in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Theoretically, this project is a discourse analysis, and I have been interested in the web of debates and meanings on the area of prostitution in a Nordic⁴ context. The question I ask is what the differences and similarities are between these countries' political debates in media and political forum, and I attempt to systematize and analyse the use of different arguments and references in these debates.

I have previously done an ethnographic study of women's life in prostitution here in Oslo (Skilbrei 1998), and this was what sent my interest in the direction of political discourse. During that study I read the deliberations the politicians in the city council in Oslo had on the subject of the rise in the numbers of massage parlours and on what one should do about it. Prostitution was for many participants in these debates clearly placed within a tradition of viewing prostitution as sexualised violence, no matter which the buyers and sellers are, and what they themselves may think about prostitution. I was disturbed to see how many claims were made about the prostitution that takes place in massage parlours that seemed to have little in common with my findings on the same issues. Some of the claims were that the women working in massage parlours were very young, and that they were a public health risk as they could be transmitting HIV/AIDS to the general public. After completing this project I therefore went on to study societal conditions for massage parlour prostitution in Norway and Denmark (Skilbrei 1999 and 2001).

My interest in comparative studies came from the fact that the official legal status of prostitution for a very long time was the same in Norway and Denmark, but the approach to prostitution, portrayals in the media, in the police activities and politically, seemingly were completely different. Norway and Denmark therefore constituted each others perfect comparative cases with many similarities and many differences. Doing comparative discourse analysis is a good way to produce knowledge about the consequences of debates. Political debates are not only hovering over the daily lives of us all, these debates also create the conditions under which we create ourselves in our own eyes and in the eyes of other people, as well as laying the fundament for political actions.

The legal status of prostitution has changed in Denmark since I did that project, but Denmark and Norway continues to be a very interesting comparison. In my current

⁴ The Nordic countries seem to be a better word of the area than the more diffuse Scandinavia, as it both refers to the Scandinavian Peninsula and the countries Norway, Sweden, Denmark and sometimes Finland (Bergquist 1999:3). The Nordic countries count Denmark (including the Faeroe Islands and Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

project I also include Sweden as a case. To some extent, Denmark, Norway and Sweden is a common prostitution market, and we have long traditions for clients and prostitutes moving between these countries.

Few years ago, the legal situation regarding prostitution was much the same in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Buying and selling sex was in reality legal, while pimping and procuring was illegal. In 1999 it became a criminal offence to buy sex, or attempting to do so in Sweden, and in Denmark one removed a paragraph on soliciting. These changes have widened a gap that in reality already were there between the puritan north and the liberal south, at least in how we perceive the situation.

A Swedish white paper, "Violence against women reform"⁵ (Government Bill 1997/98:55), was meant to bring together different issues important to women. Making buying sex a criminal offence was one of the important consequences of this white paper. The reason given for the prohibition was a symbolic one, even though the Government knew it would be difficult to use such a law, it was meant to in the long run change attitudes towards commercial sex. In a government statement on the criminalization, the Swedish approach is made clear (Regeringskansliet 25.07.03):

In Sweden, prostitution is regarded as a part of men's violence against women and children. There is an official acknowledgement of the fact that prostitution is a form of exploitation of women and children and a serious societal problem that inflicts serious damage both on individuals and society"⁶.

Some of the same claims are being made in Denmark; there are politicians that would like to make buying sexual services illegal in Denmark. But the difference is the power of this claim. The legal status of prostitution is also continuously debated within political parties in Norway, especially within the women's factions.

I am especially interested in links between the debates on prostitution control in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. And my paper is on a recent example of how prostitution debates in one country are being related to debates in other Nordic countries. Because recently we saw this difference in approach to prostitution and the role of governments facing prostitution being put to play as Denmark refused to take part in an official protest against the planned brothels in Athens during the Olympic Games next year. Prostitution is legal in Greece, but there are some rules organised prostitution must abide to, like a prohibition against operating close to churches and schools. 30 new brothels will open to deal with the increase in demand as athletes, organisers and spectators gathers in Athens. The Swedish minister for equality, Margareta Winberg, was shocked by this and described it as horrendous. She especially mentions the fact that the mayor of Athens is a woman, and therefore should object to this (Dagens nyheter 03.07.03).

This is an important part of the Swedish debates on prostitution. There is an assumption that women showing solidarity with other women always mean fighting actively against prostitution. Women from different political parties joined forces in making buying sex a

⁵ In Swedish: "Preposition Kvinnofrid".

⁶ In Swedish: "I Sverige anses prostitution vara en del av mäns våld mot kvinnor och barn. Det finns ett officiellt erkännande att prostitution är en form av exploatering av kvinnor och barn och ett allvarligt samhällsproblem som medför allvarliga skador på både individer och samhälle".

criminal offence in Sweden and in a very explicit manner, the correct feminist position in Sweden is equated with wanting stricter prostitution control (Gould 2000). We see some of the same assumptions in the Norwegian debates, and the issue of prostitution is often left to female politicians and the women's groups within the parties, but I think this sentiment is stronger in Sweden.

Margaretha Järvinen, a Finnish sociologist now living in Denmark, has done important work on the issue of prostitution and prostitution control. The difference between Denmark on one hand and Norway and Sweden on the other on the area of prostitution puzzles her. There is less research on prostitution in Denmark, and all in all it seems not to be considered a social problem. But this doesn't mean that prostitutes and prostitution is fully accepted. Danish women selling sex are marginalized just as her Norwegian and Swedish counterparts. Järvinen writes about the relationship between Danish prostitution debates and especially other Nordic ones (1989:11):

Discussions and research on prostitution in other countries is met with suspicion in Denmark. "They are probably trying to smuggle Swedish/Norwegian new-moralism into our country – and we don't want that in Denmark".⁷

Now back to the example of the brothels in Athens: Seven ministers for equality, including the Norwegian and Swedish one, issued an official complaint to the mayor of Athens. The initiative for the complaint was Swedish. Denmark did not take part in this protest, as the Danish minister for equality, Henriette Kjær, refused to sign the protest. The Danish reply was concerned with the fact that protests like this does nothing to the overall existence of prostitution. The Danish minister of equality replied (Dagens Nyheter 24.07.03): "We have our own problems we have to deal with instead of this sort of business that will lead to nothing"⁸. Instead the Danish Olympic Committee has issued a prohibition for Danish competing athletes to visit brothels during the Olympic Games. There will be no such prohibition in the Swedish camp.

The main conflict on the issue of brothels in Athens has been between Denmark and Sweden in this, as representatives of opposing stands. The Danish decision not to sign the complaint, has been met with critique, especially from Sweden, and the Swedish minister of equality has said that she is "tired" of the Danish attitude to prostitution (Dagens Nyheter 23.07.03). In an article with the title "Would you let your own daughter sell her body?" Margareta Winberg says:

I am surprised and can only regret that a minister for equality in our neighbouring country expresses herself in this way. But even earlier she has explained that she doesn't think equality is an issue that need priority. Either you see that prostitution is a form of violence against women, or you think it is important that men have access to healthy women who have been inspected [in a regulated brothel]⁹

⁷ In Danish: "Den udenlandske diskussion og forskning om prostitution har vakt mistænksomhed i Danmark. "De forsøger nok at smugle svensk-norsk nymoralisme ind her i landet – det vil vi ikke have i Danmark"".

⁸ In Swedish: "Vi har våra egna problem här hemma som vi måste ta oss av i stället för den här sortens gyckel som man inte får något ut av".

⁹ In Swedish: "Jag blir förvånad och kan bara beklaga att en jämställdhetsansvarig minister i vårt grannland uttrycker sig på detta vis. Men redan tidigare har hon dock förklarat att hon inte anser att jämställdhet är ett

As we see from the last sentence: you are either with us or against us in this matter. In the same article Margareta Winberg clarifies her standpoints on sex, love and prostitution:

Sex and love is not something that can be subjected to commercial exploitation. But then again, this matter is not really about sex. But about power. That women are to be of service. And that some men don't want to take their fellow human beings welfare under consideration.¹⁰

As I mentioned, there will be a prohibition against Danish athletes buying sex while representing Denmark in Athens. The president of the Sports Confederation of Denmark, Kai Holm said (Dagens Nyheter 25.07.03): "Our prohibition is a signal to the world that the Olympic Games and prostitution is not compatible. That we don't back prostitution, but that we don't interfere with Greek politics. We take the responsibility for our own people"¹¹. The Danish Minister for equality shares his sentiments and makes it clear that Denmark can not take part in raising fingers at other democratic countries like this. In an article in the Danish newspaper Politiken, Henriette Kjær said:

The only one, who profits on this, is the one who invented the protest. In this case it was Margareta Winberg [the Swedish minister for equality], who obviously needed to polish her halo in Swedish public life¹² (Politiken 16.08.03).

Considering how little prostitution is reacted upon using prostitution laws in all the Nordic countries, it is important to consider what are just differences in use of words, and what are real differences between Denmark, Norway and Sweden regarding prostitution. This is an important issue as one is often led to believe differences are bigger than they are, due to escalating debates.

Most interesting to me is the fact that politicians in Swedish debates have a need to construct arguments in opposition to other positions, and that Denmark seems to be the best available opposing stand, and vice versa. The criticism against each others positions on the issue of prostitution is linked to a wider disagreement on gender equality and the relationship between the State and its citizens.

Still one should be careful not to equate one Danish politician's view with all Danish politicians view. In this and several other Danish debates on prostitution, the Danish minister of equality has met with considerable resistance. Bodil Kornbek is a member of parliament and the spokesperson for equality in the Christian People's Party [Kristligt Folkeparti] in Denmark. She continuously criticise the minister of equality, among other things for not taking part in the protest about Olympic brothels. She is

område som måste prioriteras. Antingen vill man se att prostitution är en form av våld mot kvinnor eller så menar man att det viktiga är att män har tillgång till friska, kontrollerade kvinnor" (Aftonbladet 25.07.03).

¹⁰ In Swedish: "Sex och kärlek är inte något som ska utsättas för en kommersiell exploatering. Men nu är det ju inte sex som saken handlar om, egentligen. Utan det är en maktutövning. Att kvinnor skal stå till tjänst. Och att viss män vill slippa ta hensyn till sina medmänniskor" (Aftonbladet 25.07.03).

¹¹ In Swedish: "Vårt förbud är en signal till omvärlden om att OS och prostitution inte hör ihop. Att vi tar avstånd från prostitution, men att vi inte blandar oss i grekernas politik. Vi tar ansvar för vårt eget folk".

¹² In Danish: "Den eneste, noget sådant tjener, er opfnderen af protesten. I dette tilfælde var det Margareta Winberg, som åbenbart trængte til at pudse glorien i den svenske offentlighed".

instead in favour of using the law to combat prostitution, and is especially insistent on a focus on trafficking. This party has as its starting point that prostitutes are victims. Henriette Kjær, on her part, criticise Danish feminists for being too paternalistic and too eager to make unfavourable comparisons between Denmark and Sweden on matters of gender equality.

Henriette Kjær has said about her opponents in Denmark (Politiken 16.08.03):

Most of the beginnings of good debates on gender equality are actually ruined by the fact that the “gender equality clique” explains that Denmark on the area of gender equality is a development country, light years behind e.g. the Swedish Utopia, while wringing their hands¹³.

In the same article, she writes:

[gender]Quotas and pedantic justice is not the way forward, and I really don't want Denmark to be like Sweden and Norway, where inflexible rules in many situations have substituted common sense, and where the debate is, if possible, even more stiff and politically correct than in Denmark.¹⁴

This is exactly the sentiments Järvinen has described, there is a perceived conflict between Denmark and Norway and Sweden on this area that is really about national differences in a wider political context, especially regarding gender issues.

What the Nordic countries have in common is worries about the developments in transnational prostitution. And there is much attention directed on this. The means that are used in meeting prostitution is also still much the same. Even though there are laws on pimping and procuring in all three countries, they are difficult to use. Criminal law doesn't seem to have a big impact on the overall situation. Instead prostitution is met with local and private reactions like neighbourhood activism directed at removing prostitution from residential areas and police activities directed at removing prostitutes from view in cities are commonplace ways of handling prostitution. There are also outreach programs meant to meet the needs of women selling sex inn all three countries.

Interestingly enough, the discursive differences seem much larger than the real differences, and this has first and foremost to do with the fact that prostitution as such is understood to be completely different phenomenon in for example Sweden and Denmark. Roughly one can say that prostitution as such is regarded as sex in Denmark and therefore a private issue, while it in Sweden is regarded as violence, and therefore a public matter. This is most visible in media coverage of prostitution and prostitutes. In Danish tabloids like Ekstra Bladet, it is commonplace to comment upon how women selling sex look. In Norwegian or Swedish tabloids it would be unheard of these days to describe female prostitutes as sexy, delicious or as Russian dream girls, as I have seen in Danish news coverage.

¹³ In Danish: ”Langt de fleste tilløb til en god debat om ligestilling bliver faktisk ødelagt af, at ligestillingskliquen håndterende forklarer, at Danmark ligestillingsmæssigt er et uland og f. eks. ligger lysår bag drømmesamfundet Sverige”.

¹⁴ In Danish: ”Kvotering og millimeterretfærdighed er ikke vejen frem, og jeg ønsker slet ikke, at Danmark skal ligne Sverige og Norge, hvor stive regler i mange situationer er trådt i stedet for sund fornuft, og hvor debatten er om muligt endnu mere forkrampet og politisk korrekt end i Danmark”.

Both in Denmark and Norway I get the impression that the focus on prostitution is shifting rapidly towards trafficking, and ONLY trafficking. On the web pages of the Danish minister of equality no references are being made to prostitution involving Danish women, only women who are being trafficked are mentioned. In the public debate on prostitution in Norway foreign women selling sex in Norway have gained increasingly more attention starting in the mid ninety-nineties. In Sweden this development may not be as prominent as the penalizing of clients brings attention to domestic prostitution as well as trafficking. The minister for equality in Sweden clearly includes prostitution generally among important issues, while her Danish counterpart makes no mentions of prostitution unless it involves trafficking.

I believe we have to be aware of the dangers involved in conflating worries about trafficking with our response to prostitution as such. We can't let the issue of prostitution control become a decoy – leading us away from solving some of the problems of prostitution. There are other angles available. It is also important that we don't make prostitution into a sports form in a Nordic championship of feminism.

The emphasis is different in different countries, and while principles seem to be an important part of the Swedish approach, the Danish approach seems more pragmatic. Opposing standpoints doesn't necessarily mean opposing actions, and as a political field, one could say that this first and foremost is a case of a battle of words. Hopefully, this battle of words doesn't push the participants into trenches, where they end up defending their position no matter what, instead of creating constructive discussions on some of the problems we have to deal with.

Norway seems to stay put in the middle in this, not as convinced as Sweden, though not as liberal as the Danish. Even though the view that prostitution is sexualized violence also is prominent in Norwegian debates, this still hasn't made criminalizing the purchase of sex possible. There are important lessons to be learnt here. For the time being, Norway doesn't seem to take part in such battle for words, leaving room for the suffering in prostitution as well as being hesitant to using criminal law to solve our social problems. If Norway can keep some modesty and openness in future discussions on prostitution and trafficking, I for one would be very pleased.

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DEBATES FOLLOWING SECTION I AND II

Guri Tyldum, Institute of Applied Social Science (FAFO), Norway

I have a comment to the first speaker [Trygve Wyller]: I really appreciate your presentation, and I agree with you that the image we have been presented with to day, the sex-workers who were able to organize themselves and demand their rights, is a very nice picture. However, I am a bit worried that we look at this in a manner of how things are supposed to be and that we thereby tend to forget reality. Maybe most of these girls make an actual choice, but they don't have any alternatives. They are voluntary prostitutes, but choose to start because they don't have any other means to survive or to get money.

There might be some strong prostitutes that are able to demand their rights and to find their way both internationally and in their own country. But the majority of the girls that end up in prostitution come from very bad social backgrounds. They don't have much education and they are easily exploited. We have to keep this in mind, even though I agree with you; that is the way it should be. There might be some volunteer sex workers. However, the reality is that by loosening up the structures around them and focusing on the rights of sex workers, we don't solve the problem for the majority of the women, as they have a problem when they chose to become sex workers. Maybe we reduce exploitation around them by making it easier to be a sex worker, but we don't really solve the problem that made them make the choice in the first place. Thank you.

Pye Jakobson, ROSEA - a sex worker's rights organization, Sweden

We have lots of work to do in Sweden. I am not even going to comment on this: "You know everybody who gets into sex work already have a problem when they start doing it." I just want to tell you a little episode from my life so you can understand how things are in Sweden. I have worked as a sex worker for 17 years, but from time to time I work in different areas. This summer I worked in a home for older, former homeless people. There were several people applying for the night shift, which I wanted, but I got it because of the references I have. I was supposed to work until the end of August, but in the beginning of August I got a phone call from the boss. He told me that he'd got orders from a higher instance that I couldn't work there anymore. This was because of things I had said in the newspapers about prostitution.

I don't know what prostitution has to do with working with older people, but the social sector, that is responsible for this home, also works with prostitutes. They want people to leave the industry of course, and my views were wrong, so therefore I couldn't work with these older homeless people. Now I am so lucky that I am the first sex worker in Sweden that belongs to a union. So *Social Tjänst Förvaltningen*, which is the instance that sort of fired me illegally, will now have to pay a high price for this. They are now being sued.

So, the only conclusion I can draw from this is that they want all people, especially the women, to leave the sex industry but they really don't want to employ them themselves. And this is really how the Swedish government looks at prostitution. We are

untouchables. They don't want to employ us and consequently they kick us right back to the sex industry. Thank you.

Mariann, Payoke NGO, Belgium

I have been a sex worker for 16 years. I want to make a comment on what Jo and her colleague were saying. I think we've got a lot of sex workers in Europe who are really not forced, who are not victims. What we should learn from places like India and Africa is to get a voice. Today we don't stand up. I don't know why. I think in Europe, we feel more ashamed about prostitution and being sex workers, than for instance in Africa and India. I mean, in India you've got a culture; you've got rituals talking about prostitution, accepting it in a way. We feel really dead ashamed about what we do. What we have to learn in the future is that if you want to be accepted, you first and foremost have to accept it for yourself. Then you can have society accepting you for what you are and give you a place. Thank you.

Jo Doezema, Network of Sex Work Project, UK

I turn to sort of the first and the third speakers' combined comments. What is exactly my whole problem with the 'voluntary' and 'choice' way of looking at prostitution is that you can never argue that someone absolutely chose prostitution in the absence of any other consideration. It is a futile argument. Everyone is motivated by a variety of factors.

As my colleague from Payoke said, the sex workers in the rest of the world are much better organized than we are in Europe, much better organized than they are in the United States. And professor Wyller was talking about it this morning; the sex workers in Porto Alegre are really not middle class. They are really not rich. They really don't have a lot of choices in their lives. Yet, they are sex workers working together claiming their rights. And if we agree that this is the way it should be, then what we need to look at is how did they get there? What are the conditions that enable women from working class backgrounds to organize? And of course, sex work is a working class profession that allows women, men and transgenders working in the sex industry to organize, to work together to better and improve the conditions in their lives.

And just to comment on the second speaker [Pye Jakobson]: My God, what a story! It is so unbelievable, but so typical of a reaction. The crazy schizophrenic reaction to sex workers in many countries, not only in Sweden. But just a little follow on to what happened in Greece: While the ministers for equality were fighting about who is the best feminist, nobody was paying attention to the sex workers of Athens who were striking. They called the general strike because of the new regulation from the mayor who, while opening up 13 new regulated brothels, shut down all the one- to two-person brothels, that had been going on in the city for years. So all the feminists, all the protest completely ignored what the sex workers themselves were saying, organizing and doing underground in Athens.

Liv Jessen, Chair Person, Pro Sentret, Norway

I would like to challenge you on the question from FAFO, about the reasons for prostitution. Why do people migrate for instance to Norway? Why do all the Eastern and Central European women come to Oslo to sell sex? What do you think? It is not for skiing. It is not because of the beautiful scenery – it is to earn money.

And I have a similar type of question which I think is lacking in the Norwegian debate. We say, or I listen to the radio, or I see written in the newspaper, that the reason or the bases for prostitution is the demand. And I think: The demand? I mean; the men buying? What about the global poverty? Prostitutes or sex workers all over the world do not sell sex because they want to satisfy men. I don't think so. I think they do it to survive. And if that dimension is not more present in the debate, I think we will go astray. And that's why I think your question is a very important one. How can we do something with the reasons behind women's migration? Somebody wants to talk about this challenge or say something about it?
Yourself FAFO?

Guri Tyldum, Institute of Applied Social Science (FAFO), Norway

Right now we are in the middle of a research project. We are only half way and still have a lot of data to collect and go through. Through interviews with girls from Eastern and Central Europe we have found, most of you probably know this, that it might not be the poverty itself that push women into prostitution, but rather a situation where they have a desperate need of money very fast. This is especially tied to trafficking and ending up in a situation with a lot of coercion. Usually these girls don't have much time. They don't have the time to go around and check out the networks and the offers they get. If they have an offer, they go, and very often it only takes two or three days from they make the decision or get the offer until they actually leave the country.

Focusing on poverty in itself is not sufficient. There are a lot of poor women all over the world that do not go into prostitution. However, these women often need to support someone, either their own children or other family. They might be young girls that don't have any parents any longer, and consequently need to get money in order not to end up in a crisis situation. Most of the Eastern European countries don't have any social support system where the women can seek help. If these girls don't have any private networks that can help them out, or the solution provided from their network is actually prostitution, which it often is, then this is why women end up in Norway.

We will publish a report later on this year. By then we will hopefully have had more time to go through the data.

Laila, Natthjemmet (Women's Shelter) Norway

When you are working with these women, what are you doing? Do you help them and support them in any way? Do you help them in some way to protect them if they want to go out of prostitution? Or do you just ask them questions?

Guri Tyldum, Institute of Applied Social Science (FAFO), Norway

Both in Norway and other countries where we work, we usually cooperate with the support apparatus. So, of course, we always have telephone numbers and names of persons we can contact and send people to in case they need help. But you know; I hope in the end to help them by uncovering some of the mechanisms in this area and find out what kind of help they themselves ask for and what kind of help they need. But no, as researchers we don't help them directly.

May-Len Skilbrei, University of Oslo, Department of Criminology and Sociology of Law, Norway

The situation described by the researcher from FAFO is much the same in Norway. It is not just one factor; it is a combination of factors pushing women into prostitution. The poverty is linked with a desperate situation. Women I interviewed when I did research on prostitution in massage parlors in Oslo told me that their way into prostitution was a combination of lacking money and seeing no other ways of getting it. Even though we have a very good welfare system in Norway, applying for social security takes several days and it can take even longer to get the money. Some of the same issues are involved and there are some practical measures to meet these situations both in Eastern Europe and in Norway. Instead of thinking about this as a large area that needs to be regulated, one can meet problems face to face with the women involved, on a local and practical level by helping them out of desperate situations.

Jaana Kauppinen, Pro-Tukipiste, Finland

Pro-Tukipiste is an organization working in a similar way as Pro Sentret here in Oslo. I have a comment to you [Guri Tyldum, FAFO]. There is always a problem with research. If you ask people; why do you come here, you simultaneously send a message to that person; it is something wrong with you coming here. We meet about 100 to 150 Russian women per week in Helsinki. It took us almost two years to get a more complex picture of what they are thinking and how their life situation is.

Liv Jessen, Chair Person, Pro Sentret, Norway

I have a comment on what our colleagues in Helsinki did and what the Pro Sentret has done the last years: We employ what we call *cultural mediators* to help us in this work. Because when I as a social worker shall try to establish contact with a person coming from a different country and another culture, I find it difficult. That is why we have employed Russian, Albanian and Thai women to help us along in that work. They really do a very good job. It is recommendable to others to employ cultural mediators in this work.

Jan Visser, Rode Draad NGO, the Netherlands

I will talk later in the meeting, but I am tempted to link up this discussion about job alternatives for prostitutes or sex workers. Often we get a remark that when you are

supporting sex workers and see prostitution as a reasonable opportunity to earn a living, you are somewhere in the pro-prostitution lobby, actually wanting to draw people into sex work, saying this is a way to earn a living, and that you should not get out. Well, this is not the case. Anybody should be able to get out. And how does one get out? Is it on their own motivation or should it be forced by the government or governmental institutions? You say “Prostitution is so bad. We are going to help you, you will get a new identity, you have to testify that you are leaving this profession, that you have done bad things and that you have built up a new identity, a new personality. And we will give you another job.” That is the one option.

The other one, which we are trying to develop in the Netherlands, is that people, who have worked in prostitution, might want to look for other job opportunities. In prostitution they have developed skills; communication skills and negotiation skills, which can be used in other professions that for instance have to do with public relations, speaking to people and managing offices. So what we did in this European project together with an Italian, Belgian and German organization was to list the qualifications that have been developed through prostitution and that could be used on a CV as a positive factor in getting other jobs. This means that you do not have to scrape out your identity and start all over again. You can follow up and get a kind of job career stepping up from prostitution.

SECTION 3: MIGRATION AND PROSTITUTION: FACTS AND IMAGES

TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Tatiana Sullini

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THE PHENOMENON OF TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking represents a category of migration that is not a new phenomenon. But the magnitude, severity and pervasiveness of the problem are increasing dramatically. Every year thousands of people – mostly women and children - are deceived, bought and sold against their will and find themselves in situations of extreme exploitation from which there may seem to be no escape.

Trafficking has many different dimensions: it is an issue of violence against human beings, an example of serious human rights violations, an economic and development issue with consequences for the entire region and its societies, and, ultimately, a criminal matter, in which the traffickers are the perpetrators. Trafficking in women and children has been a growing industry for many years and as in any industry, the rules are dictated by the economic incentives with criminal businessmen who calculate with profits, marketing factors, risks of getting caught when they decide in which countries they will sell the women into prostitution etc. The price of trafficked women and children start as low as 48\$. In total the child trafficking business generates more than 9\$ billion each year.

IOM MANDATE AND MISSION

IOM involvement and approach to trafficking¹⁵ is based on the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society: if properly managed migration can contribute to the prosperity, development and mutual understanding among people.¹⁶ After half a century of worldwide operational experience and commitment, IOM has become the leading international organisation working with migrants and governments to

¹⁵ With regard to the definition and elements of trafficking, IOM follows the definition elaborated in the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children*. Accordingly, trafficking is understood as the “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat, use of force or other means of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the receiving or giving of payment... to a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.” Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal or organs. The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth above have been used.

¹⁶ IOM has been established in 1951 as an Intergovernmental Organization to resettle European displaced persons, refugees and migrants and has now grown to encompass a variety of migration management activities throughout the world. During this time IOM has assisted more than 11 million individuals world-wide, including 9.9 million refugees and 1.1 million national migrants.

provide human responses to migration challenges. In partnerships with Governmental and Non Governmental actors - both local and International - IOM is committed to uphold the human dignity and well being of migrants by intervening to assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management, to advance understanding of migration issues and to encourage social and economic development through migration.

IOM is particularly concerned about those migrants who are, or have been, deceived or coerced into situations of exploitation, which unfold through forced labour, forced servitude, coercion, debt bondage, or other violations of their fundamental human rights including physical, sexual and psychological abuse.

Relying on its extensive field presence and experience, IOM is working with governments and local non-governmental organizations to develop and implement sustainable, multi-faceted programmes to combat trafficking. Since the early nineties IOM has been actively engaged to address the issue of trafficking with a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to include research, technical co-operation activities, return and reintegration assistance and information campaigns.

In Europe, IOM has undertaken a range of targeted research studies¹⁷ on trafficking in women from the Central and Eastern European to Western European countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland, Austria and Italy, contributing substantially to the understanding of the complexity of the problem. Furthermore, IOM has carried out a number of nation-wide information campaigns targeted at young women susceptible of falling victim to traffickers. Such campaigns include those in Hungary and Bulgaria carried out within the framework of the EU-U.S. Transatlantic Dialogue and the ones in the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Completed initiatives are the campaigns in Ukraine and the Czech Republic as well as in Cambodia, Bangladesh and Nigeria, countries identified as high risk in terms of increased trafficking activity.

Projects assisting victims of trafficking to return to and reintegrate in their country of origin are being implemented by IOM in a number of EU Member States such as Belgium, Germany, Italy, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM, Serbia and Montenegro and Kosovo as well as in Southeast Asia. Last but not least, a number of technical co-operation activities to enhance the capacity of governmental and other institutions to counteract trafficking are being carried out in a number of countries of origin of victims of trafficking.

TRAFFICKING IN THE BALKANS

Trafficking in human beings, particularly women and children, is a phenomenon of increasing proportions in the Balkans and neighboring countries, demanding a strong, comprehensive and coherent response from the international community.

In the context of IOM's experience in the Balkans and its neighboring countries, trafficking in human beings is primarily a phenomenon affecting women and children, who are influenced by social and economic pressures in their home countries and get caught up in the terrible cycle of trafficking. Trade in human beings can have many forms and serve many purposes but in Eastern Europe and the Balkans IOM has witnessed

¹⁷ See Trafficking in Migrants, IOM Activities, Publications and Documents

mostly the trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation, but also for juvenile delinquency as well as domestic servitude. Migrating women are especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation, and to the health consequences of emotional, physical and sexual violence. Their existence is often quickly twisted into a life of extreme dependency, with clandestine and promiscuous living conditions.

There are a lot of factors conducive to the expansion of trafficking that can be examined at global and regional level; focusing on the Balkans the main trends that contributed to this explosive growth are considered:

- The end of the cold war and the subsequent opening of the borders;
- The rapid expansion of the global economy - legitimate and illegal, transition from central to market based economy encouraged the development of shadow economy and corruption;
- Geographical position and proximity to Western European countries;
- The post-conflict unstable economical and political situation with the large presence of the international community;
- Lack of or newly established anti-trafficking legislation;
- Established smuggling routes facilitated by porous borders and insufficient border control
- Well-established organized crime and systematic corruption.

The huge profits that are possible from trafficking, in combination with the low risks, have resulted in the domination of this illegal activity by criminal organizations. Recruiting networks are well organized both at national as well as international level. These networks are able to operate essentially with impunity for a number of reasons such as fear on the part of the victim to speak out about her/his experiences, inadequate legislation including the lack of appropriate mechanisms to enforce existing legal provisions.

THE PROFILE OF THE VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

IOM has identified common characteristics of trafficked women, their perpetrators and the trafficking process building upon data collected in the countries of transit and destination. From the perspective of the migrant, according to the data gathered by IOM in these years, we could state that trafficking is easy to occur when a potential migrant is

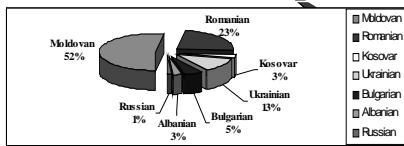
- driven by home conditions to seek better income sources in other countries; is unaware of dangers of trafficking and not informed; is subject to an abusive environment (present or past) and finally never left their country of origin before.

The trafficked women are typically young (almost 60% are between 18 and 25), mostly from urban areas (over 50%) and lured to trafficking by false promises of better-paid jobs through newspaper advertisements (about 8%) but more often by personal contacts and acquaintances (more than 80%). Facing difficult socio-economic conditions and massive unemployment, after graduating middle school (over 60% of the assisted victims) or high school (24% out of all of the assisted victims have at least a high school diploma) young women from Eastern Europe seek unskilled, low wage employment such as waiting, housekeeping, babysitting, au pair and other domestic or restaurant jobs: this indeed applies to more than 50% of the assisted victims. The trafficked women come

mostly from Moldova (50 %), Romania (21 %) and Ukraine (14 %). About 70% of the assisted victims come from poor or very poor economic situation. The big majority (77%) are recruited based on false job promises (about 45 %) in Italy and Greece mostly, while 23 % in countries of Former Yugoslavia (Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM). A minor part (10 %) of them is promised false travel arrangements and/or invitation abroad. Only 8 % of the victims are kidnapped.

Victim's Profile

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

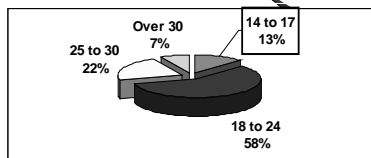


Trafficked is determined by different factors including unemployment, poverty, lack of opportunities, lack of realistic information in the country of origin, civil and ethnic violence, the absence of legal instruments, corruption..

Based on IOM recorded cases

Victim's Profile

AGE BREAKDOWN

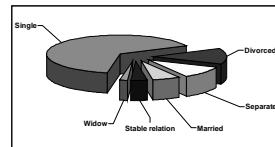


13 % of the trafficked victims in Kosovo are MINORS!

Based on IOM recorded cases

Victim's Profile

Family status



THE VICTIMS ARE:

- SINGLE (65 %),
- DIVORCED (14 %)
- SEPARATED (10%).

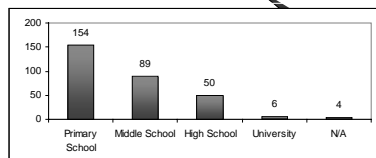
A RELEVANT PART (38%) OF THEM HAS FROM 1 TO 3 CHILDREN.

- 82 % of mothers raise their children alone

- 60% HAD INCOMES BELOW 40 EURO / PER MONTH IN THEIR HOME COUNTRIES,
- 26% REPORTED HAVING DIFFICULT TO EXTREMELY DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR PARENTS AND/OR PARTNER,
- 12.5% HAD EXPERIENCED SEXUAL ABUSE WITHIN THEIR FAMILIES.

Victim's Profile

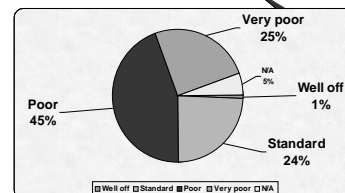
Level of Education



Only 2 % had a University degree, 16.5 % a High School degree, 29 % attended the Middle School and 51 % had only the Primary education.

Victim's Profile

ECONOMIC STATUS



The majority of the assisted victims of trafficking are single (about 66 %), additionally about 37 % have to raise at least one child. A fifth of them are the sole providers of their

families and 70 % of them are not economically sustainable. These women are constantly looking for better-paid jobs to meet the basic economic needs of their families.

From their interview, it has resulted the worrying factor that about one third of them have been physically abused in the past, either by their parents / step parents (more than a half of them) or by their husbands and boyfriends (about 20 %). About 13 % have been marked by traumas of earlier sexual abuse between the ages of 10 and 18 performed by strangers (over 50 %), but also, which is alarming, by relatives or close family members (over 20 %) or friends and acquaintances (in about 30 % of cases).

As far as they work experience concerns, 76% of the assisted victims had already been working before. 67% have had working experience in their home countries, mostly in private sector (more than a half of them) with very low wages, far less than the minimum consumption basket in their home countries with a salary of less than 30\$ per month in almost 60% of the cases. A relevant number of them (41%) had received a professional training and often were able to work in their professions in their home countries.

The assisted victims of trafficking had a previous outside experience and traveled abroad for various reasons and one third of them have had a working experience abroad. Most of them worked in Turkey (over 35%), but also in EU countries (less than 14%), New Independent States (less than 11 %) and EU candidate countries (less than 11 %). Their previous working experience could not always be considered a positive one. For example, 59% of those working abroad received regular salaries, while 29% did not receive them at all or only on occasional basis.

Generally, the victims are not aware about the risks of being trafficked or smuggled. Only 10 % of those assisted were aware since they had been smuggled or trafficked before. It comes evident from the discussions with the victims that they often do not even realize that in their previous journey abroad they had been in fact trafficked. It is worth to stress that although more than 78% of the victims were exploited for sexual purposes in the destination country, only 11% of them knew about the possibility of being involved in sex services before departing from their home country.

Even if aware of the trafficking consequences (from personal experience or mass media) the victims would usually think this could not happen to them (especially if they were trafficked before). They tend to easily trust somebody if they do not have too many choices of earning money otherwise at that particular moment in life. They do not believe that these persons whom they know and who offered them the possibility of a better living would traffic them.

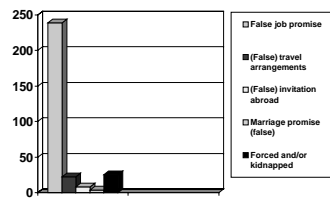
If the young woman has a child to raise, if she did not receive any income for a long time, since she is alone and nobody is there to help her financially, she would consider a blessing the fact that someone proposed her a well paid job abroad, and provided her with a way to feed her family.

RECRUITMENT INTO TRAFFICKING

The traffickers work in well organized crime nets on the whole route and the travel is planned up to destination. The recruiter is often (57% of the cases) an acquaintance or friend and in half of the cases is a female, of the same nationality as the victim. The

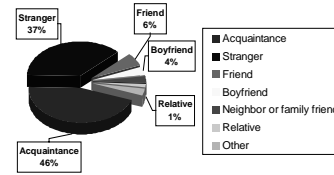
recruiter often states to the victim that s/he is an employment agent and s/he is the one arranging documentation and travel of the victim across one or more national and/or international borders.

Recruitment method into Trafficking..



Based on IOM recorded cases

Relation trafficker vs victims.....



In the majority of the cases (63 %) the trafficker is a man or woman the victims already knows ...



From initial recruitment to arrival in the country of destination, traffickers may sell the young victim several times. In most of the cases the passport (in almost 50% of the assisted cases) and often even the personal belonging are taken away from her. Debt bondage is a tactic often used by traffickers to keep women enslaved. The woman is enslaved under the pretence of repaying the accumulated debt, which includes the price that the trafficker paid for her journey, for the false documents, and her sale (between 1,500 Euros and 3,500 Euros). By the time she gets to the destination place she goes through this buying-selling process several times, her price going up every time she is re-sold. By increasing the woman’s debts owed to the trafficker through medical treatment, accommodation, resale to other owners, etc, she finds it increasingly difficult to repay her accumulated debt and must continue to provide sexual services to reduce the amount “owed”.

The trafficking experience means the beginning of a cycle of violence and terror as the traffickers are exerting an extremely brutal, cruel and manipulative treatment to the victims, both at physical and psychological level. The young woman suffers repeated physical and psychological abuse (78 %) in most of the cases by the trafficker, but also sexual abuse in about 60 % of the cases.

Trafficking becomes an easy manipulation. Usually at the beginning of the journey everything seems OK, the passport is taken away by the traffickers after the first border is crossed; the victims are moved from one trafficker to another, the victims receive very vague explanations about the route. Most of the borders are crossed illegally by foot, boat, car, even in the trunk of a bus, most of the victims are held in apartments on the way for days and weeks – locked in, while potential buyers arrive to “check” them and this implies to rape them! Usually only the day the victim enters the destination, that is not the country s/he expects to be in, s/he learns that this is her final destination where s/he needs to work and return her/his debt.

“After I finished to repay my debt, I asked the owner to let me go home, instead he became more and more violent as the weeks went by. We were his “property” he said, by buying us he bought the right to beat us, to rape us, starve us, force us to have sex with clients...”

EXPLOITATION AT THE DESTINATION AND THEIR RESCUE

The victim is usually entrapped in the same place where she works, sharing limited space with many other victims. The majority of the victims has limited (47 %) and/or none (38 %) freedom of movement.

The majority of the victims (about 75%) are forced to provide sexual services in the bars, motels and other public houses and 2.5% are exploited as private sex slaves.

“...I was locked, was never allowed to leave the apartment, almost every day beaten and often sexually abused by his friends...”

“I have seen almost 100 men. When the police came to rescue us I was about to be again soldFor me it was a terrible life...and now after I was rescued, I still have nightmares every night...I woke up in the night and I don't know where I am, it is in the bar or here, in this safe house...”

Trafficked women and children face in fact numerous health risks. Women who are trafficked suffer the same, or often worse, injuries, infections, and traumas as those suffered by women who are sexually assaulted or raped. The majority of the victims are heavily abused physically, sexually and psychologically by the traffickers. They live in terrible hygienic conditions with none or limited access to medical care (over 35% the medical care was denied). In particular they are exposed to sexually transmitted infections (STIs), other reproductive tract infections (RTIs), unplanned pregnancies and physical traumas from severe beatings. For the victims of trafficking, apart from the typical circumstances of sexual violence, the elements of surprise, isolation, threats, and an overall malicious “treatment” inflicted by the traffickers contribute to the severe impact of the experience. Many women suffer severe psychological problems due to the abuse.

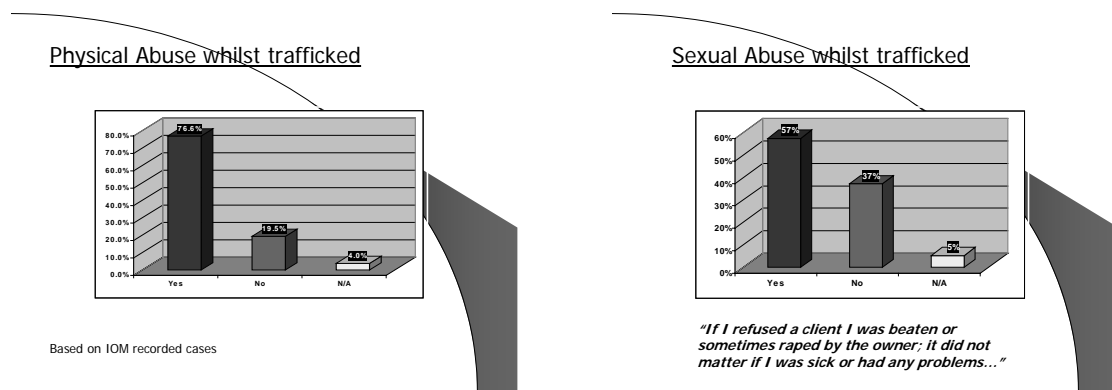
The trafficking experience violates a person's autonomy at the level of basic bodily integrity. The victim is not allowed to decide when or if she eats; she is not allowed to decide when or if she can rest, and repeatedly, her body is injured and invaded. This loss of control is often recounted as the most humiliating aspect of the trauma.

Due to the nature of the trafficking phenomenon, the type of chronic trauma experienced by the victim is not limited to a single disruptive event; instead the trauma is extended over a much longer period of time. Accordingly, the longer the victim remains under the control of their traffickers, the more severe and long lasting are the effects of their trauma.

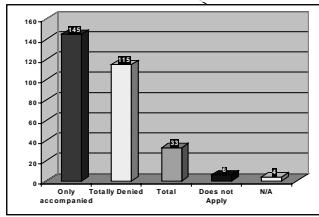
Moreover, the victim lives in a perpetually deceptive environment where the traffickers feed them with false information, which is meant to prevent the victim from turning immediately to the police or trying to escape on their own.

The feelings of vulnerability and emotional pain that are experienced by the victim, combined, often times, with a background of childhood abuse and mistreatment play a significant role in the occurrence and severity of acute reactions. The victims assisted by IOM Kosovo reported the following reactions as a consequence of the trauma they experienced such as: acute stress reaction, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, dissociation and borderline personality disorder, acts of deliberate self-harm (usually razor cuts and signs of self-inflicted cigarette burns on the arms). Ultimately, there is an extreme risk of suicide among women who have been trafficked. Some of them state that they decide to do a suicidal act (such as taking sedatives, cutting their veins, or voluntary intoxication with various chemicals) only to be hospitalised and escape from the abusive environment where they are held captive.

All their means and abilities to respond to or face danger are annihilated and the traffickers use all above-mentioned techniques to subjugate women mainly into sexual slavery. Most of the victims become numb, passive and doubtful, and seem incapable of fighting the terrible situation in which they end up. The cruel reality is that all too often people blame or criticize the victim for this passivity instead of understanding it as one of the outcomes of the criminal treatment that these women endure.

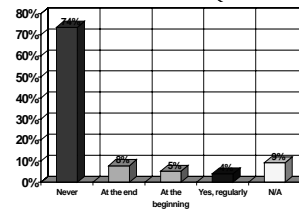


Freedom of movement



"... We were locked inside all the time. The only time we went out was with the owner to buy sexy clothes for work..."

Payment whilst trafficked...



Based on IOM recorded cases

TRAFFICKING AND ROOT CAUSES

To conclude, it must be stressed that trafficking has many different dimensions: it is an issue of violence against human beings, an example of serious human rights violations, an economic and development issue with consequences for the entire region and its societies, and, ultimately, a criminal matter. In order to address the global problem of trafficking, the factors and conditions that underlie shall be addressed in primis.

Focusing only on the effects of trafficking, without addressing its root causes, cannot eliminate the problem. The socio-economic and political root causes of trafficking including unemployment, poverty, gender inequalities, social and cultural attitudes, together with the demand for sexual services and cheap labour must be at the forefront of the long-term effort to fight human trafficking effectively. Programmes should be established with the goal of strengthening efforts to tackle poverty and further marginalization, particularly amongst the most vulnerable groups -- such as women and children -- through measures designed to improve governance, material support, social protection, employment and educational opportunities, and sustainable economic development. Furthermore, legislation and policies on equal opportunity must protect and strengthen the legal and social position of women and children and specifically address all forms of gender discrimination. These efforts are needed in countries of origin, transit, and destination and should occur not only within individual nations, but above all, through regional and international initiatives. Only with the commitment of resources and determined political will can this modern form of slavery be combated.

CROSSING BORDERS: MEDIA IMAGES OF PROSTITUTION IN FINNMARK¹⁸

Dag Stenvoll,
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When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the inhabitants of Eastern Finnmark suddenly found themselves a few hours drive from the Russian city of Murmansk. This city has a population about as large as Oslo, and after the opening of the border Russians came across as tourists and as traders, carrying goods for sale at Norwegian markets and pavements. The issue that has received most attention after this increased border crossing is Russian women selling sex to Norwegian men. There have been some reports of Russian and Eastern European prostitutes operating in other parts of Norway too, especially during the last two years in Oslo, but during the 1990s the media focus was heavily concentrated on the so-called Finnmark prostitution.

Prostitution in industrialised countries is usually located in cities, but Finnmark is the most sparsely populated region of Norway (in itself a sparsely populated country). Moreover, many of the Russian women involved are reported to have city backgrounds and higher education, and these factors make the Finnmark prostitution a rather special case. What we're faced with is more small-scale, less professionalised and less organised than prostitution involving foreign women in cities like Oslo (and also different from the instances of trafficking that has just been described by Tatjana Sullini).

In my study, I've looked at nearly 200 newspaper articles about prostitution in Finnmark, published between 1990 and 2002 by the two Oslo-issued national daily newspapers *Aftenposten* and *Dagbladet* and by the Norwegian News Agency (NTB). In these articles, the issue of prostitution in Finnmark is often discussed together with other themes, including economic recession in Russia, organised crime and disease. I shall point to some of these different themes, or frames, and discuss how they affect the understanding of prostitution and understandings of "what the problem is". Most of the themes clearly involve negative notions of the activity, and of Russians and Russia.

I start looking at the issue of prostitution in Finnmark with special focus on prostitutes and customers. Then I will discuss some of the other themes frequently raised in the material. It is important how the prostitution is framed through other themes, because it affects how we see the problem and how we see possible solutions to it.

'THE FINNMARK PROSTITUTION' AND NORWEGIAN POLITICS OF PROSTITUTION

Prostitution in Finnmark gained extensive national attention in 1997, when local demonstrations took place at venues that were well-known for prostitution, and activists

¹⁸ A fuller version of this article, with academic references, has been published as "From Russia With Love? Newspaper Coverage of Cross-Border Prostitution in Northern Norway, 1990-2001", in *The European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 9(2): 143-162.

threatened to name the men who bought sex - or the 'whorecustomers', as they are commonly called in Norwegian. Neither selling nor buying sexual services is illegal in Norway, only different forms of pressure, organising or financial gain by third parties. As local people in Finnmark cried for public action, criminal law could therefore only be used if specific instances of exploitation or organisation could be proved. This turned out to be difficult, and attempts were instead made to stop the prostitution indirectly, through other means.

One of these attempts, tried in 1998, was to expel Russian women who offered sex for money, because they lacked work permits. This strategy was criticised for its Catch-22 approach: If anyone had applied for such a work permit, they obviously wouldn't have gotten it, since prostitution is not recognised as work in Norway. In May 1999, the Norwegian Supreme Court ruled that police could not arrest or expel sex-selling foreigners for lacking work permits, since prostitution is not to be considered work.

Some weeks after this judgement, Parliament amended the so-called 'Alien Citizens Act', to allow removal of foreigners from Norway if they disturb 'the public order', or if they are not convincing on the declared purpose of stay. These amendments were part of a general adjustment of Norwegian legislation to match the criteria of the Schengen Agreement. In the parliamentary committee report as well as in the plenary debate it was suggested applicable against Russian prostitutes in Finnmark (or 'the Russian whore traffic', as one MP put it).

Another suggested policy has been to follow the example of Sweden, where paying for sexual services was made illegal from January 1999. Such customer criminalisation was rejected by the Norwegian parliament during a revision of sexual crime legislation in June 2000. It was then decided, however, to criminalise the purchase of sexual services from adolescents between 16 (the age of consent) and 18 (the age of majority). This criminalisation of adolescents was presented as being in line with the United Nations' focus on sexual exploitation of children (defined as those under 18), as well as being a synchronisation of Nordic legislation: Purchasing sexual services from someone under 18 was at this point already illegal in Finland and Denmark, as well as in Sweden. As far as I've registered, there haven't been cases of men in Finnmark being accused of buying sex from Russian women under 18.

Another attempt to stop the Finnmark prostitution, which has apparently at least greatly reduced its visibility, has been to apply legislation against infectious diseases to close down well-known venues of prostitution. In late year 2000, a venue often referred to in the newspaper articles (Tana Guesthouse), was closed 'for sanitary reasons'. Although prostitution apparently disappeared overnight, it has later been reported that Russian women still sell sex to Norwegian men in the area, but that it now happens in private homes instead.

PROSTITUTION, THE PROSTITUTE AND THE CUSTOMER

In the following, I will present and discuss some of the newspaper images of 'the Finnmark prostitution' and of its two 'main characters': The prostitute and the customer. The activities are not described in any detail, and except from a few explicit mentions of 'sexual intercourse', the articles refer to the issue simply as 'prostitution'. Often the choice of words frames the prostitution as an economic transaction: It is referred to as 'selling

and buying sex/sexual services', that Russian women 'offer sex', that there is a 'girl trade, woman trade, sex trade' or a 'business' going on. The women are frequently described as selling something ('themselves', 'their bodies', or 'their pussy'). Sometimes the economic frame is also used to explain prostitution itself, presenting it as caused by an imbalance in the local supply of and demand for women (that there is a lack of women in the region, and men are considered to be of a more 'sex-hungry' nature than women).

As for images of the Russian women involved, the general impression given by the articles is that these women are not 'professionals'. They're portrayed as women of all kinds and ages that try to escape the rough social and economic conditions in North-Western Russia. Many of the mentions can be sorted under a general frame of economic deprivation: Poverty in Russia explains the cross-border trade in sexual services. This frame occurs in several forms, on a scale from sexual slavery to free choice. At the slavery end, the women are in some articles written about as victims, exploited by men (as traffickers, pimps or customers). The women are thought to be forced or deceived into prostitution. In another image from the articles, these women are portrayed as victims of poverty rather than of evil men: Being unemployed and poor, they sell sexual services to survive and to provide for their families. Finally, but more seldom, the Russian women are written about as fortune seekers, looking for a Norwegian to marry or choosing to sell sexual services in order to afford some luxury. Although different, these images share the assumption that prostitution is caused by unequally distributed wealth, and that women wouldn't be selling sexual services if it hadn't been for poverty and inequalities between Norwegians and Russians. Prostitution is not portrayed as an attractive or legitimate profession, as it sometimes is in film and literature and in news stories about young, beautiful women working as luxury escorts or in massage parlours.

A common synonym for prostitute, widely used in the articles, is 'whore' ('sex worker' is never used). This word is often highlighted through combinations with other words, like for instance 'whoremoney', 'whorecustomer', 'whorewar', 'whorettraffic', 'whore-buses' and 'Russian-whores'. Whore is actually one of the most insulting words that you can say in Norwegian. It's quite commonly used in daily conversation, as an abusive term to and about women in general. In fact, 'whore' is more frequently used in this general, negative sense than about prostitutes. It therefore strikes me as strange how the word is so commonly used in what appears to be a descriptive manner, not only by journalists but also by quoted politicians, police officials, medical doctors and priests. One obvious explanation for its use in the press is that it's short, catchy and taboo (like 'sex'). But I also think the undisputed use of the word reflects some deeply negative notions about prostitutes in particular and also about promiscuous women in general (there are clear parallels to other languages, e.g. English 'whore' and French 'pute').

Then there're the customers, or 'whorecustomers' as they are often called in the articles. Like whore, whorecustomer is far from a positive term. However, unlike whore, it is used only about those who actually pay for sexual services. In general, the customers are more negatively portrayed than the prostitutes in these articles. Firstly, there's the mirror image of the 'prostitute as sex slave' image, namely that the customers are cynical and irresponsible men who take advantage of these women's difficult situation. Secondly, the customers are portrayed as second class men, old and a bit pathetic, not being able to make contact with women in a 'normal' way. In either case, the men involved are written about as if being different from Norwegian men in general. The 'pathetic male image' of the customers corresponds on the one hand to traditional stereotypes of primitive men living in rugged, outback country like Finnmark (the 'Wild West' of Norway). On the

other hand, the pathetic male image fits well with an understanding of prostitution as an activity for special men outside relationships, and not for husbands and boyfriends. Prostitution is thus placed elsewhere, among the socially and morally deviant. This is a common observation in prostitution studies, that men who buy sex are often presumed to be different from 'ordinary men', but that in fact such ordinary men constitute a clear majority of customers.

FRAMING 'THE FINNMARK PROSTITUTION'

Through reading the nearly 200 articles with the question of 'What is this article about?' in mind, some reoccurring frames can be identified. In the first one, which I'll call 'the crime frame', prostitution is presented as a problem of crime and public order. Trading in sex is associated with illegal trades, especially in alcohol and in drugs, and the focus is on organised crime - notably the Russian Mafia. It is assumed that the traffic in women is organised from the Russian side, and there is an expressed fear of Mafia expansion westwards into Norway. Some reports tell about organised crime actually being very limited in Norway. However, even in these reports, prostitution is often commented and written about as if it were a crime. For example, prostitution is sometimes listed alongside with smuggling, trafficking and 'other' criminal activities, and the vocabulary used is often one that gives clear associations to criminal offences (like 'evidence' of prostitution, that someone is 'suspected of' prostitution or that they're 'innocent', and that prostitution cannot be 'proved').

This crime frame fits well together with common assumptions about an ongoing criminalisation of Russian society in this period, and alongside a long history of crime-oriented framing of prostitution and sexual activity outside of marriage in general. Defining and understanding something as a problem of crime furthermore opens up for certain political strategies, usually involving legislative and law-enforcing institutions. For instance, two of the openly applied public measures against the Finnmark prostitution have been the increased on-site presence of uniformed police ('good old traditional police work') and the videotaping of customers, to so-called 'stress' the trade and thereby scare prostitutes and customers away. Now, these are measures that wouldn't have been thought of or accepted that easily if prostitution wasn't in fact seen as a criminal activity.

A second common theme in the articles is disease, and I'll refer to this as the 'disease frame'. There are some reports about increasing numbers of sexually transmitted diseases in Russia (especially HIV and syphilis). Some words used are 'explosion of HIV', 'Russian syphilis' and (my favourite) 'ticking venereal disease bomb'. There have also been some reports stating that non or very few instances of STDs has actually been traced to Russians, but most of these articles still stress that prostitution in general nevertheless represents a health danger. Only one article completely rejects the disease frame, saying that the image of Russian women as spreaders of disease is wrong and unfair.

One thing that can be said about the disease frame is that there is a long history in Norway and elsewhere of prostitution being understood and approached as a public health problem. Restrictions on prostitution have often been made in the form of health measures, presented as necessary to protect prostitutes, their customers or society against the spread of diseases. Historically, the main focus has almost exclusively been on the spread of disease from prostitutes to customers, despite the medical fact that such diseases are much easier transmitted from men to women. It has been prostitutes rather

than customers who've been controlled, for instance through compulsory medical examinations and detainment. The very small number of actual incidents of Norwegian men getting STDs from Russian women indicates that the disease frame in the press material has been out of proportions. It seems that what is really of concern here is social and moral health, not medical health.

In addition to the crime frame and the disease frame, there is a third set of themes that concerns social and moral problems, and I'll refer to this as the 'community breakdown frame'. When 'the Finnmark prostitution' became a national issue in 1997, it was written of as an activity that seriously disrupted the normal functioning of the local community. Because this is a sparsely populated area, the sex trade was presumably more visible in public than in a city, where prostitutes and especially customers can obtain some anonymity. According to the articles, the prostitution caused suspicion, lies, floods of rumours, and harm to families, children and women. There was also a theme of moral decay, describing how a small community with good values was being 'raped', becoming a local 'Sodom'. One illustrating article tells about a mother and her children picking berries, finding condoms and empty liquor bottles in their way (in Norway, picking berries is an activity highly symbolic of happy family life and innocent youth, which make a powerful contrast to the indecencies of sex and booze). All so-called good forces were called on to mobilise against such evil, in order to save the coming generations.

The fourth and last problem-oriented theme that I'll point out can be called the 'stigma frame'. In this frame, the problem is presented as prostitution causing damage to 'innocent' people: especially non-prostitute Russian women in Norway, and children of Russian-Norwegian couples. People with Russian backgrounds are reported being labelled as whores and dubious elements, and being exposed to mobbing, racism and violence. There is in my opinion an interesting side to this concern with stigma and the possible mobbing of 'innocents'. There are no accounts of 'the mob', and mobbing appears as something caused by the buying and selling of sexual services. Responsibility is not placed among 'the mobbers', but among prostitutes and customers. Prostitution appears to be the direct reason why so-called 'innocent' children and Russian women are mobbed. The solution then becomes to get rid of prostitution - and not with mobbing as such or the stigma attached to prostitution.

The concern with innocents has an obvious contrast in someone being guilty; the prostitutes. In my opinion, it is important to get past the stigma connected to prostitution. Not only because we want to avoid dehumanising prostitutes and to avoid treating them as guilty, but also because this stigma has a much broader effect: It disciplines many more women than those actually involved in prostitution. To avoid 'the whore stigma', more or less all women have to convince others and themselves that they are decent and honourable, that they're not 'cheap'. In the process, women's range of possible actions is constrained (e.g. women have to be more conscious than men on how to act and dress in public and at work). This perspective connects the stigma frame on prostitution in Finnmark with sexual conduct and gender relations more broadly. Women in general have to defend themselves against the whore stigma, if they want to be considered decent women. Journalists and other public spokespersons should therefore, in my opinion, be much more careful in contributing to this stigma, by uncritically reproducing the traditional, negative problem frames of prostitution.

Now a few notes about language: My analysis of themes and frames so far presumes that words matter, in the sense that the way things are understood and talked about affects

the way they are acted upon (politically or in daily life). It is therefore noteworthy that many of the problem-oriented articles contain imagery that associates the prostitution with crisis and disaster. The comments on prostitutes and Russians coming to Norway often imply large and threatening amounts. For instance, fear is expressed of a 'Mafia invasion' and for an 'explosion of HIV', and there are reports about Russian buses 'filled' or 'packed' with women rolling across the border 'every weekend', 'invading' 'small' Norwegian villages. One article even states that Finnmark is 'literally flooded' by Russians. Such choices of words pave the way for authorities to restrict border crossings, framed as necessary against the threatening hordes and floods of people from abroad. In this sense some of the articles have nationalistic implications, and there is also a nationalist side to the crime and disease frames, according to which crime and disease are threats coming from abroad. In Norway, as in most other countries, there is a strong tendency to see 'foreigners' or 'non-ethnic Norwegians' as more criminal and as a greater health risk than 'Norwegians'. Within this self-understanding, Norway is a quiet oasis in a world of violence, disease and poverty (has some truth to it, but is not the whole story). An important strategy following from this idea of Norway as a very special place is to restrict border crossings in order to keep it that way.

CONCLUSION

To sum up: The different frames on the Finnmark prostitution are important. They provide answers to the question of 'What is the problem?' and points to how the problem should be solved. If the prostitution is understood in terms of crime, disorder and disease, it is at the same time linked to established institutions for dealing with such problems, that is the police and the judicial system, health authorities, and immigration control authorities. These institutions are commonly understood as non-political, in the sense that most people accept that they represent the general public interest. Measures directed against Russians thus appear as necessary self-protection (and I would say, of course, that this isn't the case).

'The Finnmark prostitution' involves border-crossing in the specific sense of crossing the Russian-Norwegian border, but it also involves the more abstract border-crossing between romantic love and sex on the one hand, and money on the other. This distinction is a common issue in much research on prostitution worldwide, and it has been shown that there are great variations in to what degree people actually separate between the two. In Norway, it is quite clear that it is a taboo to mix sex and money, or love and money. 'The Finnmark prostitution' is a rather special case, because of its small-scale, rural setting. According to recent reports, as many as one in two marriages in some of the eastern counties of Finnmark now take place between a Russian woman and a Norwegian man. Evidently there are overlaps between prostitution, arranged marriages and 'normal' relationships, something that is also mirrored in the news reports' portrayals of the Russian women as 'non-professionals'. If these portrayals are correct, 'the Finnmark prostitution' should be approached differently than organised trafficking of Eastern European and Third World women to urban locations elsewhere in Western Europe. It is important to keep in mind that prostitution is a diverse thing, and to avoid taking political action based on distorted premises, action that might have adverse effects. An example of such a mistake would be to 'protect' Russian women by limiting their freedom of movement.

It is also important to start speaking about Russian women in Norway as something more than prostitutes or mail order brides. There are currently about 7000 Russians living in this country, most of which are (believe it or not) neither prostitutes nor pimps nor members of the mafia. In Finnmark, the opening up of the border has actually caused some revitalisation of a region in decline, since resourceful Russians have come to live and work in the area. It is very sad that the prostitution issue, which after all is a relatively marginal phenomenon, has overshadowed such positive developments.

Finally, prostitution only affects a relatively small number of people directly involved as prostitutes or customers. The whore stigma, however, affects many more women. The problem is not that men think that all women can be bought, but rather that women must spend such a considerable amount of time and energy thinking about not to appear 'whorish'.

DEBATES FOLLOWING SECTION III

Turid Heiberg, Save the Children, Norway

I want to thank you Tatiana because you brought the issue of children on to the agenda. I think that is extremely important. It is our experience, working more or less all over the world, that the increase in trafficking in children is quite high. We have previously challenged the Minister of Justice. He mentioned the five pillars in the governments work against trafficking. The issue of children however, should have been high on the agenda too. We actually think it should have been the 6th pillar on his agenda for fighting trafficking. We have measured that 1/3 of all those trafficked are children. Moreover, many women report that they were trafficked for the first when they were children.

We have talked about victimising and giving help. Of course, it is a challenge to let children themselves organise and be allowed to speak out. Also, as you gave such a valuable account of, Tatiana, how they describe the whole trafficking situation. That is so important.

About victimising; I think after this day, this is an issue we all should build upon. Although, in certain instances children are victims, they are human beings too, who have used whatever they can to survive the circumstances. Sometimes they also manage to get out of trafficking and sexual exploitation in whatever form.

Liv Jessen, Chair Person, Pro Sentret, Norway

And thank you Turid. Save the Children is at least one of the NGO's that push young people forward within their own organisation, so that they can organise and take up this issue, which is a very, very good thing.

Volker Moritz, Foundation AMOC/DHV, the Netherlands

I have a question; are there any organisations working with, what do you call them, the traffickers? I mean the men selling the women?

Tatiana Sullini, IOM Prishtina, Serbia/Montenegro

Do you mean if there are organisations that try to fight, or work against the traffickers?

Volker Moritz, Foundation AMOC/DHV, the Netherlands

No, not against, but helping them. I don't mean helping them selling the women, but helping them change their view re trafficking, work with them or whatever they need...

Tatiana Sullini, IOM Prishtina, Serbia/Montenegro

Yes, good question. From a legal and prosecution point of view, the answer is yes. In Kosovo at least, the law enforcement authorities try to prosecute the traffickers, as they are involved in organising the whole network. Moreover, In Kosovo the law is foreseen both for the victims as well as those who organise the whole network. The punishment in Kosovo for trafficking range from 2 to 20 years.

If you think from the psychological point of view, I think much could have been done to find out what is pushing these criminals to organise whole networks. As far as I know, there are no such initiatives. I believe however, that the answer to this question is quite clear; it is done for the economic profits. So may it be that these people have psychological problems; I mean they are criminals. The main effort to be done by the government is to establish preventive measures against trafficking and for the law enforcement to punish the traffickers when a crime is committed.

Liv Jessen, Chair Person, Pro Sentret, Norway

It is important, of course, to realise that people become traffickers mostly because they want to, or need some money. It is also a poverty type of thing, especially if the trafficker is an acquaintance of the women. Like the girls we talked to the other day at our office. They knew very well the man in their own village that got them on to the path of trafficking, recruiting them and helping them along. He was an acquaintance, a good friend.

Tatiana Sullini, IOM Prishtina, Serbia/Montenegro

I can add something to this. I would like to emphasise that in organised trafficking, there are three levels of organisations. When we talk about top-level traffickers, the ones that organise the international level, the different networks, Russians and Albanians, belong to the local mafia. They also normally traffic in weapons and drugs. At least this is the situation in Kosovo. They are one kind of criminals. Then we have the second level of traffickers. Usually they operate on a national level. They are often Moldavian and Romanian women that in the majority of the cases have been trafficked themselves. After two or three years in prostitution, they don't see any other way to escape than to become traffickers themselves. So I think when it comes to traffickers, a large part of our work should be concentrated on preventing the victims to become traffickers themselves, because they don't see any other way out.

Nell Rasmussen, VFC, Pro-Tema, Denmark

I think that the heading of this section of the program has been really interesting; learning the facts of trafficking, and then the images in Norwegian papers on prostitution as a phenomenon in the northern part of Norway. Dag [Stenvoll], your presentation of the images on prostitution almost took me 20 years back in the debate and in the understanding of prostitution. And I was wondering; has your study already been published, and if so, has it caused some debate in the Norwegian media? It seems like the understanding is so backwards that there must be a tremendous teaching and educational job to do in relation to journalists.

Dag Stenvoll, The Rokkan Centre, Norway

It has been published, but it has been published in English, so I presume it hasn't been read by Norwegian journalists. But I haven't noted any debate, no, nothing in papers anyway.

Jo Doezema, Network of Sex Work Projects, UK

I was also noticing how the two papers work together. It is interesting, the idea of images and facts, and particularly what Dag [Stenvoll] said: what's the matter? Images matter, this was illustrated so clearly in the presentation of facts. As one of my favourite philosophers, the Czech Zizek says: "The arch statement of ideology is to let the facts speak for themselves. The thing is: Facts never speak for themselves, but are made to speak to a discursive network of symbols and signs" The IOM is heavily invested in the Balkans with an image of the sex worker as a victim, which was something that I addressed in my presentation. As a network of sex worker projects, we have had a lot of contact with the IOM in their work, and as a sex worker organisation, we recognise the terrible abuses that go on in the sex industry. In fact – I think there is no organisation better placed with thousands of members around the world with experience in the sex work industry to know what is going on there. We call these abuses of sex worker rights. However, organisations that are invested in the victim mode ignore the experiences of sex workers for fear that the image of the victim will somehow be compromised. And I have to say – in the presentation to day from the IOM – how interesting I found it that there was a constant reiteration of the sexual abuse undergone by the trafficking victims. When this was 13 %, and I do have to say – what on earth does it matter if someone is sexual abused if they are in a condition of sexual slavery? What earthly relevance does that have to their justification for being removed from that situation?

The other thing that I found very interesting was the further developments where victims of trafficking apparently return two or three or even four times, where victims of trafficking refuse our offers of help and assistance. When you are thinking exclusively in a mode of victim or criminal, there is only room for this person to be a victim or a criminal. But what those facts are saying to me is sneaking through a different image, of a migrant, a migrant sex worker with agency, with determination, with spunk who doesn't conform to the victim image. Who doesn't *want* to conform to the victim image, and for whom the IOM is offering nothing. And this is something that I would take the IOM to task for. I get reports daily of police brutality, on the back of anti-trafficking efforts in the former Balkans, of crack downs and battles of deportations of sex workers who don't conform to their victim standard. The IOM as the organisation for migrants should be there for all sex workers, not just those who conform to the victim standard.

May-Len Skilbrei, University of Oslo, Department of Criminology and Sociology of Law, Norway

I have a comment in line with Jo's comment, actually, because I want us to be aware of the fact that we have a lack of research based knowledge about trafficking. And I believe it is a problem in the debate that one takes some extreme examples and makes them the evidence of the whole situation. Because if it is true, that hundreds and thousands of women are being trafficked to Europe every year, and that institutions like the IOM and the police meet some of these women, it might be that those are the worst-case scenarios. There might be other ways of experiencing transnational prostitution. I think that's a very important aspect of this. Especially if you want to combat this phenomenon, if *this* is what you point at, and it isn't really representative, you shoot with the wrong ammunition. So, I think we have to take these things into consideration.

SECTION 4: EUROPEAN PROSTITUTION CONTROL: DIFFERENT APPROACHES

THE SWEDISH VIEW ON PROSTITUTION: THE LAW, THE MOTIVES AND THE RESULTS SO FAR

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First I would like to express my appreciation of the fact that I have been given the opportunity to meet you today and give a short orientation about the Swedish perspective on prostitution and the experiences of our legislation.

I think it is extremely important to meet and talk about important matters. Therefore I welcome this conference and the mutual wish to take the matter of prostitution seriously. I think it is an important question that is stated before this conference: What are the practical consequences of the different strategies for control? But I want to stress that in Sweden, our ambition is not to control prostitution, we want to fight it.

I will start by talking from the view of human rights. In a situation where the debate has become ignited and confused, I think it is important to extract some fundamental values and arguments.

- What should every person in this society be guaranteed?
- What should society as a whole try to benefit and what should it fight?

A good way to succeed in answering those questions in the perspective of prostitution is to start with some key phrases in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations signed in 1948.

Let's start with Article 3. It says: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Compare this with the fact that different studies show that the mortality is drastically higher among prostitutes than others. In Canada for example a study shows that the mortality is approximately 40 times higher among prostitutes than the average.¹⁹ Despite different ideas about what to do about it – it is obvious that the life as a prostitute today does not reach up to reasonable human rights standards.

Let's move on to:

Article 4. It says: No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

¹⁹ Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (Fraser Committee) *Pornography and Prostitution in Canada* (Ottawa: Department of Justice 1985)

Compare that statement with the fact that studies show that for example in Netherlands, 80 % of the women in prostitution are trafficked into the country.²⁰ Trafficking, which is a phenomenon high on the European agenda, is strongly linked to prostitution.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Is there anyone that does not think that prostitution is a degrading treatment? If prostitution is not defined as cruel, inhuman and degrading in a democratic society – what is?

Of course we can always point at other countries and say. "Look! They are committing crimes against human rights!" It is much worse than what's happening here. Perhaps it is true, but it is not the answer to why we choose not to see the cruelty in our own societies, in Europe, in the western world, in stable democracies being blessed from war for decades.

We must also be able to look at ourselves and study our own part of the world. And we have to see that also cruelty against women and children is cruelty.

We have to open our eyes, listen, talk about it and act.

In Sweden the debate on prostitution has become intense during the last years. This is mainly the result of the Swedish law but also the influences from the debate in different European countries such as the Netherlands, Germany and of course Italy a couple of years ago, and today from Finland, Russia and the Baltic states. Of course, the fact that there is focus on fighting trafficking in Europe has also put focus on the issue of prostitution in Sweden. An ambition we strongly support.

I will start by posing some questions that are the main issues of the discussion in Sweden. After that I will describe the law and some of the results obtained.

Let's start with the crucial questions. I will identify four of them:

1. Is prostitution a result of a free choice?
2. Is prostitution ordinary work?
3. Is prostitution exploitation of poor people and racism?
4. Is prostitution the result of male dominance and violence?

PROSTITUTION AS A RESULT OF A FREE CHOICE

A common argument by prostitution advocates is that women and girls make informed and calculated choices about entering into prostitution. They say that the ones who have so chosen should be free to pursue their choice in the name of self-determination.

But it is an indispensable fact that a number of oppressive conditions increase the likelihood of women and girls being drawn into prostitution, such as living in poverty,

²⁰ International Centre for Migration Policy Development, *The Relationship Between Organized Crime and Trafficking in ALiens*: Study Prepared by the Secretariat of the Budapest Group 1999 att 11.

being homeless and being drug dependent, as well as sexual, physical and psychological violence by male relatives, boy friends, husbands, pimps and others. We also know that poverty is widespread, that drug abuse is up to 100 % in Malmö, 20% in Gothenburg.²¹

In different studies from around the world, the majority of women and girls in prostitution report that they have been victims of male sexual violence in their girlhoods. In a study of 130 prostituted persons in San Francisco, the researchers found that 57% had been sexually abused as children.²² Likewise, a study in Portland, Oregon reported that 85% of the women interviewed were victims of incest as girls and 90% had been physically abused.²³ In a Calgary study, 82% of the girls had been victims of prior sexual violence.²⁴

I have a friend who has been working in the sex industry in Sweden for decades and now has succeeded in leaving it. She has met hundreds of prostitutes while working in the sex industry and she says that she never met any prostitute that had not been sexually abused before they came into prostitution. She was of course one of them.

Instead of talking about prostitution as a choice, we must ask ourselves: If prostitution is a free choice, why is it that it is always the women and girls who are the ones who end up in prostitution? Why is it always the people with the least power, the most marginalized, the drug addicts, the most abused, and the poorest and persons with foreign origin that are supposed to freely have chosen this?

Because *the lack of alternatives* shows that the choice is not free. The freedom of choice is of course based on reasonable alternatives. For different reasons these do not exist for prostitutes.

Could you really imagine a world where women have the power, the highest salaries, the fortunes, the resources, the best health care, the best careers, the best social securities and the greatest self-esteem. Could you then imagine women being prostitutes? Of course not – then it would be the men selling their bodies. Because power and abuse are connected.

But there is another way of thinking about the freedom of choice. Even if it might be a free choice, which I don't think it is, why would that freedom of choice be more important than other freedoms? Is individual liberalism always more important than other values? I will give you an example. When WHO identified a growing market for internal organs, there was a very fast initiative to prohibit it. Most European countries have criminalized this trade. The risk to bring pressure upon people is huge and the respect for the human body is jeopardized. It is the body as an idea that is protected against commercialism. Why should this not be the case for the bodies of women? Why is it okay to commercialise it through prostitution?

²¹ Personal conversation with Kajsa Wahlberg, National Criminal Investigation Department - NCID, January 2001.

²² M. Farley and H. Barkan, "Prostitution, Violence against women, and posttraumatic Stress Disorder" 1998 27 *Women and Health* 37.

²³ Susan Kay Hunter, "Prostitution is cruelty and abuse to women and children" 1993 *Michigan Journal of Gender and Law* 91 at 94.

²⁴ G. Ekberg, *Prostitution and Trafficking in Women: Basic concepts*, oct 3, 2001, Calgary

And why should the individual perspective be more important than the collective if it is obvious that prostitution is damaging, not only the prostitutes, but to all women, in supporting the view that women can be bought – and that women and their bodies are to be commercialised by men? Everyday, everywhere, all women are getting their freedom reduced because of that. Isn't this collective freedom worth anything?

PROSTITUTION AS ORDINARY WORK

The next line of argument is the view that prostitution is ordinary work; legitimate work for women and a valid form for female economic empowerment. Generally, the rhetoric centres around the view that prostitution is a job just like any other, using traditionally female, low-paid jobs as comparable illustrations.

Of course this is not true. Even the strongest supporters of legalizing prostitution are arguing that it is important to support the women that want to leave the prostitution. Please, give me an example of a job where you have to support people that want to change work. Are you in favour of doing so when it comes to doctors, lawyers, politicians or street cleaners? Or are you convinced that they can change work without support, just by doing it. Of course you are. And the reason for the difference is that prostitution is not a common work. It is abuse and you need support to be able to leave it.

And if you think that it *is* an ordinary job: Would you like pupils and students to be interns at brothels, to practice there? In Sweden, if you are supported by unemployment benefits, the government can urge you to take a job. If you refuse, you can lose your benefits. Would it be fair to force unemployed people (both men and women of course) to work as prostitutes? Of course not. Because it is not ordinary work.

And if it really is an ordinary job - would you recommend it to your wife, daughter or perhaps son? Or perhaps work extra hours in the weekends for yourself? Of course not. Because it is not an ordinary job. It is abuse and you and your family have the possibility to choose something else. And you do. The powerful and the ones with a choice always do.

The pro-prostitution lobby often argues for “tolerance zones”; separate districts – meaning “red light districts” in cities where brothels are licensed by the local governments and where street prostitution is regulated. How can this be? If it is an ordinary job, without negative side effects – why does it have to be in special districts? Do we hear the same arguments concerning pharmacies, clothing-stores and bookstores? Of course not. Because prostitution is not ordinary work, it is not an ordinary trade.

If prostitution is an ordinary job, the brothels should be normal working places. If this was the fact, it would be legalized by the government as a legal working place. But your countries as well as mine have got strong laws on enhancing the working conditions in the working places. Can you name one working place with worse conditions concerning mortality, risk of abuse, violence or infections? Of course not – and this is the fact, regardless of legalisation or not. Because they are not ordinary jobs. If those working conditions were discovered on an other type of working place for example – a police department or a factory – it would have been dealt with immediately or the working place would have been shut down.

Therefore, legalizing brothels and prostitution or not aiming at more than controlling these activities, is not a question of legalizing or controlling ordinary jobs and good working places. It is about legalizing abuse and accepting it.

And doing that gives another interesting result: According to an article in *Neues Deutschland*, 3% of Amsterdam's tax revenues come from the so-called "Red Light-districts", and it is estimated that the legalized sex industry provides 5% of the Netherlands's Gross National Product (GNP).²⁵

It makes the government a pimp. And what you should ask yourself is: Should states make money from this so called "market" and support abuse and the women's bodies? Does it not mean that the State indirectly will be acting as a pimp? What will the taxes be? What should be the level of VAT for abuse?

And let's return to one of my initial questions: What should society as a whole try to promote and what should it fight? My view is that the government as a pimp is not the right answer to that question.

IS PROSTITUTION EXPLOITATION OF POOR PEOPLE AND RACISM?

The prostitution lobby argues that prostitution is an acceptable solution to poverty. They assert that prostitution is a legitimate and rational choice for poor, uneducated and unskilled women for whom other kinds of work alternatives are hard to come by. What they mean, but do not say, is that prostitution is an acceptable solution to women's poverty. Seldom do we see proposals that poor men should make their way out of poverty through prostitution.

The prostitution industry exploits to its advantage the fact that most women and girls who are in prostitution come from the most oppressed and vulnerable groups in society. It also benefits greatly from the fact that women of colour and indigenous women face additional levels of violence and oppression because of racism. These women and girls clearly do not have a choice. They are economically and racially marginalized, and are recruited into prostitution because of the absence of real, reasonable alternatives.

To give you one example: In Canada, Aboriginal women and girls are over-represented in prostitution. In a study made a few years ago in Vancouver, the researcher found that 80% of the street prostituted women are Aboriginal women.²⁶ Why aren't wealthy, white men prostitutes?

IS PROSTITUTION THE RESULT OF MALE DOMINANCE AND VIOLENCE?

The prostitution industry often downplays, minimizes and trivializes the extreme level of violence that males are committing against women and girls in prostitution. Pimps,

²⁵ MEP, Marianne Eriksson, "Prostitution 2001" *Neues Deutschland*

²⁶ Jackie Lynne, *Street Prostitution as Sexual Exploitation in first Nation Women's Lives*, Vancouver, University of British Columbia 1998.

traffickers and brothel owners subject women in prostitution to brutal rapes and physical abuse to break down their resistance and to “season” (initiate) them into prostitution.

Compare that with the following question: Why do battered women sometimes stay with the man that beats her? Is she doing it “voluntarily” or is she so weak, compared to the oppressor, that she does not have the strength to leave him? Of course it is not voluntary, in any human sense.

Power and dominance is connected to violence. And that is the fact when it comes to both violence and prostitution.

This brings us into trafficking. This is in every sense the methods for forcing women into trafficking and prostitution. Power is used both in trafficking and in prostitution. The link is so strong. According to a recent study of organized crime (1999), 80% of the women in prostitution in the Netherlands are trafficked into the country as I mentioned earlier.²⁷ They are forced from their country with abuse, violence and power, transported illegally to another country and working as a prostitute there. And never in this chain of horror is their power increasing, in none of these situations do they forget the abuse, and in none of these situations is their self-esteem strengthened. Prostitution is a matter of power and abuse and so is trafficking.

So from my point of view, and from the experiences in Sweden, I dare say that prostitution is not a choice, it is not an ordinary job, it is a way to use people that are weaker and it is an act of power and of violence.

In that context, the answers to the two initial questions:

- What should every person in this society be guaranteed?
- What should society as a whole try to benefit and what should it fight?

– In the context of prostitution, the answer is that every individual is to be guaranteed some fundamental human rights. One of these rights is the right not to be forced to prostitution. It is the responsibility of the society to fight it and give people who are prostitutes real alternatives in order to leave it.

Therefore, Sweden has taken some strong actions in order to fight prostitution. The most famous is of course the law that criminalizes the act of purchasing Sexual Services

THE SWEDISH LAW

In 1999, the Swedish law against the purchase of sexual services came into force as part of a larger *Anti-Violence Act*. This law recognizes that it is the man who buys women for sexual purposes who should be criminalized, and not the woman.

The law was part of a *Violence Against Women Act* package, which was enacted on July 1, 1998. This package included several changes to laws relating to male violence against women, including a strengthened sexual harassment law and a new offence where

²⁷ International Centre for Migration Policy Development, *The Relationship Between Organized Crime and Trafficking in Aliens*. Study Prepared by the Secretariat of the Budapest Group 1999 at 11.

repeated instances of male violence against a woman in an intimate relationship are punishable. All penalties against women and girls in prostitution were removed.

The government also pledged money and assistance to women who are victims of male violence, including prostituted women. The state is thus, to a certain extent, responsible for assisting women to leave violent situations, including prostitution, and for providing women with access to shelters, counselling, education and job training.

THE LAW AGAINST THE PURCHASE OF SEXUAL SERVICES (1998:408)

The law is currently worded as follows:

A person who obtains casual sexual relations in exchange for payment shall be sentenced for the purchase of sexual services to a fine or imprisonment for no more than six months.

To put the length of imprisonment in context, you should know that the longest sentence that can be imposed on anyone for criminal offences in Sweden is ten years.

We have criminalized the buyer in Sweden. It does not solve the whole problem of prostitution and the trafficking in sex slaves, but it is a clear signal that society does not accept that the bodies of women and children are regarded as commodities. And it is clearly saying that the criminal act is to be a buyer – not a prostitute.

AND WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF THE LAW?

From 1999 and until today, the number of women involved in street prostitution has decreased by approximately 50 %, and the recruitment of new women has come to a halt.²⁸ The number of buyers has decreased with 75 % – 80 %.²⁹

Representatives for the Prostitution Centre in Stockholm, a group assisting women leaving prostitution, describes the positive effect the law has have on their clients: of the 130 women they had contact with during the past three years, 60 % have left prostitution permanently, and many of them points to the law as an incentive.³⁰

A representative for the Prostitution Group at the Stockholm Police reports that street prostitution has declined considerably in the four years since the law was passed. The number of prostituted women has been reduced by 50 %. He also points out that there is no indication that prostitution that takes place in porn clubs, escort agencies and brothels has increased.³¹

²⁸ IOKSP Prostitutionsgruppens utvärdering 1999-2001 and "Sexköp minskar - men våldet ökar" Aftonbladet 18/9 -00.

²⁹ Yearly report from the Stockholm Police Prostitution Group, A Gripenlöv and "Gatans sexhandel minskar" DN 29/6-01.

³⁰ Prostitution Centre in Stockholm, different representatives.

³¹ Sanna Björling, *Gatuprostitutionen minskar i Stockholm*" DN 16/2 -01

According to the latest released statistics updated in April 2003, 492 males have been arrested under the law. 492 men have been apprehended by the law by April 2003. This means an increase by 300% the last year. The majority pleas guilty, in order to avoid publicity. 2/3 are convicted and the highest fine so far 50 000 SEK.³²

So does the law fulfil its expectations? The Swedish Women's movement and groups that work with prostituted women say yes. They maintain that prostituted women contact them in greater numbers in order to get assistance to escape prostitution. They also suggest that the existence and enforcement of the law deter young women who are not yet in prostitution but who are runaways, or women who are "soft" drug abusers.

It is estimated by the National Criminal Police that between 200 and 500 women are trafficked into Sweden every year, mainly from Eastern Europe, Russia, Ukraine and Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.³³

According to the National Rapporteur on Trafficking at the National Swedish Police, the number of trafficked women to Sweden has declined since the law was implemented. She says:

There are clear indications that the law has direct and positive effects on fighting trafficking. The law functions as a deterrent.

Traffickers are choosing other destination countries where business is more profitable and not hampered by similar laws. Traffickers are business men - they do not want to go through the hassle in Sweden.³⁴

Trafficking in women for prostitution into Sweden has decreased. The traffickers, who are pragmatic business people, do not want to go through the hassle in Sweden. Instead they bring the women to other countries, such as Holland, Germany and Denmark, where the climate is "friendlier" in these matters.³⁵ And, as I understand it, nowadays also to Norway.³⁶

One important perspective of the law is of course that it also changes the general values in public opinion. Today 80 % of the people support the law.³⁷ It is changing attitudes. As an example the law could be compared to the motives for criminalizing corporal punishment against children. Not many adults have been convicted of that crime, but during the decades the law has been in force it has drastically changed the attitudes towards hitting children. The crime is still there but it has decreased immensely. The society is giving a clear signal of what is right and what is wrong.

I look upon the fight against prostitution as a fight for human rights. In Sweden – we are really convinced that it is through criminalizing the act of the buyer that we both understand the reasons for prostitution and that it is the buyer – the strong part – that is doing the punishable act. Therefore, we think that criminalizing the buyer is the best way to move forward in a difficult issue. And we have seen positive results already – after just

³² Statistical information provided by Leif Pettersson, Brå (Brottsförebyggande rådet.)

³³ National Criminal Investigation Department - NCID, Handel med kvinnor, lägesrapport 3 and 5 1 jan - 31 dec 2002 (RKP KUT Report:3 and 5).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ NRK radionews, 5/9 -03.

³⁷ Annika Engström and Lova Olsson, *Starkt stöd för skärpt sexlag*. SvD 7/2-01. See also Nneka Amu et al, *Åtta av tio svenskar vill ha kvar förbudet mot sexköp*, Aftonbladet 29/10 -02 and SIFO telefonbuss 2002.

4 years. And we are convinced that this is the best way for us to fight both prostitution and trafficking. Trafficking that needs the local prostitution market in order to function.

The Swedish law is truly groundbreaking. It is one of the first attempts by a country to address the real source of prostitution and trafficking – the men who assume the right to purchase females. We know from experience that when the buyers risk punishment, the number of men who buy prostituted women decrease, and the local prostitution markets become less lucrative. Traffickers will then choose other and more profitable destinations. It is a law that recognizes the harmful effects of prostitution on the women and girls who are the victims. This law, I argue, is one of the most fundamental first steps towards abolishing prostitution and trafficking in women and girls. If more countries would address the demand for prostituted women, as being discussed in Finland, Russia and the Baltic states, by criminalizing not only the pimps and the traffickers, but also the buyers, then the global prostitution market could be curtailed.

DUTCH PROSTITUTION POLICY IN A EUROPEAN CONTEXT

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I have been working on the issue of prostitution for some 23 years now. After I finished my studies in sociology, I got a job at the Mr A. de Graaf Foundation in Amsterdam, the Dutch Institute for Prostitution Issues – a small organisation. My main activities were research and policy development. I have been the director of The Rode Draad, the prostitutes' rights organisation, for two years now. Together with a couple of women we are subsidised by the government to inform prostitutes of the new position they have, now that the entire prostitution industry is legal. And we try to influence national and local policies to take prostitutes' rights better into account.

In this presentation I will give an overview of the Dutch situation. I will talk about the reasons why the Dutch government decided to legalise the organisation of voluntary prostitution. I will explain what the law is, and I will go into the results so far.

PROSTITUTION IN THE NETHERLANDS

Amsterdam can be regarded as the city with the largest concentration of prostitution in Europe. All forms of the sex industry can be found here. Famous is the Red Light district in the old centre with hundreds of windows where women sit on display. Next to that we can find sex clubs, some 40 scattered all over the city. A so-called tolerance zone can be found in an industrial area, it is a designated location where street soliciting takes place.

From a study I did in 1999, I calculated some 6,500 work places in prostitution businesses in The Netherlands, and that may lead up to some 20- 25,000 women and boys working there.

SOCIETY AND PROSTITUTION

What is the problem with prostitution? Prostitution is one of the ways in which sexuality is organised in society. Sexuality plays a special role in our society. In all societies, at least in our Western world, people are uneasy to give it a clear place in their life, to talk about it in a relaxed way. Governments feel awkward about how to give it a place in social life and they try to use the penal code to control unaccepted behaviour. Prostitution always falls into that category. There are many reasons for this uneasiness. Prostitution has a public order element. Is it visible? Does it cause nuisance to residential areas? If it does, then it poses a problem, of course.

Furthermore, there is the element of morality. Is it respectable to buy and sell sex or not? Does it fit into religious beliefs? And how about the criminality that is connected to it?

Organised drug crime, forced prostitution and trafficking of persons are real life examples. And of course there is the concern that public health is endangered by prostitution, that prostitutes spread sexually transmitted infections to the general public via their clients. All these elements are being taken into account when the state is thinking about what should be done with this subject. The state is the institution that sanctions the way in which social life is organised. As prostitution is seen as not respectable and undesirable, prostitutes are blamed for the above mentioned social problems as if they are the cause of these problems. There is an element of hypocrisy in this variation on 'blaming the victim'. It ignores the fact that there is a strong demand from willing respectable ordinary men. As a consequence, prostitutes, who do not follow the norms, are stigmatised and socially isolated. I would argue that a thorough analysis of the way in which society is dealing with prostitution will lead to the conclusion that all parties concerned will benefit from acceptance and decriminalisation.

I think the social exclusion and the isolation that is part of the condemnation of people who are doing something that the government doesn't like you to do, is one of the most victimising aspects of the topic that we are talking about to day. We would rather see stigma replaced by respect. Respect that somebody has another religion, respect that somebody has another sexual orientation, respect that somebody wants to dye his hair red. Respect that somebody wants to sell sexual services. Without attaching a stigma.

OPPOSING VIEWS

The difference in ideologies, perspectives and policies are reflected in the words that are used. Prostitute or whore, sex worker or sex slave, professional versus hustler, migrant or victim of trafficking: You find these dichotomies back in the words used for the husband: pimp or partner, and for the organiser: exploiter or entrepreneur. Do you call the buyer rapist or customer? The words that are used relate to the way the speaker thinks about the issue.

The word prostitute is often used to label an identity that will mark you for life. I would rather use it to describe an activity. That also puts more emphasis on the prostitute as subject instead of an object (somebody without free will).

I basically object to the use of words that tend to be very rigid and negative. Actually I think that more categories can apply to a person as time goes by, because conditions change, people change, mentality changes, and knowledge change. To give an example: I witness women who come to our office, as victims, in due time they develop into people who take control of their lives. The use of a concept is also dependant on the experiences of the observer and the judgement he or she makes; maybe even on the mood of somebody thinking about what is life about and how do you feel about your own destiny.

I really think mood swings also influence the way you interpret a situation that you come across. When you come across the windows in the Red Light district in Amsterdam, and you are a British tourist, and you have got money to spend, and you come with your friends, then you look at it from a totally different point of view than if you come the next month with your wife, drinking less alcohol, and you see what the scenery in a totally different perspective and your role in this scenario will be different. You see the same scenes, but I think you have a very different analysis and feeling of what is going

on. So I think that we need to be open for alternative views instead of thinking and analysing in absolute terms. And saying: “this is the truth”, and taking that for the correct perspective for the next hundred years is wrong in my opinion. It makes much more sense and it keeps you closer to reality when you say: “this person can be in this situation and circumstances today, but in another position tomorrow. And I will also look at it in a different way”. But to be so flexible and open-minded is difficult, because you will then always have to be prepared to change your decisions and political actions.

Labelling is done by the powerful, and what we see in the prostitution debate in the international circuit is an overriding idea that prostitution is evil and that the ultimate goal is that it disappears. My main point is that I want to question the absolute nature of this position, and I propose to be open for multiple realities. And above all to listen to the persons concerned the prostitutes.

POLITICAL CULTURE IN THE NETHERLANDS

In Dutch culture there is a relatively great variation in the ideas of how people should live or what religion people should have or how they should relate to one another. There is no dominant religion or ideology. The state is not allowed control peoples' private lives. Of course there are norms and laws, but when people feel that these laws do not apply to a particular situation, they feel free to bend this law. And they are allowed to do so, as long as they do not violate other people's right.

Many politicians would define prostitution as a “social reality”. This points to another basic element of the Dutch society: making compromises on the basis of a pragmatic attitude. The Dutch start their analysis not much from a norm or a principle; they think more with a reference to the most fruitful solution for a given problem. There is actually no overriding set of values and norms: you could be a Protestant, you could be Jew, you could be a Catholic, you could be a Muslim nowadays, and you could be a non-religious person. And everybody applies an element of pragmatism in social life. This result in a picture where everybody has a place under the sun. It is a give and take situation: if you allow other people to live the life they want and to organise it how they want; then you can expect them to respect your way of living. That is part of the social ideology of the Dutch population.

POLITICS AND PROSTITUTION

When one analyses prostitution policy, you must take into account different factors and forces that are playing a role. Economic principles for instance. It is about money. And as long as there is scarcity of sexuality, a market will develop where it is for sale. It is not surprising that in a patriarchal society it is the men who buy. Will the demand for sex disappear? There will never be a society were all peoples' desires are completely met by their partners. There will always be men and women without partners. There will be people who do not have enough money who will sell sexual services to make money. Therefore it is my conclusion that prostitution is inevitable.

In an open society as the Dutch's one it will also be practically impossible to repress prostitution. Holland lies in the centre of Western Europe, where we have one of the biggest airports in Europe, where we have open borders where foreigners come and go

constantly. So it is inconceivable how we can control people's private behaviour or intimate life in such way that we could get rid of prostitution if we wanted to.

ABOLITIONISM

Before the legalisation of the prostitution industry that took place three years ago, the law was abolitionist. The fundament of this view is that every person (mainly men) around the prostitute is seen as a criminal, because he takes advantage of her vulnerable position by selling her body. The prostitute is not penalised, the prostitute is seen as the victim that deserves support to get out of prostitution. The idea of women choosing to work in prostitution is not considered; the possibility that prostitutes could control their own work is seen as absurd.

But as in most Western countries, this law was not implemented. Tragically enough we can see that in most countries the reality is the reverse. The prostitute who is supposed to be the victim and supposed to get help is stigmatised and isolated in social life and de facto criminalized. And the people who organise prostitution – brothel owners and pimps – are left alone to do their business. This hypocritical outcome of everyday policy is what you see in most European countries.

DUTCH TOLERANCE AND REGULATION

The Dutch policy has for the last decades been a system of tolerance: prostitution businesses will not be closed and the owners will not be prosecuted if no other crimes are associated with these businesses. So when there are no children working there, when there is no violence, when there is no trafficking going on, when it poses no nuisance to the neighbourhood, then it will be allowed to operate. The legal reform of 2000 practically formalise this tolerance abolition system. The organisation of voluntary prostitution by adults was taken out of the penal code and municipalities were given the authority to issue licenses and oblige prostitution businesses to operate in a fashion much like a bar or hotel. State related institutions like the tax office, social security funds and the chamber of commerce are supposed to treat this sector like any other economic branch.

Connected to the legalisation was a change in the law concerning trafficking of persons. Penalties for this offence were raised from one to six years. The police was asked to give cases of trafficking more priority.

THE RELATION BETWEEN STATE AND CITIZEN

It might puzzle foreign persons how it was possible to bring this legal reform about. I believe that in our political culture we can find the elements that explain why the Dutch politicians had the possibility to take this radical step. In most other European countries politicians would not even consider in their wildest dreams to do such a thing.

I already mentioned the relative distance between the state and the individual citizens. The Dutch government constantly needs to legitimise its interference with its citizens, especially if it wants to intrude in their private life sphere. The state has no authority to

control individual citizens, there is no hierarchal relationship. It is more a relation of negotiation. In our case: if adult citizens agree to exchange sex for money, then the state has nothing to do with it. It is the autonomous decision of individual people. (This point of view can also be found in the declaration that leading feminists issued already in 1983. They stated that, if a woman – in her actual circumstances – considers prostitution as the best option to earn a living, she should not have to work in a criminal surrounding. Hence the support from feminists for the new bill.)

But the Dutch do not live in a state of anarchy, where everybody is completely free to do what they want. There are laws and they function. This brings us to a second aspect of the way the rule of law is applied. In many countries we can see that behaviour *as such* is penalised, such as to have homosexual contacts or to operate a house of prostitution. The Dutch legal system penalises this only if the behaviour is taking place in a framework of violence, force or fraud.

This is a very important judicial principle; it is the basis the new prostitution policy. The Dutch police and public prosecution do not go after the behaviour as such. What is essential is not the fact that you are gay, not the fact that you are smoking cannabis or heroin, not the fact that you are a sex worker; the police intervenes if *violence* is taking place in those circumstances. In this way religious and ethical norms on how persons should behave are playing no role in our penal code.

A third special element in our penal system is that the Ministry of Justice explicitly says that it does not want to make a law just to give a signal to the population. The idea of symbolic law without a practical function is seen as undesirable.

THE NEW LEGISLATION

The passing of the new bill was welcomed by the larger cities in the Netherlands, as they were looking for administrative tools to control and monitor the prostitution industry. Now they can issue licenses and attach conditions to them. These conditions apply to the location of the building, opening hours, safety in the building and the style of management in order to guarantee the freedom of prostitutes to refuse clients and sexual acts. If the brothel owner does not fulfil his obligations, the mayor can take away the licence. This proves to be a more effective tool than the penal code if the local government wants to close or relocate prostitution.

As a second major goal it is the intention of the bill to improve the position of prostitutes in these regulated brothels. Prostitution is now a profession, and self-employed and employed prostitutes can operate under normal rules of business and can work under the protection of the labour law. It will take some time however before this will be implemented and applied in all its details. Brothel owners on the one hand and prostitutes on the other hand are in a process of organising. It might not be long before negotiations on the working relations and working conditions will start.

TRAFFICKING AND MIGRATION

It is another goal of the bill to better combat violence and trafficking of persons. The idea is that if acceptable brothels have a licence, they will not involve in crime, as they

will then lose their licence. Illegal forms of prostitution businesses will be easier to detect, as the industry becomes more transparent and more integrated into mainstream economy. It is hoped that the police will be more effective in tracing trafficking of persons and victims are encouraged to report. If they do, they will be allowed to stay in The Netherlands in order to testify in court. Unfortunately, they do not get a permanent residence permit. Victims also fear reprisals against their families, so not all of them report crimes committed against them.

But there is also another complicating factor. Not all women who come from abroad are victims of trafficking. Some explicitly come to The Netherlands to work in prostitution. They might have heard that prostitution is legal and they hope to earn more money than they can do at home. The Dutch government does not issue work permits for foreigners from non-European Union countries to work in the sex industry. This means that these women are illegal migrant workers and they become very vulnerable for severe economic exploitation by criminals and criminal networks that facilitate their travel, house them and find them a place to work. For these services the women have to pay a lot of money and it leads often to a modern form of debt bondage. But the majority of the women see no other option than to accept, because of their illegal status. They know that if they go to the police they might be saved from the hands of criminals but they face deportation themselves.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW POLICY

Another complicating factor that causes great concern, is the integration of the prostitution sector in mainstream, official economy. Many rules and regulations concerning work relations, work condition, taxes and social security are not yet solved. The implementation of the new law into everyday practice is also going very slowly. The Dutch bureaucratic system is complex and every governmental body claims the right to implement and interpret the new rules according to their views and priorities; these bodies have a relative large autonomy to make their own policies. One of the key factors here is co-ordination, in order to develop the same policy and treatment all over the country. But it proves to be nearly impossible to force this co-ordination on state institutions like labour inspection, welfare agencies, health service, chamber of commerce, tax office; let alone private corporations like banks and insurance companies.

Any new legislation requires time to be implemented, but the fact that it concerns prostitution is a very complicating factor. The civil servants who have to apply new rules in practice are citizens like everybody else. And although the population in general is in favour of the new policy, when it comes to actually meeting a brothel owner or a prostitute and having to deal with them – that is still another story. Changing the law is simpler than changing age-old values and beliefs. On the other hand, it is not always unwillingness to treat prostitutes like anybody else; rather it is awkwardness and nervousness on the part of both prostitutes and the general public on how to act in the new situation. We will need time to adjust.

A development of some concern is the possible growth of the area of the illegal sex industry, in other words businesses without a licence. There will of course always be a grey area where people operate who do not want or who can not meet the requirements of legal work. But in this transition period, where the benefits of legal work are not yet clear for everybody, the temptation to go “underground” is sometimes great. Especially when

a local municipality is effectively obstructing legal businesses, because the city council still regards prostitution as an undesirable nuisance. Foreign women who do not have a real option to work legally might also choose that route. They might take the advantage of modern technology like mobile phones or the Internet to contact customers in an uncontrollable way.

WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE?

It is clear to everybody that there is a lot of work to be done before we can see the first real signs of integration of prostitution in Dutch socio-economic structures. Nearly everybody agrees that the fundamental step to legalise the prostitution industry is the right decision. Wherever people work we want them to have a professional status and the protection of the labour law.

It is necessary that the government and its agencies treat prostitution businesses fair, and apply rules that are applied for businesses in general. Then a sound prostitution sector can develop, with reasonable guarantees that the prostitutes work based on their own free will and are in control of their activities and earnings. The society as a whole will need to put more energy in diminishing stigma and showing more respect for prostitutes, especially when they come face to face with them. A publicity campaign by the government to accompany the legal reform is much needed. For foreign women there must be a realistic opportunity to work in The Netherlands if they indeed wish to do so. This must be regulated under the same rules as in other economic sectors. Information campaigns in the countries of origin about the conditions of work should help to diminish the chances that these women fall into the hands of traffickers. We lobby for permanent residence permits for victims of trafficking, so that they can integrate into Dutch society if they should desire that.

All European countries need to formulate answers in relation to economic migration from abroad and to combat organised crime. The analysis and policies are different. The Netherlands wants to regulate voluntary prostitution in order to better identify violence, force and trafficking. Other countries regard prostitution as the basic problem as such and seek to eradicate this phenomenon by criminalisation and repression. This means that the persons who remain in prostitution, especially the prostitutes, pay the price. De Rode Draad, as prostitutes' rights organisation, will continue to seek the international podium to express its solidarity with prostitutes abroad; and we will continue to try to convince governments that criminalisation of prostitution drives prostitutes in the hands of criminals and that it is also bad for the society at large because it strengthens the criminal underworld.

SECTION 5: CURRENT CHALLENGES IN PROSTITUTION CONTROL

FINAL DEBATES

Unfortunately, due to technical problems with the recording equipment, we have lost the first part of the final debate. Thus, the interventions from Liv Jessen, Pye Jacobsson, Malin Bring, Nell Rasmussen, Hanne Størseth, Astrid Renland are missing. We sincerely apologise for this. The minutes from the debate begin where Ursula Berge is explaining the effect of the Swedish legislation on trafficking.

Ursula Berge, The Think Thank Agora, Sweden

Despite the Internet revolution, we really do not have more women trafficked into Sweden than we had four years ago. My point of view is that there is a link [between trafficking and prostitution] and this should be considered. It would be interesting to hear the Dutch position on this if it is true that the larger part of people in prostitution in the Netherlands is trafficked into the country.

How are you supposed to fight this if there is a strong connection between trafficking and the local prostitution market? In Sweden, we think there *is* a really strong link: Where do trafficked women go and where do they work? Well, I suppose it is in the local prostitution market; where would it other vice be. The main object here is to find a strategy to fight a huge problem. We are looking for ways to create a better situation for people in prostitution and get better possibilities for people who want to leave prostitution.

I do not think, as someone else here said earlier, that it is the Swedish law that is stigmatising people. If it were, it would only be the prostitutes in Sweden who would be stigmatised, and not prostitutes in other parts of the world. I am sorry to say that this is not the fact. Prostitutes are stigmatised all over the world. They are also stigmatised in countries where legalisation is at hand. I would really like to have some information on the positive developments concerning stigmatisation in for example the Netherlands and Germany, where it has been legalised and is considered work. How many of the women in Germany have registered their company and tried to work as prostitutes in a legal way? Has their stigmatisation situation in any way become much improved over the last years? I would like to have information on this.

What I can say is that a lot of women have left prostitution in Sweden. I haven't followed all of them, but the information I have from the Prostitution Group is that the 60 % who left when the law came into force have not come back to prostitution. I think that this is an important thing to mention. My information indicates that they are living a rather normal life so to say, with work or studies and things like that.

These 60 % are 60 % of the persons that had contact with the Prostitution Group in Stockholm. These are of course mainly street prostitutes, but other prostitutes as well. Perhaps there is someone else here who works there that can say more about this.

Concerning my sources, it would be so boring if I read all my sources. I can give you all my sources concerning the figures of sexual abuse afterwards.

Volker Moritz, Foundation AMOC/DHV, the Netherlands

It is difficult to say something now, but I am happy that some of you have already asked the questions I wanted to ask. Just briefly about the stigmatising all over the world: It is still a stigma to be gay, and I think this is not a reason not to fight for the right to be gay.

The next thing is that male prostitution has been mentioned just a couple of times. I believe that it is still a problem in Holland. I work mainly with the illegal boys from Eastern European countries, such as Romania and Poland, and they have more difficulties in Holland now as it is legal to be a prostitute, but not as an illegal person.

One question I had to you [Ursula Berge]: When the clients get a fine, when do they get a higher fine and when to they get a lesser fine?

Ursula Berge, The Think Thank Agora, Sweden

Interesting question. Well, I am not a lawyer or a judge, but there is something in Sweden called day-fine. You can get 50 day-fines, for instance. If you earn very little money, this does not mean a large sum, but if you have a high position in a very large company earning a lot of money, 50 day fines is very much money.

Ingrid Smette, The Pro Centre, Norway

I have two brief comments to make. One concerns the choice of criminalisation or legalisation as ways of handling trans-national prostitution. Personally, I am very sceptical to both strategies. Legalisation, as you have heard, does not mean that people who are not EU citizens can work legally in prostitution in the Netherlands. I believe that we need to know more about the consequences of the new legislation for these people.

As for Sweden, I am very sceptical to what the consequences of criminalisation are on trafficking and migrant prostitution. To my knowledge, most of the clients that have been penalised have been caught buying sex from street prostitutes. And there are very, very few migrant street prostitutes in Sweden. A very important reason for this is that according to Swedish law, it is illegal for foreign women to work in street prostitution in Sweden. And as also to my knowledge: in Sweden there is very little knowledge about what actually goes on in indoor prostitution. This means that it is difficult to estimate and document what the changes actually have been when it comes to migrant prostitution in Sweden.

Then the second comment: I think we have been discussing the role of the clients far too little to day. I think a problem with legalisation as well as with criminalizing strategies is that they do not lead to a debate where men openly discuss why it is that men keep buying sexual services. These strategies do not change the debate. Actually, I think it is the opposite. Both criminalizing and legalisation reinforce the idea that men *have* to buy sex. Men are so driven buy their sex-drive that they cannot assume responsibility

themselves. I think this is a problem. I believe we need to raise this debate by not only talking about the law, but by discussing what buying sex is reality about.

Jo Doezema, Network of Sex Work Projects, UK

I have a quick response to the comment about clients. I was asked to speak about feminism. Because most of my work around sex work involves clashes with feminism, I find myself too often slipping into the view of the sex industry that sees sex workers as women and clients as men.

There are very, very many men who work as sex workers in the sex industry. There are a lot of women who buy sexual services. There are increasing numbers of women who buy sexual services. I am one of them. And so I speak as a client and as a sex worker. I feel that we don't need to put male sexuality into the box of oppression, of needing to be controlled in order to express and fully experience out own sexuality as women.

Steffen Hallina, RF Swedish Federation for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans Gender Rights, Sweden

I belong – I think – to that smaller minority of 20 % that is not absolutely convinced about the gloriousness of the new Swedish legislation. In May we had a hearing on male prostitution in Stockholm. We asked the government to come and explain or to evaluate the consequences of the legislation. Then we had an opponent. Unfortunately the government couldn't come. But we had, and this will be published later on, an evaluation made by Dan Kulick, professor of social anthropology, showing on the effects of the legislation.

As Jan said earlier, the Dutch government does not like symbolic laws, saying that this is how we want reality to be. I would say that the Swedish law is very much something like that; not very pragmatic. Dan Kulick could prove that many of the effects for the prostitutes themselves are very negative. When you tell this to the people working with laws, or to the government, they sort of back down and say: "Well, but society has to take a stand." This is disregarding people working in prostitution or in the sex industry.

The picture we had here today is not as simple as it looks when it is being presented from the governmental side. I would also doubt the figures, like Jaana said: Who is one asking, where is one looking? Exactly the opposite views are being presented too, claiming that hidden prostitution has increased. It has disappeared from the streets, but it is now on the Internet, at home and things like that. It is not as gloriously simple as some people would like to think.

Ola Elvestuen, Leader of The Liberal Party (Venstre) in Oslo, Norway

I have been a little back and forth, so I haven't heard all the introductions. But I think that politically – as it also has been mentioned – what drives the debate in Europe today is the debate about trafficking. What most politicians are interested in is the debate about trafficking. I think it is a big problem that today, when we talk about trafficking; we include everything from regular migration to the worst cases of slavery.

I feel that what we need to do in this country, but also in many other countries in Europe, is to differentiate the debate about trafficking. If you take the worst parts, which are regular slavery – it is a small minority, but it is regular slavery – then you need to use the same laws as used before against slavery. You have people who are forced into Western Europe and into prostitution; you have to fight that.

I think that Sweden has chosen a very fundamentalist approach to this question, and I totally disagree with it. Their willingness to step on individual rights in order to reach a common good is something that I totally disagree with and cannot accept. But on the other hand, what they have done creates a challenge to the more liberal countries in Europe. When you look at the Netherlands, on one hand, one wants to give individual rights to the prostitutes and to the sex workers. But on the other hand, in order to be able to do this, one needs to increase the fight against forced prostitution and the worst parts of trafficking. Especially today with women from Eastern Europe, which clearly are present.

And my question is: Do you think that the Netherlands, but also that other countries, is up to that challenge?

Gitte

My name is Gitte, and I am a prostitute. I represent a new network in Norway. The network is working to prevent a law such as that in Sweden to be implemented in Norway. I am not opposed to such a law in order to be nice to the customers. I am against this law because it will not be good for the girls.

I was an active politician many years ago, and I have been out of politics for some years. But when I heard that such a law was suggested in Norway, I was thinking that this cannot be true! I have been working for a long time, and I have seen how they try to use laws to take away prostitution. And I have seen that it is not possible to take away prostitution by making laws against it. Because the girls, we will always work. If we want to work, we choose to do that, and when you make these laws, we just find other ways to work.

In Norway in the 90's, there was a big campaign. There was a lot of street prostitution in Oslo, and they brought a lot of police down on the streets to move them and take them away. But what happened was that the girls were moving inside to apartments. These days, The Pro Centre in Oslo found that 70 % of the women are working indoors, in hidden prostitution. If you make such a law, it will be even more underground. Already the girls are hesitant to speak to social workers or to the police. If we have trouble, we call the police, but if you make this law, no one would dare to call the police. Because there are also other customers inside the building, so it won't be possible to do that.

The Swedish girl here says that it is not only the customers who will be criminalized. If you try to catch the customers, you have to spy on the girls. The girls will have to go to the police and make statements, and maybe they have to go to court. Thus, it is not only the customers that will be criminalized.

And to you [Ursula Berge]: I have this question because you said that there were many girls who disappeared from prostitution after the new law. I wonder how you know that they have quit. Because, as I say, in Norway, we just make other ways to prostitute. So I wonder how you know for sure that the girls are away.

I think it is shocking that people with little knowledge on prostitution have come so far that they have been able to make a law against sex buyers. They mix up trafficking and prostitution. These are different things; they are not the same.

They also talk about selling the body. I can say that I have been a prostitute for 20 years, and if it had been that I sold my body every time I sell sex, I wouldn't be here now. I would have been sold out.

Liv Jessen, Chair Person, Pro Sentret, Norway

There were actually three more people on the list, but we cannot continue. I am very sorry to say so. But be sure: there are opposite positions that I've now taken away from the list. So nobody should feel that they were not listened to. I will thank all of you – the audience, the speakers here.

I just want to quote another philosopher at the end. He is also Norwegian, and he is called Skirbekk. He says that if you don't have a good solution, it is better to stay in the question. And perhaps that is what we will take with us when we go from this. Ask more questions, please. And thank you for coming today!

