

Dangerous Liaisons

A report on the violence women in prostitution in Oslo are exposed to.

By Ulla Bjørndahl Oslo, 2012

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background for the report

This report is based on the results from three separate investigations Pro Sentret have conducted on violence against women in prostitution in the period 2007-2012.

In the spring of 2008 Pro Sentret published the report “Fritt vilt. En undersøkelse om voldserfaringene til kvinner i prostitusjon” (Bjørndahl and Norli 2008). The report presented some of the results from a survey conducted by the sex workers support services in Oslo on 95 of their clients in fall of 2007. The report concluded that clients of support services in Oslo are frequently the victims of violence, both in private and in their work. The violence they had been exposed to could be described as severe, often very severe. Further the report showed that many of the participants in the survey expressed concern that the criminalization of sex purchasers would lead to an increase in susceptibility to violence. Subsequent to the publishing of “Fritt vilt” Pro Sentret applied to the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety for the funds to take a closer look at the results from the investigations of violence conducted in 2007/08 that had not been published in “Fritt vilt”.

Pro Sentret were granted part of the funds we applied for. In this report we take a closer look at the answers the women gave in the 2007/08 surveys about survival strategies and what the women thought the support services and politicians could do to ensure fewer sex workers were exposed to violence. In the 1. of January 2009 the purchase of sexual services was criminalized in Norway. Many were worried that criminalization could lead to more violence directed at people who sell sexual services. The municipality of Oslo decided that Pro Sentret should conduct an investigation of violence a few years after criminalization was introduced to determine whether women in prostitution had become more susceptible to violence. Pro Sentret conducted an investigation in the spring of 2012, and the results are presented here.

In the winter of 2010/11, about two years after the sex purchase law was put into effect, Pro Sentret conducted interviews among employees of support services on their experience concerning the exposure to violence among their clients subsequent to criminalization. This report also contains a discussion about the feedback from that investigation.

1.2 Breakdown of the report

In addition to the introduction this report consists of 4 sections:

Section 2 presents the results from the examination of violence in 2012.

Section 3 presents the results of the feedback from the support services about their experiences subsequent to criminalization which was conducted in the winter of 2010/2011.

Section 4 presents some of the unpublished findings from the examination of violence in 2007/08 with a focus on survival strategies employed by the women in order to avoid violence and additionally what the sex workers thought support services and politicians could do in order to ensure fewer sex workers are exposed to violence.

Section 5 contains closing comments.

1.3 The term 'violence'

There is no universal definition of violence (Bjørndahl and Norli 2008). Isdal(2000:36) defines violence as: “Violence is any act which directed towards another person harms, causes pain, frightens,

or degrades, makes them do something against their will, or cease to do something against their will". Furthermore he divides violence into 5 subcategories: physical violence, sexual violence, material violence, psychological violence, and latent violence. By using this definition with these subcategories Isdal wishes to emphasize that violence has to be expanded from the purely physical.

Hjemdal, Pape, and Stefansen (2004:11) defines violence as "illegitimate violation of another persons integrity". Their argument for using this definition is that it includes both a subjective definition as well as an external, normative evaluation of the permissibility of the violence.

In this report we highlight the experiences the clients of Pro Sentret has with violence, threats, and harassment. By using the preceding definitions of violence you could consider both threats and harassment a form of violence. In this report we will therefore mainly use the term 'violence' to avoid constantly repeating all three concepts.

The exact meaning of the word 'violence' will vary from person to person. Because this report is based on interviews with support services and a survey among clients of Pro Sentret we have chosen to let the participants themselves define 'violence' ¹.

1.4 The main findings of the report

- 59% of the participants in the investigation from 2012 said they had been the exposed to violence in prostitution after the sex purchase law was introduced.
- The violent offender in most cases is an unfamiliar, male client.
- Many of the women reported that they have been the victims of extreme violence in the last 3 years. Among the 123 participants in the investigation 25 say that they have been raped / threatened into having sex, 24 had been threatened with weapons, 17 said they had been robbed/attempted robbed and 11 had been the targets of attempted murder.
- The numbers can only be interpreted one way: women who sell sex in Oslo is a group where many have been exposed to extreme violence in the last 3 years. A frequency of extreme violence this high is seldom seen among such a small group in Oslo.
- The terms under which sex work is conducted has changed for a large share of the women who provide sexual services. The market is characterized by increased judicialization which means that sex workers are more controlled by the government and therefore perceive themselves to have been increasingly criminalized.
- The women rarely talk about their experiences with violence and few seek help from support services after they are exposed to violence.
- Harassment and discrimination of women in prostitution from society at large has increased.
- Some of the survival strategies sex workers mentioned in 2007/08 have been difficult to maintain subsequent to the passing of the sex purchase ban due to large changes in the prostitution market. The difficulties in employing these strategies are tied to an increased judicialization, a reduction in available customers and changes to the terms under which the women sell sex.

1 How this was done in practice is detailed in the sections about methods in part 2 of the report.

2. The study of violence, threats and harassment against women in prostitution in 2012

2.1 Background, methodology and definitions

2.1.1 Background for the investigation

The investigation was conducted due to measure 3a of the municipality of Oslo's plan of action against prostitution for 2011-2013.

Measure 3a: Examination of violence among women in prostitution

Pro Sentrets investigation from 2007/08 is repeated 2 years after the law against the purchase of sex was introduced. The purpose is to evaluate whether the women are more exposed to violence after the introduction of the law. Deadline: 01.06.2012.

Responsible party: Pro Sentret

The measure lies under part 3 of the plan of action which is titled “knowledge and competency about the prostitution community in Oslo and assistance to prostitutes”. The goal of this section is defined in this way in the plan of action: “To follow the development of the prostitution community for women and men in Oslo” (Oslo municipality 2010:17).

2.1.2 Choice of method

Since the investigation that was undertaken in 2007/08 was a questionnaire it was natural to use a questionnaire in this investigation as well.

2.1.3 Design of the questionnaire

The design of the questionnaire was approximately the same as the questionnaire that was used in 2007/08, albeit perhaps somewhat shorter². In 2007 the questionnaire consisted of 5 parts: Personal information, general experience with violence in prostitution, violence in prostitution in the last year, violence in personal life, and thoughts the women in prostitution have about vulnerability and violence.

Because we in 2012 wanted to examine the women's experience with violence after the sex purchase ban was introduced, we did not see it as appropriate to ask questions about other conditions than their experience with violence after the passing of the law. Therefore the questionnaire only consisted of two parts this time:

1. Personal information
2. Experience with violence, threats, and harassment in prostitution after the sex purchase ban took effect on 1. January 2009.

2.1.4 Collecting the questionnaires

Collection of the questionnaires took place from the end of January until the end of March 2012. Pro Sentret collected their questionnaires in two arenas: on Pro Sentrets premises and the investigative work in the indoor Thai prostitution community. In Pro Sentret the collecting was handled by various employees and an intern, while a social worker and a cultural mediator had responsibility for the Thai community. In addition questionnaires were collected by Natthjemmet³ on their premises. Everyone who answered the questionnaire was given a small gift for participating. The gift consisted of various

² The questionnaire that was used is included in this report.

³ Natthjemmet is a shelter for women prostitutes and drug users in Oslo which is run by the Church City Mission.

reasonable cosmetic products.

2.1.5 Sampling for the questionnaire

123 women participated in the investigation. 7 of these answered the questionnaire at Natthjemmet, while the rest of the questionnaires were collected by Pro Sentret.

The participants originate from 16 different countries: Thailand(50), Nigeria(24), Norway(21), Bulgaria(5), Romania(4), The Dominican Republic(4), Estonia(3), Ecuador(3), and Russia(2). Additionally one person from each of the following countries participated: Sweden, Poland, Morocco, France, Spain, Lithuania, and Albania.

As to the arenas on which the participants sold sexual services 51%(63 people) replied that they worked in the indoor market, 23.5%(29 people) worked on the street, and 19% worked both indoors and on the street. 8 people declined to answer the question.

All the participants said they had sold sexual services after the sex purchase ban was introduced on 1. January 2009. 81%(100 people) said they had been working as a prostitute at the time the investigation took place, while 16%(20 people) said they had not. 3 people did not answer the question.

79%(97 people) said they were not addicted to any narcotics, 17%(21 people) said they were, while 5 people did not answer the question.

The age of the participants ranged from 20 to 67 years old. The average age was 35.7 years old, while the median age was 36 years old.

If you compare the sample with the total client group of Pro Sentret in 2011, you will note that the amount of clients from the various nationalities are not proportional with this study. In 2011 Pro Sentret had 1218 clients and of these 41% came from Nigeria, 18% from Norway, 17% from Thailand, and 24% from other countries. In this study with 123 participants as many as 41% came from Thailand, while 20% came from Nigeria, and 17% from Norway. 22% came from other countries. The participants from Norway and "other countries" reflect the distribution of Pro Sentrets client group, while participants from Thailand are strongly overrepresented and participants from Nigeria strongly underrepresented in this investigation.

The distribution of nationalities also increase the average age when compared to Pro Sentrets user group in general. The Thai clients of Pro Sentret are often women 40-50 years of age, while the Nigerian clients are mainly 20-30 years of age. This means that the average age of this investigation is higher than Pro Sentrets total client group.

It is important to remember this discrepancy when reading this report and interpreting the results. There is a possibility that the experiences with violence could have been different with a different sample.

2.1.6 Methodological challenges

Using questionnaires in a study carries with it the risk that questions might be misunderstood without it being detected. Participants may interpret the questions in ways that were not intended. In order to avoid large misunderstandings this questionnaire contains questions with multiple answers, in order to reduce the chances of the participants misunderstanding what we were asking. The dangers of providing multiple answers is the possibility that participants will not answer questions where their experiences are not among the available answers. This is why we chose to provide an option for "other:..." to every question. Nevertheless we can not be certain that some questions were not misunderstood.

With studies of this type there is always a risk that some over report or under report their experiences. Similarly to our previous study in 2007/08 we noted that participants had different interpretations of the term 'violence'. This means that some participants may have answered the questionnaire based on their own understanding of violence, rather than the options listed by us. This could lead to an under reporting.

Another factor that could contribute to under reporting is the repression of traumatic experiences. In the 2007/08 study we noticed that some people we knew had been exposed to violence reported that they had not been (Bjørndahl and Norli 2008). This also occurred in this study. Same as the previous study we chose not to remind these participants of the violent events we were aware of, both to avoid leading the answers of the participants as well as not to remind people of experiences they would rather forget. As to over reporting we did note a few cases where some participants may have reported incidents that occurred before 1. January 2009. Everyone who participated were asked if they had sold sexual services after the introduction of the sex purchase ban on 1. January 2009. Despite this we noticed that some people we were fairly sure had left prostitution answered yes and participated in the study. We did not feel that we could refuse them to participate as it is quite possible that they had sold sexual services in this time period without our knowledge. Even so there is a possibility that these people had not sold sexual services after 1. January 2009, but participated to receive the gift. We can therefore not exclude the possibility that some participants have contributed to an over reporting of violence or participated on the wrong terms.

2.1.7 Analysis of the results

In presenting the results we have chosen to divide the population of the study into two different categories in order to discuss the different experiences of the sample.

We present the results in the form of nationality groups as well as what arena they sold sexual services in.

We have divided the arenas into 3 different groups⁴ in relation to where they sell sex:

- Indoors
- Outdoors
- Both indoors and outdoors

The participants were divided into four groups based on nationality:

- Nigeria
- Norway
- Thailand
- Other countries (France, Russia, Spain, Poland, Morocco, Sweden, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Lithuania and Albany)⁵.

The report contains various tables with percentages. In all the tables concerning exposure to violence the percentages will be calculated from the 73 people who said they had been victims of violence, not the 123 people who participated. The tables therefore shows the distribution among those who had been exposed to violence. This does not apply to tables 1 & 2 which deals with how many had been exposed to violence among all 123 participants.

4 There is also a category with 5 people who did not report where they work. Since there are so few people in this category it is not included in the tables, but the number will sometimes be supplied underneath the table.

5 These nationalities were combined into one group called "other countries" because there are very few people from each of these 13 nationalities.

In the analysis the numbers from the 2012 study will be compared with the numbers from the 2007/08 study⁶. The numbers can not be directly compared since the first study dealt with experiences spanning an entire career in prostitution while the previous report asked about experiences in the last three years. The comparison can nevertheless give an indication as to whether or not there have been any changes in the prevalence of violence.

In the 2007/08 report the nationality groups were somewhat different from the 2012 study. In 2007/08 the Thailand group also included people from South-America, while in this study it only includes people from Thailand. The 2007/08 report had a nationality group called “East-Europe” which consisted of people from Latvia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Romania, Russia, Lithuania, Albania, and Poland. In the 2012 report this group was replaced with “other countries” and consists of people from Bulgaria, the Dominican Republic, Romania, Estonia, Ecuador, Russia, Sweden, Poland, Morocco, France, Spain, Albania, and, Lithuania. In this study there is a group which consists solely of Norwegians, while in the first study this group also included Danes.

2.1.8 Usage of the term 'violence'

In the study we wished to map our clients experiences with violence, threats, and harassment. We know from experience that people have very different interpretations of these terms. When we carried out the previous study in 2007/08 we chose to specify what we were referring to when we said violence, threats, and harassment by listing a variety of specific acts(Bjørndahl and Norli 2008).

We decided to to the same in this study. We used the same list of acts as last time, we also added some new ones. The list in this study looked like this:

Threats/force	Restrained	Shoved	Trapped
Struck with fist	Pinched	Thrown from car	Kicked
Struck with open hand	Hair pulled	Biting	Scratched
Threatened with weapon	Stranglehold	Raped	Spat on
Robbed(inc. attempted)	Burned	Unwanted touching	Verbal abuse
Threatened into sex that was not agreed to		Murder attempt	Object thrown at

Underneath the list it was also possible to state other forms of violence, threats, and harassment they had been exposed to. This allowed them to include additional acts in the understanding of violence. Here the participants reported the following: blackmail, shot, drugged, force into kissing, shaved, tied up, bullied, not been paid as agreed, force to have sex without a condom, and forced to have an abortion.

2.1.9 Ethical considerations

Pro Sentret regularly conducts studies among our users, both for internal use as well as for publishing. Additionally we weekly receive requests from students, researchers, and journalists who wish to interview our users. Pro Sentret is intended to be focused on the needs of our clients not society in general or our own need to document the Norwegian prostitution market. We are therefore restrictive about letting others conduct studies, surveys, or interviews with out users. At the same time it's important for our users that their situation and changes to the market is regularly documented. This could contribute to support services adapting their work to accommodate the changes and tendencies that are reported from the prostitution community. Society and decision makers do in fact need

⁶ Not all the numbers from 2012 can be compared with numbers from the 2007/08 report since some answers that are published in the 2012 report were not published in the 2007/08 report.

knowledge of the situation our clients are in. Finding a way to balance documentation with the need to protect our clients from being “questioned” is a challenge Pro Sentret is faced with. The last few years there have been major changes in the prostitution market, both in regards to the nationalities in the market and the sex purchase ban.

This has led to our clients receiving many inquiries. Some have said that they feel that they are constantly asked to share experiences and information without getting anything concrete in return.

Before conducting this study it was discussed how we could show our users that we appreciated that they spent time sharing their experiences with us, and we decided to provide everyone who participated with a small gift as a token of our appreciation. Compensating participants with money or gifts is very common in market examinations and similar studies, but this carries with it both ethical and methodological challenges⁷. Since this study deals with a serious and sensitive subject it was important not to emphasize the gift too much. We wanted to make sure the participants wanted to share their experiences and that we didn't “trick” anyone into participating by luring them with a gift. This is why we first asked if they wanted to participate and only mentioned the gift after they had accepted.

Conducting a study about violence, threats, and harassment involves having to ask about difficult and unpleasant experiences. This means it is important to find a good balance between proper documentation and protecting the participants as much as possible from reliving difficult episodes in their lives (Bjørndahl and Norli 2008:22). While conducting the previous study we wanted to have a questionnaire that mainly consisted of the participants checking answers to avoid long and detailed description of individual events. In the 2012 study the questionnaire consisted solely of optional answer that could be checked. We were also committed to respecting the fact that some users declined to participate by only asking once. Additionally we emphasized that they didn't have to answer anything they didn't want to, and everyone was asked whether they needed to talk to someone about traumatic experiences after answering the questionnaire. Time was allocated to talk to anyone who needed it. We did not get the impression that any participants felt that they couldn't ask for someone to talk to because they had received a gift for participating, but we can obviously not exclude the possibility that some may have felt uncomfortable asking for anything in addition to the gift.

Our experiences conducting the study and providing gifts was mainly positive. We received more responses than we had anticipated. In the previous study we received 95 responses in three months, while this time we received 123 answers in two months. The increase in responses can probably be explained with the fact that the questionnaire was noticeably shorter this time compared with 2007/08 combined with everyone participating receiving a gift.

Many expressed that they thought it was important that we were focusing on the issue and that they therefore wanted to participate. It seemed that many considered the gift a recognition that they were spending their time doing something that they didn't have to do. Many also emphasized that they would have answered the questionnaire anyway, and that the gift was just an additional benefit. We received very little negative feedback from the participants. Among those who did not want to participate feedback was somewhat more negative. Especially among the Nigerian group many stated that they did not believe Pro Sentret could do anything to protect them from violence and that they therefore did not want to share their experiences with us or participate in a study like this.

7 Methodological challenges with providing a gift is dealt with in 2.1.6

2.2 Experiences with violence after the introduction of the sex purchase ban

2.2.1 How many have experienced violence after 1. January 2009?

Among all participants in the study 59% said they had experienced violence in their work after the sex purchase ban was introduced on 1. January 2009, while 41% said they had not. In the 2007/08 study we asked how many had experienced violence in their entire career and how many had experienced violence in the last year. The answer we received was that 52% had experienced violence in the course of their career. The numbers from 2007/08 can not be directly compared to the 2012 study since it is about experience with violence in the last three years, but there is still a noticeable increase in reporting of violence in this study compared to the previous one.

If we look at the distribution of violent experiences in relation to the arena of work, we see large variations in the amount of violence in the arenas. Among those who work indoors less than half(43%) of respondents had experienced violence, while 76% of those who worked outdoors and as much as 83% of those who worked both indoors and outdoors said they had experienced violence after 1. January 2009. Of those that declined to state where they worked 5 out of 8(63%) said they had experienced violence.

These numbers show a clear trend that those who work outdoors or both indoors and outdoors experience violence more often than those who exclusively sell sex indoors.

Market arenas	Violent experiences
Indoors	43 %
Outdoors	76 %
Both indoors and outdoors	83%

Table 1: Experiences with violence after 1.1.09 divided by avenue.

Compared with the 2007/08 study we see an increase in all arenas. In the previous study 33% of indoor workers said they had experienced violence in the course of their career. Outside the number was 58%, while it was 68% for those who worked both arenas. Both studies show clearly that those who work exclusively indoors experience the least amount of violence.

Similarly to the variations in violence among the different arenas, we also find a difference in experiences with violence among the different groups of nationalities. Among the Nigerian respondents as many as 83% said they had been victims of violence since 1. January 2009, while 40% Thai, 55% Norwegian and 75% among the other nationalities replied yes to the question. A possible explanation is arenas of work. People from Thailand who sell sex almost always work indoors, while Nigerians primarily work outdoors. Another possible explanation is the fact that those who originate from Thailand often have a permanent residency in Norway. They are well established in the Norwegian prostitution market compared to those that come from Nigeria and other countries. It is possible that knowledge of the Norwegian market means that those who come from Thailand and Norway have a better understanding of how to avoid various dangerous situations in prostitution and that they take different precautions than those who are less familiar with the market. Those who have rights in Norway may also experience less force from third parties and they may have more options than Nigerians and those who are included in the category “other countries”.

Nationality	Violent experiences
Thailand	40 %
Nigeria	83 %
Norway	55 %
Other countries	75 %

Table 2: Violent experiences after 1.1.09 divided by nationality.

When we compare these numbers with those from the 2007/08 study we see that the distribution among the different nationalities has changed considerably. In the previous study only 33% of the Nigerian respondents said they had experienced violence in the course of their career, while as many as 83% say they have been experienced violence in the last three years. In the Nigerian group there is a large increase of violent experiences. We also see a near doubling among respondents from Thailand from 21% in 2007/08 to 40% in this study, and a small increase among respondents from the other countries from 67% to 75%. The only group that has had a reduction of violent experiences is the Norwegian one. In the last study 72% said they had experienced violence in the course of their career, while 55% report violent experiences in the last 3 years.

2.2.2 Frequency of violence

On the question about how many incidents of violence they had experienced since 1. January 2009 we see that the majority of 47% have experienced 1-3 violent episodes. This means that approximately half the respondents have experienced relatively few violent incidents, while the rest have experienced violence more frequently. 22% report 4-6 incidents, while only 4% say they have experienced 7-10 incidents and 7% have experienced more than 10. As many as 16% said they could not recall how many violent experiences they had in the last three years. It seems safe to assume that this group has had many violent experiences, seeing as they would probably remember if it was only a few incidents. The numbers confirm that most participants do not experience violence on a daily basis, and that violence is the exception rather than the rule. This is the same trend as the previous study.

Number of incidents	Don't remember	1-3	4-6	7-10	More than 10	No response
	16 %	47 %	22 %	4 %	7 %	4 %

Table 3: Number of violent incidents since 1.1.09 distributed among all who experienced violence.

Compared with 2007/08 we see that somewhat fewer participants said they had experienced 1-3 incidents of violence in the last three years, while fewer also reported more than 10 incidents(7%). In 2007/08 54% said they had experienced violence 1-3 times, while 14% said they experienced more than 10.

When we look at the different arenas we can see variations. In the outdoor market as many as 59% report that they have experienced 1-3 incidents of violence and is therefore the arena where most report few incidents of violence, compared with those who work indoors(41%) and those who work in both arenas(37%). Those who work in both arenas report the highest frequency of violent incidents with 37% having experienced violence 4-6 times, 5% 7-10 times and 11% more than 10 times. A relatively high number of participants from both the indoor market(26%) and the outdoor market(18%) reported that they could not recall how many violent incidents they had experienced, which seems to indicate

that the amount of violent incidents in these groups is higher than the table actually shows. Among those who did not report what arena they sell sexual services in 3 people said they have experienced 1-3 incidents, while 1 has experienced 4-6 and 1 more than 10.

Arena	Don't remember	1-3	4-6	7-10	More than 10	No response
Outside	18 %	59 %	14 %	-	9 %	-
Inside	26 %	41 %	19 %	7 %	-	7 %
Both outside & inside	5 %	37 %	37 %	5 %	11 %	5 %

Table 4: Number of violent incidents since 1.1.09 divided by arena.

If we compare this study with the previous one we see that fewer report a small number of violent incidents in the indoor market than in the previous study. In the 2007/08 study approximately 70% of the women in the indoor market reported that they had experienced 1-3 incidents, while only 41% reported that in this study. This seems to indicate that the frequency of violent incidents among those that experience violence in the indoor market has increased after 1. January 2009. For those who work outside or on both arenas the numbers for 1-3 incidents are fairly similar in both studies, and those that experienced more than 10 incidents somewhat lower. That fewer have experienced more than 10 incidents in the last three years than in the study that looked at the entire career in prostitution is not surprising since the question in the previous study was not limited to a certain time period.

As to the nationality groups where the majority reported 1-3 violent incidents we see that those from Nigeria(55%) and the other countries group(66.5%) have the highest amount of respondents in this category. These are the groups with the highest amount of reports of violent experiences, but it appears they are also the groups with the least amount of recurrent violence. Many have experienced violence in these groups, but most have not experienced violence often. Among Norwegians the frequency of violence appears to be much higher. Only 8% report 1-3 violent incidents, while 58% have experienced 4-6, 17% have experienced more than 10 and 17% cannot recall how many violent incidents they have experienced.

Among respondents from Thailand as many as 30% said they cannot recall how many violent experiences they have had in the last three years, while 40% reported 1-3 violent incidents. No one in this group reported more than 10 violent incidents, but we can suppose that the frequency of violence is somewhat higher in this group based on the fact that so many cannot recall how many violent experiences they have had.

	Don't remember	1-3	4-6	7-10	More than 10	No response
Norway	17 %	8 %	58 %	-	17 %	-
Nigeria	15 %	55 %	15 %	-	15 %	-
Thailand	30 %	40 %	25 %	5 %	-	-
Other	5 %	66.5 %	5 %	9.5 %	-	14 %

Table 5: Number of violent incidents since 1.1.09 divided by nationality groups.

In the 2007/08 study the numbers for the amount of violent experiences among the different nationality groups were not published we can therefore not compare table 5 with the previous study.

2.2.3 Who commits violence against sex workers?

86% of the participants in the study said that the abuser was a man. 10% said it was both men and women, while only 3% report female abuser. The violent abuser is therefore usually a man. As to who has been the target of violence from women the nationality groups differ. Of the nine respondents that have been exposed to violence by women all are of foreign origin and six are from Nigeria.

Additionally to the fact that most are exposed to violence by men as many as 67% said they had experienced violence from an unfamiliar client, while 22% reported violence by an unfamiliar passerby. It is mainly unfamiliar men who are the abusers. Among those who answered “other” the following was submitted: drunk people, pimp who is also a boyfriend, friend, father, identity uncertain, and unfamiliar drug addict.

We see some variations between the nationality groups. All reported unfamiliar customers as the most frequent abusers. Among respondents from Thailand 80% answered 'unfamiliar client' and few checked the other alternatives, while those from the 'other' nationality group had a much greater variety of abusers in their responses. Among the Norwegians as many as 83% said they had been exposed to violence from an unfamiliar customer, while 42% have experienced violence from an unfamiliar person in a car and 33% from unfamiliar passersby. Respondents from Nigeria is the group where the greatest number of violence from unfamiliar passersby is found. As many as 40% of them had experienced violence from passersby, that is almost double that of the entire sample at 22%. A possible explanation could be that the Nigerian women work in a greater variety of locations when offering their sexual services, compared with others who work outside. They are also more visible due to their skin color, and they are often referred to as unwanted, pushy, and as a public disturbance in the public debate. This could be a plausible explanation for the high prevalence of passersby that these women are exposed to violence, threats, and harassment from.

	Total	Norway	Nigeria	Thailand	Other
Unfamiliar client	67 %	83 %	70 %	80 %	43 %
Unfamiliar Passerby	22 %	33 %	40 %	5 %	14 %
Unfamiliar person in car	11 %	42 %	10 %	-	5 %
Regular client	7 %	-	5 %	-	19 %
Acquaintance from the drug community	7 %	25 %	-	5 %	5 %
Others	7 %	10 %	-	-	14 %
No answer	7 %	-	-	15 %	10 %
Boss/pimp	5 %	-	10 %	-	10 %
Another sex worker	4 %	-	5 %	-	10 %

Table 6: Abusers divided by total sample as well as different nationalities.

If we compare these numbers with those from 2007/08 we find that they are similar to the numbers from the 2007/08 report where 69% reported being exposed to violence from an unfamiliar client and

22% from an unfamiliar passerby. One thing that has changed is that the number that has experienced violence from someone unfamiliar in a car has declined from 27% to 11%. One possible explanation for this could be that fewer provide sexual services in a car after the sex purchase ban was passed, because they move away from the car to complete the sexual act more discreetly or that fewer clients visit the district by car. It is also possible that fewer people use a car to visit the prostitution district to harass people who sell sex, because they are worried about being stopped by the police or being mistaken for clients.

We also see a decline in violence from regular clients from 20% to 7%, and 14% to 7% from boss/pimp. It is difficult to speculate about the reason for this decline, but much could perhaps be explained with the fact that the previous study asked about violence throughout sex workers entire career and this last study only asked about violence in the last three years.

In relation to the different arenas we see that unfamiliar clients are most commonly the abusers in all three arenas. Among those who sell sex on the street as many as 77% reported about violence from an unfamiliar client, while 27% have experienced violence from an unfamiliar passerby. In the outdoor market there is a clear trend that the abusers are usually an unfamiliar person seeking out the women on foot and/or as customers. Among those who sell sex indoors 67% said the abusers was an unfamiliar client. In this group 15% did not answer the question. This is also the group were the largest amount report violence from a pimp(11%). Although few consistently report violence from a pimp, it appears that it occurs most commonly in the indoor market. If we look at the group that sell sex both indoors and outdoors we see a larger spread of who the abusers are, even though the main trend is unfamiliar customers, passersby or person in a car as the violent abusers. This group is the only one that report violence from an unfamiliar person in a car at 42%, why this group experiences such a high rate of violence from an unfamiliar person in a car is uncertain, perhaps they were thinking of an unfamiliar client in a car when they checked this option?

	Outdoors	Indoors	Both outdoors and indoor
Unfamiliar client	77 %	67 %	58 %
Unfamiliar passerby	27 %	11 %	31 %
Unfamiliar in car	-	-	42 %
Regular client	9 %	-	16 %
Acquaintance from the drug community	-	4 %	16 %
Others	14 %	4 %	5 %
No answer	-	15 %	5 %
Boss/pimp	-	11 %	5 %
Another sex worker	5 %	4 %	5 %

Table 7: Violent aggressors divided by arena.

2.2.4 Where does the violence the women are exposed to take place?

In the questionnaire we asked what country the violent episodes occurred. 70% said they had only experienced violence in Norway, while 12% have experienced violence in both Norway and one other country. 8% did not answer the question.

10% said they have only experienced violence in another country. As to what countries other than Norway they had experienced violence in five said Italy, two Romania, two Belgium, two Spain, two Thailand, one Nigeria, en Singapore, and one Germany. That Italy is the most common response after

Norway is not surprising because many of the Nigerians who sell sex in Norway also have experience with prostitution in Italy. In the Nigerian group 20% reported violence in both Norway and another country, while 15% reported violence only in another country. This is the nationality with the greatest number of reports of violence outside of Norway. To the question of where the violence took place the responses vary. The four most common arenas reported was the street(36%), a car(30%), their own apartment(29%), and the abusers apartment(23%). Only one participant reported violence in a location that was not included in the options. She said it happened in the clients cabin.

	Total	Norway	Nigeria	Thailand	Other
On the street	36 %	58 %	60 %	5 %	29 %
Car	30 %	58 %	30 %	-	43 %
Own apartment	29 %	17 %	25 %	50 %	19 %
Aggressors apartment	23 %	42 %	35 %	5 %	19 %
Hotel	10 %	17 %	15 %	10 %	-
Work apartment	10 %	8 %	15 %	10 %	5 %
Massage parlor	8 %	-	-	30 %	-
No answer	4 %	-	-	5 %	-
Other	1 %	-	-	-	5 %

Table 8: Location of violent incident divided by entire sample as well as nationalities.

When we look at the nationality groups we see that the responses from the Norwegians and Nigerians are fairly similar but the group from Thailand is quite different from the others. The differences are probably caused as much by what arena they sell sex from as nationality. Among the Thai respondents as many as 50% said that the violent incident took place in their own apartment, while the other groups have a much lower rate of violence in their own apartment. Respondents from Thailand are also the only group that said they had been exposed to violence in a massage parlor(30%). This group practically operates exclusively in the indoor market and it's therefore to be expected that the arenas of violence is their own apartment and parlors. The other groups have a greater share of sex workers who sell sexual services outdoors and more often go with the customer to their car or apartment, it is therefore logical that many of them would report violence in the clients apartment, in a car, or on the street.

When we look at the responses by arena we see that they match the assumptions we made above. In the indoor market the majority say they have experienced violence in their own apartment and massage parlors, while those who work outdoors or both indoors/outdoors said that the street, car, or aggressors apartment are the arenas they most commonly experience violence in.

	Outdoors	Indoors	Both outdoors and indoors
On the street	55 %	4 %	63 %
Car	36 %	4 %	63 %
Own apartment	18 %	41 %	21 %
Aggressors apartment	36 %	7 %	32 %
Hotel	5 %	11 %	7 %
Work apartment	5 %	11 %	7 %
Massage parlor	-	22 %	-
No answer	-	7 %	4 %
Other	-	4 %	-

Table 9: Location of violent incident divided by arena.

In the 2007/08 study the location of the violent incidents was not published and we have therefore not compared the numbers in this study with the previous study.

2.2.5 What kind of violence are the women exposed to?

In the study we asked what form of violence the women had been exposed to in prostitution in the last three years. 23 different forms of violence were listed as optional answers. Additionally there was a category called “other” where the participants could fill in other forms of violence they had experienced. 10% checked this category, and the forms of violence they reported were: blackmail, shot, drugged, forced to kiss, shaved, tied up, bullied, didn't receive money as agreed, forced into sex without a condom, and forced to have an abortion.

7% did not report what form of violence they had experienced.

Table 10 shows that the forms of violence that are reported most often can be characterized as threats and harassment. The three most common forms of violence across the entire sample is unwanted touching(48%), verbal abuse(48%), and threats/force(38%). Furthermore we see that many have reported extreme violence. As many as 33%(24 people) of those that have experienced violence have been threatened with weapons in the last three years, while 23%(17 people) have been robbed/attempted robbed and as many as 15%(11 people) have experienced attempted murder.

Rape we chose to ask about in two ways: rape and threatened/forced into sex that was not agreed to. We know that many of the women call rape something else: that they were forced into sexual acts that were not a part of the agreement they had made with the customer. Legally this is rape, but many of the women associate rape with assault and will therefore not call force by the customer they have made an agreement with rape. Table 10 shows this clearly. As many as 27% reported that they had been threatened/forced into sex that was not agreed to, while 15% said they had been raped. We have looked at how many checked both answers which could mean that they define both these categories the same way. Only 6 people have done this, which confirms our suspicion that many of the women would not characterize actual rape as rape. This also means that the actual frequency of rape is considerably higher than what is shown in table 10. If we combine the amount that checked these options and then subtract those that checked both we see that as many as 34%(25 people) of those that have experienced violence in the last three years have been raped/threatened into sex that was not agreed to.

The numbers in table 10 can only be interpreted one way: women who sell sex in Oslo is a group where

many have been exposed to serious violence in the last three years. A frequency of violence this high among a group this small, is very rare in Norway.

In table 10 we can also see that there are differences between the nationalities in how many in the groups are exposed to the various forms of violence and what forms of violence the different groups are exposed to.

Among the Norwegians the three most common forms of reported violence is verbal abuse at 75%, 67% have been touched against their will, and 58% have experienced force/threats. In this group we also see that many report very serious forms of violence: 50% have been threatened with weapons, 33% have experienced murder attempts, 25% have been raped, and 42% have been placed in a stranglehold. Why this group experiences so much violence is difficult to answer. It might have something to do with the fact that many of the Norwegian women have a drug addiction. Because of the addiction and the high these women may be willing to accept clients that the women who do not have a drug addiction will refuse, due to a need for money – or rather a drug fix – that seems acute.

In the Nigerian group we also see that the three most common forms of violence are: verbal abuse(65%), unwanted touching(50%), spat on(40%). Among Nigerians we see a substantially higher reporting of two distinct forms of violence compared to the other groups. As many as 50%(compared to 34% in the whole sample) have been shoved, and 40%(compared to 19% in the whole sample) said they had been spat on. One possible explanation for this could be that this group is frequently exposed to violence from unfamiliar passersby(cf. The discussion in chapter 2.2.3). As we have said these women often move in places where their behavior is perceived as unwanted and unsuitable, which might be why a passerby might spit, push, touch, and verbally abuse the women as a response to their unwanted presence/behavior.

It is important to underline that also in this group we see that many have been exposed to serious forms of violence. 30% report being threatened with a weapon, 35% had been thrown from a car, and 25% had been robbed/attempted robbed.

Among the respondents from Thailand we see that the three most common forms of violence are unwanted touching(55%), threatened/forced into sex that was not agreed to(45%), threatened with a weapon and verbal abuse were both at 40%. In this group we find the largest amount of respondents who say they have been threatened/forced into sex that was not agreed to. While 27% of the entire sample said they had been exposed to this form of violence, as many as 45% of this group have experienced it. Additionally 20% of this group said they had been raped. It is disturbing that so many of this group have been exposed to sexual violence by their clients. One possible explanation might be the fact that many of these women first sell massages and during/after the massage try to make an agreement with the client about any sexual services. Such a relationship with the client could easily make the women vulnerable. The client could contest the parameters of the agreement they have already made and force them to do things outside what was agreed to. Another explanation might be the fact that these women are often alone with the client in their own apartment. In part 2.2.4 we could see that as many as 50% of those in this group who had been exposed to violence had experienced it in their own apartment. When you are all alone with a client in your apartment it is obvious that you would be very vulnerable to being forced into something you did not agree to, without anyone noticing it and without the possibility to call for help. In this group we also see the highest amount of robbery(30%) and threats with weapons(40%).

If we look at the numbers for the other countries, we do not see some types of violence being more common than the other forms like we do in the other groups. In this group the distribution of forms of

violence is very even, and they stand out from the Norwegian and Nigerian groups by the fact that we do not find a higher amount of harassment than extreme violence. The forms that are most commonly reported(32%) are threats/force, struck with fist, kicked, hair pulling, and unwanted touching. Why this group has a much more even distribution of forms of violence is not known. It may be the fact that this group is composed of a great many different nationalities who sell sex on different arenas and different locations, and that they therefore do not have the clear trends the more homogenized groups do.

	Total	Norway	Nigeria	Thailand	Other countries
Unwanted touching	48 %	67 %	50 %	55 %	32 %
Verbal abuse	48 %	75 %	65 %	40 %	26 %
Threats/force	38 %	58 %	30 %	45 %	32 %
Shoved	34 %	25 %	50 %	35 %	26 %
Threatened with weapon	33 %	50 %	30 %	40 %	21 %
Hair pulling	32 %	42 %	35 %	25 %	32 %
Threatened/forced into sex that was not agreed to	27 %	33 %	25 %	45 %	11 %
Restrained	25 %	58 %	20 %	20 %	16 %
Robbed/attempted robbery	23 %	25 %	25 %	30 %	16 %
Stranglehold	19 %	42 %	25 %	15 %	5 %
Struck with open hand	19 %	20 %	25 %	5 %	21 %
Spat on	19 %	8 %	40 %	10 %	16 %
Struck with fist	18 %	25 %	10 %	10 %	32 %
Trapped	18 %	20 %	15 %	10 %	21 %
Murder attempt	15 %	33 %	15 %	10 %	11 %
Rape	15 %	25 %	15 %	20 %	5 %
Biting	15 %	-	20 %	10 %	26 %
Thrown objects	15 %	-	25 %	25 %	5 %
Kicking	15 %	-	25 %	-	32 %
Thrown from car	14 %	8 %	35 %	-	11 %
Other	10 %	17 %	10 %	-	16 %
Pinched	4 %	10 %	5 %	-	-
Scratched	4 %	-	10 %	-	5 %
Burnt	3 %	8 %	5 %	-	-

Table 10: What forms of violence, threats, and harassment the women have experienced in prostitution divided by everyone who has been exposed to violence as well as nationalities.

Table 11 shows the distribution of the different forms of violence by prostitution arenas. In the same way we saw differences in frequency of the various forms of violence between nationality groups in table 10, we also see a different distribution between arenas.

Among those who sell sex on the street we see that the three most commonly reported forms of violence are different kinds of harassment: 59% said they had been verbally abused, while 50% have been experienced unwanted touching, and 41% have been shoved. In the group that sells sex in the indoors market 44% have been exposed to threats/force, while 37% report unwanted touching, threatened/forced into sex that was not agreed to, and being shoved. Among those that operate both outdoors and indoors 68% said they had experienced unwanted touching, 63% were verbally abused, and 47% had experienced threats/force.

There is a clear trend that those that work outdoors and those that work both indoors and outdoors report a higher frequency of harassment than those who work on the indoor market. Both verbal abuse, unwanted touching, and being spat on is much rarer on the indoor market than the street. Being threatened/forced into sex that was not agreed to and robbed/attempted robbed we see considerably more of in the indoor market as well as among those who work in both arenas than we see among those who work on the street. At the same time we see that those who work on the street full time or part time are more often exposed to other forms of extreme violence like being struck with a fist or slapped, being bitten, or kicked. The only forms of violence that are reported in approximately the same frequency from all arenas is being shoved and threatened with weapons.

On the street the women are very vulnerable to threats and harassment from passersby and society in general, while those in the indoor market are frequently alone with the abuser with no one else present and are therefore more vulnerable to extreme forms of violence like being threatened into sex that was not agreed to or robberies. The women that work in both arenas are the ones that consistently report a relatively high frequency of almost all the forms of violence, while the numbers are much more varied from form to form among those who sell sex on the street or indoors. This can probably be explained by the fact that you are vulnerable to different forms of violence on the street and the indoor market, while those who work in both arenas are exposed to the violence that is common in both the outdoor market and the indoor market.

	Outside	Inside	Outside and Inside
Unwanted touching	50 %	37 %	68 %
Verbal abuse	59 %	33 %	68 %
Threats/force	27 %	44 %	47 %
Shoved	41 %	37 %	32 %
Threatened with weapon	36 %	30 %	37 %
Hair pulling	36 %	22 %	42 %
Threatened/forced into sex that was not agreed to	14 %	37 %	32 %
Restrained	18 %	19 %	42 %
Robbed/attempted robbery	14 %	30 %	32 %
Stranglehold	14 %	15 %	32 %
Struck with open hand	23 %	11 %	26 %
Spat on	32 %	11 %	16 %
Struck with closed fist	23 %	11 %	26 %
Trapped	18 %	15 %	26 %
Murder attempt	9 %	11 %	26 %
Rape	14 %	19 %	16 %
Biting	23 %	11 %	16 %
Thrown objects	14 %	19 %	16 %
Kicking	23 %	7 %	16 %
Thrown from car	23 %	4 %	21 %
Other	5 %	7 %	16 %
Pinched	5 %	-	11 %
Scratched	5 %	-	11 %
Burnt	-	-	5 %

Table 11: What forms of violence, threats, and harassment the women have experienced in prostitution divided by arena.

In the study we also asked if the participants had been exposed to multiple forms of violence at the same time. 40% said yes, 45% said no, while 15% did not answer. 50% of Norwegians, 40% of Nigerians, 40% of those from Thailand, and 33% of the other nationalities answered yes to this question. Divided by arena it was 36% of the outside market, 37% of the inside market, and 47% from both markets who answered yes. Among those who said they had been exposed to multiple forms of violence at the same time 38% said they had experienced 1-3 forms of violence at the same time, while 17% answered 3% more than ten. [This sentence appears to be missing some words. My best guess is that it is supposed to say 38% for 1-3 forms of violence, 17% for 4-6, 7% for 7-10, and 3% for more than 10.] 35% did not answer the question.

In table 12 we compare the numbers about the frequencies of the various forms of violence from the 2012 study on violent experiences in the last three years with the numbers from violent experiences throughout the entire prostitution career of the participants in the 2007/08 study. The arrows show

whether the numbers have gone up or down from 2007/08 to 2012. Here we see that the numbers have gone up in 11 of the different categories for violence (unwanted touching, verbal abuse, threats/force, shoving, threatened with weapon, hair pulling, stranglehold, biting, kicking, scratching), while they have decreased in 9 categories (threatened/forced into sex that was not agreed to, restrained, robbed/attempted robbery, struck with open hand, struck with fist, trapped, raped, thrown from car, pinched). In one of the categories (“other”) the numbers are the same. Murder attempt and having objects thrown at them were not asked in 2007/08, so we can therefore not compare the numbers from 2012 in these categories.

Even though this table can give us an indication of some trends it is important to remember that the two studies dealt with very different time frames. The numbers from 2007/08 represent experiences with violence throughout an entire career in prostitution (which could be anything from one day to 50 years), while the numbers from 2012 show the violence experienced by people who have been active in prostitution in a longer or shorter period since 1. January 2009.

	Total 2012	Total 2007/08		Total 2012	Total 2007/08
Unwanted touching	48 % ↑	39 %	Struck with fist	18 % ↓	29 %
Verbal abuse	48 % ↑	41 %	Trapped	18 % ↓	27 %
Threats/force	38 % ↑	35 %	Murder attempt	15 %	- ⁸
Shoving	34 % ↑	33 %	Rape	15 % ↓	29 %
Threatened with weapon	33 % ↑	22 %	Biting	15 % ↑	6 %
Hair pulling	32 % ↑	12 %	Thrown objects	15 %	- ⁹
Threatened/forced into sex that was not agreed to	27 % ↓	35 %	Kicked	15 % ↑	12 %
Restrained	25 % ↓	49 %	Thrown from car	14 % ↓	18 %
Robbed/attempted robbery	23 % ↓	31 %	Other	10 %	10 %
Stranglehold	19 % ↑	18 %	Pinched	4 % ↓	10 %
Struck with open hand	19 % ↓	27 %	Scratching	4 % ↑	2 %
Spat on	19 % ↑	12 %	Burnt	3 % ↓	4 %

Table 12: What forms of violence, threats, and harassment the women have experienced in prostitution in the last 3 years from the study in 2012 and what forms of violence, threats, and harassment the women have experienced in their prostitution career from the study in 2007/08.

↑ indicates an increase, ↓ indicates a decrease.

⁸ Was not asked in 2007/08.

⁹ Was not asked in 2007/08.

2.2.6 Use of weapons

In the study it was asked if any objects/weapons were used to harm the women when they were exposed to violence. 36% answered yes, while 51% said no. 14% did not answer.

There were no alternatives on this question, so the respondents themselves had to answer what form of object/weapon had been used to harm them. 52% answered knife, while 24% said pistol. Other types of weapons reported were baseball bat, broken bottle, stun gun, fire hose, rock, a “plastic object”, hammer, and pen. 14% did not report what form of weapon had been used against them. That nearly 4 out of 10 who had been exposed to violence have had a weapon used against them shows that it is quite common in the environment. This correlates with the high percentage who have been threatened with a weapon(33%) and robbed/attempted robbery(23%), cf. section 2.2.5. It is important to note that the question that was asked about weapons did not include having been threatened with a weapon, but actually being injured with a weapon. This indicates that many of the violent acts that was reported in section 2.2.5 might mean actual use of weapons rather than threats with weapons and robbery, for example rape, having objects thrown at them, and/or murder attempts.

In regards to nationality distribution we see in table 13 that the Nigerian group most often report being injured with a weapon, but that it is relatively common across all groups. There are in other words no group that report a low occurrence of having weapons used against them.

	Total	Norway	Nigeria	Thailand	Other
Yes	36 %	42 %	45 %	30 %	29 %
No	50 %	50 %	55 %	70 %	48 %
N/A	14 %	8 %	-	-	23 %

Table 13: Use of weapons in violent acts the women have been exposed to distributed among everyone who has been exposed to violence as well as nationality groups.

Table 14 shows that it is primarily people who work on the street who report being subjected to violence with a weapon. At the same time we see that a great deal of those from the indoor market and those that work both indoor and outdoors have not answered the question, so we cannot firmly establish that the street is the arena where it is most common for abusers to use weapons.

	Outside	Inside	Both inside and outside
Yes	41 %	26 %	37 %
No	59 %	52 %	22 %
N/A	-	22 %	16 %

Table 14: Use of weapons in the violence the women have been exposed to distributed by arena.

In the 2007/08 study the numbers for use of weapons was not published and we have therefore not compared them in this study with the previous study.

2.2.7 What are the consequences of violence?

Table 15 shows what physical and psychological consequences the women reported. We see that it is psychological problems that are most commonly reported with 63% reporting being frightened and 41% that they suffer from anxiety/psychological problems. These numbers show that the violence impact the psychological health and conditions of the participants. Whether the psychological reactions to the violence is long term or short term is not answered by this study.

The amount that report physical consequences is lower than the amount that report psychological consequences. The explanation for this might be that the most commonly reported forms of violence are various forms of threats/harassment, not physical violence. Even though the numbers for physical consequences are lower we see that a relatively high amount of physical consequences are reported as well. As many as 16% said that the violence amounted to a serious threat to their lives, while 25% reported visible injury, 23% short term pain, and 15% long term pain. 12% answered “none” to the question.

10% of the participants in the study answered “other” to the question of the consequences of violence. Among respondents who answered this the following is what they reported: anger, sleep problems, breathing difficulties, feeling humiliated, headaches, and that they could not work due to their injuries.

If we look at the distribution among the nationality groups we see that the Norwegian group consistently report the highest occurrences of consequences in all categories, with the exception of “scared” where they reported the lowest occurrence. As many as 83% of the respondents from Norway said they had anxiety and psychological problems as a result of the violence, while considerably fewer reported this in the other groups(50% from Thailand, 35% from Nigeria, and 29% from the other countries). In the Norwegian group as many as 50% said the violence amounted to a serious threat to their lives, while 15% of the Nigerians, and 20% from Thailand said the same. None of the people in the other countries group reported this. When we consider the differences between the nationality groups the numbers in table 15 might indicate that the Norwegians experience the highest amount of physical and psychological problems following being exposed to violence. In section 2.2.5 we saw that many in this group report being exposed to very serious violence. At the same time the large differences in reports of the consequences of violence might be due to cultural differences in how both physical and psychological pain is talked about. Pro Sentret have experienced that in general many foreign women express both physical and psychological pain differently than Norwegian women. It is possible that some did not recognize their way to express pain in the options in the study.

	Total	Norway	Nigeria	Thailand	Other
Frightened	63 %	50 %	70 %	60 %	67 %
Anxiety/ psychological problems	41 %	83 %	35 %	50 %	29 %
Visible injury	25 %	33 %	25 %	10 %	33 %
Short term pain	23 %	42 %	20 %	20 %	19 %
Serious threat to life	16 %	50 %	15 %	20 %	-
Long term pain(more than an hour)	15 %	25 %	25 %	5 %	10 %
Other	10 %	25 %	5 %	-	-
None	12 %	-	20 %	15 %	10 %
N/A	8 %	-	-	20 %	-

Table 15: What consequences the women experienced as a result of violence distributed by everyone who were exposed to violence as well as by nationality groups.

Table 16 shows the division between the different arenas. Here we see that psychological suffering is reported more often than physical suffering in all the arenas. The group that sells sex in both arenas is the one that reports the highest occurrence of consequences of violence in all categories, with the exception of the category “frightened”. Here many report consequences of a long term nature like anxiety/psychological problems(63%), serious threat to life(37%), visible injury(32%), and long term pain(26%).

Among those who work on the street we see that being frightened is the most commonly reported. In this group as many as 77% report being frightened, while 36% had anxiety/psychological problems, and 32% had visible injury. This is also the group where the highest amount said the violence had no consequences(18%) and were the fewest reported serious threats to their life.

On the indoor market we see that 56% said they had been frightened and 44% had anxiety/psychological problems as a consequence of violence. Compared to the other arenas this is where the lowest amount of visible injury was reported(15%), short term pain(19%), and long term pain(7%). It is important to note that as many as 19% did not answer the question, which could mean that the real numbers in the various categories might be higher.

	Outdoors	Indoors	Both outdoors and indoors
Frightened	77 %	56 %	68 %
Anxiety/ psychological problems	36 %	44 %	63 %
Visible injury	32 %	15 %	32 %
Short term pain	23 %	19 %	37 %
Serious threat to life	9 %	11 %	37 %
Long term pain(more than an hour)	14 %	7 %	26 %
Other	14 %	-	16 %
None	18 %	15 %	5 %
N/A	-	19 %	5 %

Table 16: What consequences the women experienced as a result of violence distributed by arenas.

Compared with the 2007/08 study we see approximately the same amount of reports of being frightened as a consequence of violence, while the number who report anxiety/psychological problems have gone down by about 10% from 2007/08 to 2012. Visible injury has decreased from a third of the sample to a fourth.

When we look at arenas we see the same trend in both studies that fewer who work on the indoor market report consequence of violence in a number of categories compared with the other arenas. Even so we see that fewer report that the violence had no consequence on the indoor market in 2012(15%) compared with 2007/08(33%). Which means that more of the indoor market now report that violence has consequences for them.

2.2.8 Do the women receive help after they have been exposed to violence?

Table 17 shows which participants said that they had received help after being exposed to violence. We see that it is most common to receive help from friends at 38%. As many as 21% said that they received no help after being exposed to violence. Only 7% said that they did not need help.

Given the seriousness of the violence many of the women reported it is alarming to see how few have received help from official/voluntary support services after being exposed to violence. In relation to official agencies only 16% report receiving help from the police, 10% from hospitals, and 3% from emergency services. The numbers are also low for the prostitution initiatives: 15% received help from Pro Sentret, 5% from Natthjemmet, and 3% from Nadheim.

10% of the participants in the study checked the category “other”. The most common answer submitted was unfamiliar passerby. Some also answered abusers friend, psychologist, god, and Caritas in Italy. One participant reported that she received help from the police, but that the police had made sure she was thrown out of the apartment she sold sex from after she had contacted them for help.

If we look at the different nationality groups respondents from Thailand(45%), Nigeria(50%), and Norway(42%) report that they received most help from friends, while 24% of the people from the “other countries” received help from friends. In other words half as many in the “other countries” group received help from friends compared with the other nationality groups. Among those who say that they received no help after being exposed to violence as many as 42% of the Norwegians and 29% from the “other” countries said that they received help from no one, while the numbers are somewhat lower among Nigerians(15%) and Thailand(10%).

With the exception of the Norwegians, where 33% have received help from Natthjemmet and 25% from Pro Sentret, relatively few participants have received help from the various prostitution initiatives. As far as the police is concerned we also see significant differences between the nationality groups. 33% of the Norwegians and 25% of the Nigerians have received help from the police, while only 5% from Thailand, and 10% from the “other” countries report the same. That so few women from Thailand and the “other” countries contact the police can probably be explained with the fact that the police have been very active with operation “Husløs” the last few years. This operation means that women who sell sex lose their rental contract when prostitution activity is discovered in the apartments they are renting. Many are therefore reluctant to contact the police when they are exposed to something illegal.¹⁰ Of those that said they did not need help 15% of respondents were from Thailand and 10% from the “other” countries, while no one from Nigeria or Norway reported this.

As many as 30% of the respondents from Thailand did not answer the question, while practically everyone in the other nationality groups answered this question. The table therefore reflects a less accurate picture of who the respondents from Thailand actually received help from, compared with the other groups.

¹⁰ More on operation “Husløs” and its consequences in Pro Sentrets yearly report for 2008-2011 as well a section 3 of this report.

	Total	Norway	Nigeria	Thailand	Other
Friends	38 %	42 %	50 %	45 %	24 %
No one	21 %	42 %	15 %	10 %	29 %
Police	16 %	33 %	25 %	5 %	10 %
Pro Sentret	15 %	25 %	15 %	15 %	5 %
Hospital	10 %	8 %	20 %	5 %	5 %
Other	10 %	-	20 %	5 %	10 %
N/A	10 %	-	-	30 %	5 %
No help required	7 %	-	-	15 %	10 %
Client	5 %	17 %	-	-	10 %
Natthjemmet	5 %	33 %	-	-	-
Partner	4 %	8 %	5 %	-	5 %
Crisis center	3 %	-	5 %	-	5 %
Emergency care	3 %	8 %	-	5 %	-
Nadheim	3 %	-	-	-	10 %
Family	1 %	8 %	-	-	-

Table 17: Who the women received help from after the had been exposed to violence distributed by everyone who had been exposed to violence as well as nationality groups.

It is consistently friends most of those exposed to violence ask for help, regardless of what arena they sell sex on. As far as not receiving help is concerned only 7% of those who work on the indoor market reported this, while significantly more of those who worked on the street(27%) and those who work both indoors and outdoors(37%) reported this. This coincides with the fact that 15% from the indoor market said they did not need help, while few from the other arenas reported this. It is nevertheless important to note that as many as 22% of those who work in the indoor market did not answer the question as to who they received help from after being exposed to violence, something which means that the actual situation might be somewhat different for these women.

When we look at what help the women from the various arenas have received from official/voluntary support services, we also see some clear differences. Among those who work both indoors and outdoors we see the highest prevalence of support by the police(21%), while those from the indoor market report the highest occurrence of help from Pro Sentret(22%). Compared with the other arenas we see that those who work both outdoors and indoors have the highest occurrence of help from Natthjemmet(21%), customers(11%), and partners(16%).

	Outdoors	Indoors	Both outdoors and indoors
Friends	36 %	41 %	37 %
No one	27 %	7 %	37 %
Police	14 %	11 %	21 %
Pro Sentret	9 %	22 %	16 %
Hospital	14 %	7 %	11 %
Other	9 %	7 %	16 %
N/A	-	22 %	5 %
No help required	5 %	15 %	-
Client	5 %	4 %	11 %
Natthjemmet	-	-	21 %
Partner	-	-	16 %
Crisis Center	5 %	4 %	-
Emergency care	-	4 %	5 %
Nadheim	-	7 %	-
Family	-	-	5 %

Table 18: Who the women received help from distributed by arena.

If we compare the numbers for how many reported having received help from various services in 2012 with the study from 2007/08 the numbers are discouraging. In contrast to the other numbers presented from this study we wish these numbers had increased, rather than decreased. Unfortunately the trend is the opposite.

The numbers have gone down for 11 of the 15 options(friends, police, Pro Sentret, other, Natthjemmet, crisis center, no help required, emergency care, Nadheim, partner, and family). In one case(hospital) the numbers are the same. The amount that did not answer the question was not reported in the previous study and can therefore not be compared. The number that have received help from a client has increased by 1%. When we look at how many reported that they did not receive help from anyone we unfortunately see a minor increase from 18% in 2007/08 to 21% in 2012, while the number that did not require help have decreased from 12% in 2007/08 to 7% in 2012.

If we look at assistance from from police, emergency care, Pro Sentret, and Nadheim, we see approximately half the number that have received support in the 2012 study compared with the 2007/08 study.

The numbers would therefore seem to indicate that fewer of those that have been exposed to violence receive support from various agencies after the sex purchase ban was enacted than they did before 2009. We have already mentioned the disclaimer that the numbers from the two studies can not be directly compared because in 2007/08 we asked about support throughout an entire career in prostitution while the 2012 study only looked at the last three years.

We can nevertheless be certain of the sad fact that few of the women in the study receive help after being exposed to violence, despite the fact that much of the violence they experience could be consider serious and in some cases as extremely serious. If this is because few(or fewer) know about the assistance programs available or if they have little trust(or less trust) in the assistance programs is not answered by this study. The numbers are in any case discouraging.

	Total 2012	Total 2007/08		Total 2012	Total 2007/08
Friends	38 % ↓	45 %	Customer	5 % ↑	4 %
No one	21 % ↑	18 %	Natthjemmet	5 % ↓	6 %
Police	16 % ↓	27 %	Partner	4 % ↓	6 %
Pro Sentret	15 % ↓	33 %	Crisis Center	3 % ↓	6 %
Hospital	10 % -	10 %	Emergency care	3 % ↓	14 %
Other	10 % ↓	14 %	Nadheim	3 % ↓	10 %
N/A	10 %	- ¹¹	Family	1 % ↓	4 %
No support required	7 % ↓	12 %			

Table 19: Who the women received support from after being exposed to violence in the study from 2007/08 and the study in 2012. ↑ show that the number has increased, ↓ show that the number has decreased.

2.3 Main findings

- 59% of the participants in the study reported that they have been exposed to violence after the sex purchase ban was introduced.
- Reports of violence was more common among those who sell sex on the street or both indoor/on the street compared with those who only work indoors.
- Among the different nationality groups it is percentage wise mostly Nigerians who report violent experiences(83%), while the lowest amount is among people from Thailand(43%).
- Approximately half of the respondents reported 1-3 violent experiences and only 7% reported more than 10.
- The violent abuser is in most cases an unfamiliar, male client. Almost 70% of those who have been exposed to violence report that the abuser was a unfamiliar client. 97% have been exposed to violence by men.
- The places the women are most commonly exposed to violence is on the street, in a car, in their own apartments, and in the abusers apartment.
- Many of the women report being exposed to extreme violence in the last 3 years. Among the 123 participants 25 report that they have been raped/threatened into sex that was not agreed to, 24 report being threatened with a weapon, 17 had been robbed/attempted robbed, and 11 had been the target of attempted murder.
- The numbers can only be interpreted one way: women who sell sex in Oslo is a group where many have been exposed to extreme violence in the last 3 years. A frequency of extreme violence this high is seldom seen among such a small group in Oslo.
- 4 out of 10 of those that have been exposed to violence have experienced more multiple forms of violence at the same time.
- Just under 4 out of 10 of those that have been exposed to violence report that weapons/objects were used to harm them when they were subjected to violence.
- 4 out of 10 report anxiety/ psychological problems as a result of violence.
- Few ask for aid after being exposed to violence.
- Considerably fewer report receiving aid from the police and/or prostitution initiatives in 2012 than in the 2007/08 study.

¹¹ Was not reported in the previous study, so can therefore not be compared.

3. Surveying the consequence of the criminalization among support services in Oslo in the winter of 2010/2011

3.1 Background for the survey

When Pro Sentret conducted their survey of violent experiences among women in prostitution in 2007/08 it was decided that purchasing sex was going to be criminalized in Norway. Many worried that this would lead to increased vulnerability to violence among women in prostitution. This is why we posed the following question to everyone who participated in the study “Do you believe that the vulnerability to violence among women in prostitution will change when purchasing sex becomes criminalized?”.

74% of the participants in the study said that they believed their vulnerability to violence would change. Of these 90% said that they believed they would be **more** exposed to violence after criminalization of the purchase of sexual services. They explained their answer by stating that they believed prostitution would become more hidden, that the market would largely become controlled by the criminals via pimps, facilitators, and human trafficking, that the police would no longer be able to keep track, that the women would be afraid to report violence, that the official support services would become weakened, and that the “decent” clients would disappear and the “mean” clients would remain. 7% of those that answered that they believed their vulnerability would change believed it would result in **less** violence against women in prostitution when the purchase of sexual services was criminalized. Few explained their reasoning for this belief. One wrote that she believed more would abstain from purchasing sex out of fear of being punished, while another said that the women would be exposed to less violence from facilitators because the facilitators would lose track of the street. Of the participants in the study 12% said that they did not believe their vulnerability to violence would change after criminalization. Their reasoning for this was that prostitution and violence will exist regardless of laws (Bjørndahl and Norli 2008: 45-47).

Since both women in prostitution and others were worried that criminalization would lead to increased vulnerability to violence, Pro Sentret decided to conduct a study of what experiences various official and non-profit organizations in Oslo had with exposure to violence, safety, and vulnerability among the women in prostitution after criminalization was introduced.

We conducted from October 2010 to March 2011 a number of interviews with various agencies who might come into contact with women who sell sexual services in Oslo, to hear about their experiences. In connection with the study we entered into a cooperation with criminology student Marie Steen at the university of Oslo who wished to write a bachelor paper about the consequences of the sex purchase law.¹²

12 The student participated in part of the interviews and in spring of 2011 delivered the bachelor paper “Prostitution – a changing market. The arrival of the sex purchase law and its consequences”.

3.2 Who did we speak to?

We contacted the various prostitution initiatives in Oslo, the sexual assault center and social services at Oslo emergency care, Oslo police's STOP-group¹³, lawyer Trine Rjukan¹⁴ and a number of support services who work with women who use/are addicted to drugs.

The support services who work with women who use or are addicted to drugs became important informants, because Pro Sentret in the last few years have had fewer users from this group than it used to. We meet few of these women in our outreach work in the prostitution districts in Oslo. Therefore we have not had as good of an overview of this part of the market as we did ten years ago.

Not all the initiatives we contacted responded to our request. In all we conducted 15 interview with various initiatives: the STOP-group at Oslo police, Natthjemmet¹⁵, Nadheim¹⁶, PION – prostitutes interest organization in Norway, lawyer Trine Rjukan, field care in the Salvation Army, the sexual assault center, and social services at Oslo emergency care, the needle exchange in the Drug Agency¹⁷, 24SJU¹⁸, Nurses on wheels¹⁹, and the women's initiatives in the Drug Agency²⁰: Josefine's house, Therese's house and Bryn.

3.3 What experiences do the support services report?

We will now provide a summary of the trends the informants reported as well as Pro Sentrets own experiences. The various initiatives have different contact with and role in relation to the community, and therefore have different experiences.

It is not disclosed which aid initiative reported the various trends, but it will be immediately clarified when it is the police reporting since they have a completely different angle of approach to the community than the support services do.

It is important that the following points are understood as trends various initiatives reported at the time the survey was conducted (October 2010 til November 2011), and not as a common view shared by the initiatives about the state of the prostitution market as of today. It is also important to note that not all trends reported can be exclusively connected to the introduction of the sex purchase ban. The trends could also be related to other big changes in the prostitution market, like the polices enforcement of various laws, societies general approach to prostitution and the composition of sellers in the prostitution market.

13 When the survey was conducted the Oslo police had their own group, STOP-group, which worked with prostitution and human trafficking.

14 Lawyer Trine Rjukan often work as legal counsel in violence and rape cases. She has for an extended period been associated with a project at the Pro Sentret which provides pro bono legal aid to Pro Sentrets users.

15 Natthjemmet is a shelter for women in the drug and prostitution communities in Oslo which is run by the Church's City Mission.

16 Nadheim is a center for women and men with prostitution experience which is run by the Church's City Mission in Oslo.

17 The Drug Agency in Oslo municipality became a part of the Welfare Agency on 1. January 2012, but was called the Drug Agency when the survey was conducted.

18 24SJU is a 24/7 health and welfare initiative for the most disadvantaged drug addicts in Oslo and is run by the Church's City Mission in Oslo.

19 Nurses on wheels is a mobile health service for people in drug and prostitution communities in Oslo which is run by Fransiskushjelpen.

20 Josefine's house is a rehabilitation offer for women who are under medically assisted treatment, Therese's house is a short term institution for women over 18 who use drugs, Bryn is a long term housing and care center for women over 18 who use drugs.

3.3.1 Fewer customers – a buyers market

One trend that is consistently reported both from support services and the police is that the customer base has changed. There is an agreement that the number of customers in street prostitution, and parts of the indoor market, has decreased somewhat. If you look at the relationship between supply and demand you will see a trend towards a shift in the market where supply is greater than the demand.

This means that it is a customers/buyers market.

This in turn leads to changes in the power relationship between those that sell and those that buy sex. There is also greater competition between sellers over the remaining customers. This means customers to a greater degree than previously can set the terms for what sexual services they wish to buy, price, where the act of prostitution will be conducted, and condom usage. This leads to an increased vulnerability among those that sell sex.

Another trend is that the customer base has changed because there are fewer “nice” customers than previously. By “nice” customers we refer to men who seek out the women to buy sexual services, pay the agreed price, and stick to the boundaries of the agreement. These are customers that are often an average man. With criminalization many believe that fewer of this type of man buys sexual services, because this customer group often consists of law abiding citizens. They now refrain from buying sex due to the new law. These customers are described as the easiest to serve.

A reduction in the amount of “mean” customers is on the other hand not reported from either the police or the support services. The term “mean” refers to customers who do not stick to the boundaries of the agreement, tries to haggle, do not wish to use a condom, show a lack of respect for the women by treating them in a derogatory manner, are violent/threatening, are intoxicated, are psychologically unstable/ill or who seek the women out with the intention to humiliate them – not just to buy sexual services.

The consequences of a reduction in the total amount of customers, and fewer “nice” customers while the amount of “mean” customers stays constant, is that the “mean” customers make up a greater proportion of the customer base for many of the women than previously. This means that even though the amount of “mean” customers has not necessarily increased, the sellers of sexual services have become more dependent on precisely this group because the amount of money that can be made from the “nice” customers has decreased.

3.3.2 Increased judicialization and more control

There is a broad agreement among the police and the various support services that the prostitution market is characterized by an increased judicialization. This increase in judicialization means a greater focus on use of various laws to regulate and reduce the prostitution market.

That the act of buying sexual services has gone from not being regulated by criminal law to being criminalized, is a clear sign of an increased judicialization of the field. In addition to the criminalization of customers the use of other laws have also changed; In relation to the foreign people who sell sexual services the police control of identity and residence papers has increased considerably. The police has at times been very active enforcing laws pertaining to disturbing the peace, improper behavior in public and incitement to criminal acts. At the same time the police has periodically focused strongly on uncovering human trafficking and pursuing the facilitators who financially benefit from the prostitution of others.

On the indoor market the police conduct controls of massage parlors with a focus on whether the regulations for running a local business are followed. Furthermore the police has over a period of 5-6 years conducted operation “Husløs” on the indoor market. Operation “Husløs” entails that the police warns the owners of the apartment/facilities/hotel where prostitution activity is discovered that they

will be prosecuted for pimping if the tenancy agreement is not terminated.

Operation “Husløs” have lead to many who sell sexual services being evicted from facilities/apartments/hotel rooms where they have sold sexual services in/from. In some cases they have been evicted immediately by the landlord and lost the deposit they paid for the apartment/facility. Some have also had to close their massage parlor permanently or for a period as a result of increased control of the commercial space.

Another consequence of operation “Husløs” is the fact that the rental market has become more cramped for women in prostitution – both with regards to renting an apartment to live in and running a massage parlor. The prostitution initiatives report that according to the women it has at times been difficult to acquire facilities for a massage parlor, because the landlords do not want to rent apartments/facilities to people from nationality groups associated with prostitution. This has led to some of the women needing help from a Norwegian person to rent apartments/facilities in their name, and that the women pay rent to this third party. In some cases these people demand payment for putting their name on the lease to the apartments/facilities, which means the women have to pay a higher rent.

The consequences of the increased judicialization have therefore led to considerably more control of the seller of sexual services, both directly and indirectly. Those who sell sexual services are to a greater degree questioned, and sometimes receives witness status, in cases where the police prosecute facilitators and customers. At the same time the environment where prostitution takes place is put under greater surveillance and is monitored by the police in order to uncover crime.

The increased control of foreigners has led to a strong police presence in parts of the foreign prostitution communities and to more being expelled from Norway, while the use of various order regulations have led to more being fined and expelled from various city centers for a period.

The increased control of the market has led many of those who sell sex to feel that they have been criminalized. This is despite the laws not having changed in regards to those who sell sexual services. Both the police and the support services report this trend.

Many of the support services report that the police is no longer perceived by the women as allies they can turn to when they have been subjected to something illegal, because they fear that they will be investigated when they contact the police.

The police on the other hand claim that their presence has led to more reports about criminality. This applies especially to the Baltic and Russian communities on the indoor market.

3.3.3 The terms have changed for the sellers – prostitution is more individualized and vulnerability has increased

For many of those who sell sexual services the conditions surrounding the sale of sex has changed considerably in the last few years. There are many reasons why this is the case.

The support services report that the increased judicialization have had a major impact on how many of the women organize their workdays in prostitution. What changes they have made depends on what control mechanisms the police utilize in the community the individual women is a part of, what residency status she has in Norway, and what arena she sells sex from.

One trend that is reported by many is that prostitution has become more individualized for some of the sellers in later years. Among those who work in massage parlors it is reported that many have stopped selling sexual services in the parlors themselves, out of fear that they will be detected by the police.

They now make an agreement to sell sex during the massage in the parlor, then meet the customer at a later time in their own apartment to perform the sexual services. This means that the service itself is now often performed when the seller and customer is alone. This increases vulnerability.

There is a general perception among the support services that drug addicted women have become more and more rare in street prostitution in the last ten years. This is partially because they have experienced strong competition from the foreign women. It has also become generally more difficult to find customers on the street after buying sex was criminalized. Another explanation for the reduction of drug users who sell sex on the street, is that many have received medically assisted treatment. They are no longer as dependent on selling sex to finance their drug use.

Among the women with a drug addiction who still sell sex many have changed methods for finding customers. Most of the support services have experienced that the women enter into more long term relations with men who they refer to as “friends”, “boyfriends”, “uncles”, or acquaintances. These are men they stay in contact with through telephones and that they stay with for longer periods, this could be hours, days, or weeks. They have sex with the men in exchange for the men supplying them with drugs, money, and other necessities. Many of the support services say that they perceive the women as being very vulnerable in the relationships. The women become very dependent on the few customers they have. It becomes difficult to end a relationship with a customer when conflict/problems in the relationship occurs because they have so few alternatives. Additionally it is more difficult for the women to set clear boundaries for what they are willing to do sexually or otherwise, compared to chance or sporadic customers. The agreement of negotiation about the sexual services becomes more unclear with the regular customers. Many of the women also have a strong loyalty to these customers since they know them well, and the women therefore have a higher threshold for cutting off contact and/or press charges when they are subjected to violence or offenses.

A further consequence of the increased individualization of prostitution is that the community among women who sell sex has weakened in parts of the prostitution market. Prostitution is no longer something you do together by selling sex from the same corner/apartment/parlor, but something that is isolated and personal. When the common gathering points (also the use of low threshold offers at the prostitution initiatives) disappear, the safety provided by having others look after you/keeping track of you as well as being open about prostitution and sharing their experience also disappears. This increases the women's vulnerability in relation to their customers, but the lack of the community and the lack of openness also lead to prostitution becoming a taboo that few talk about and the stigma placed on those that are open about it increases. Especially in the drug community it is reported that few speak openly about selling sex and many speak in very derogatory ways about those who sell sex.

The police agree that individualization of prostitution is a trend. They also agree that the fragmentation of communities is due to police activity making it more difficult to organize. The police on the other hand believe that this had led to the women becoming less vulnerable in relation to facilitators, because it is more difficult for facilitators to organize prostitution activity. Nevertheless the police believes that the women are in many ways more vulnerable in relation to other parties, like customers, because the women are more often alone with them.

In street prostitution the support services report that the time pressure for making a deal with the customer increased considerably after criminalization. The customers are more stressed because they are worried that the police will discover them, something which means that the contact that is established on the street has to be conducted faster and that they have to get out of the area quickly. For many of the women this poses large challenges when they are in contact with the customer because it becomes difficult to make a clear agreement with the customer about price, sexual services, location

where the services will be performed, and condom use before they have to leave with the customer. The deal is only made after they have reached a “safe” place for the customer, like a hotel room, in a car, or in either parties apartment. For the women this increases vulnerability because they are often alone with the customer when the deal is finally made, since disagreements about what is actually part of the deal can arise when you have arrived at the place where the sale/purchase is going to be concluded and because the women do not have sufficient time to get a “feel” for the customer.

Since the customer base has shrunk somewhat in parts of the prostitution market many of the women also report having to lower their standards for the customers. Many women have in the past had clear standards for what sort of customer they were willing to accept: nationality, inebriation, psychological health or customers' appearance, for example. The women also have other standards that used to be absolute: what sexual services they sell/do not sell, where the sale is concluded, number of customers at the same time, what price they charge, and use of condom. Several support services believe that the women have had to lower their original standards in order to get customers and make the money they need. Whether this has led to increased violence and increased transmission of disease it is difficult for the support services to judge, but there appears to be a broad agreement among the support services that the women feel more vulnerable, more exposed to risk, and that they have less control in relation to the customer now than they did in the past – precisely because they have had to lower their standards.

Several support services report that the women's relation to the customer is now that they have to “protect” the customer from the police, to avoid the police fining them. This means that the customers have gone from being a sort of “business partner” to an ally, while the police have gone from being an ally the women can go to for protection to being someone they need to protect the customer from. Many of the initiatives believe that these relationship and role changes are experienced as a heavy burden for the women.

3.3.4 Little openness about violence

Many of the support services report that there is little talk about the violent experiences the women have. This can probably be partially explained by the trend towards increased individualization of prostitution and a large decrease of community in parts of the prostitution market. This has led to less openness about prostitution and their experiences in prostitution in general.

Several of the support services say that the women at times mention violent episodes offhand and after the incident, but that they rarely directly ask for help right after being exposed to violence. The support services have experienced that the women only ask for help when they have been subjected to very serious or life threatening violence, but few ask for help after less serious episodes.

Pro Sentret register a considerable reduction in women who come to warn other women about violent clients on the “warning board” in the common room. Previously various women would visit monthly to report about dangerous clients, from 1. January 2011 to 1. June 2012 only 6 warnings have been put up on the board.

Most support services say that the women rarely want help from the police or the sexual assault center. Often the reason is that they do not want to take it further. They want to put the incident behind them. Lack of trust can also be an issue. Few women on the indoor market contact the police when violence occurs in the parlor or apartment they work from because they are worried that they will suffer from operation “Husløs”, the support services report.

Lawyer Trine Rjukan experience that most of the women in prostitution who actually report violence, have rights here and are staying in Norway legally.

3.3.5 Increased harassment/discrimination from the rest of society

Several of the support services, and especially the prostitution initiatives, report that in the last few years there has been a shift in the way the outside world talks about and relates to women in prostitution. This trend can be traced back to 2006/2007 when the Nigerian women entered the street based prostitution market in Norway and started selling sex in new and visible locations. The debate often centered around these women behaving in an inappropriate and immoral way. Women in prostitution were more clearly and more often spoken about as something disruptive and unwanted, rather than people in a difficult situation. In the debate leading up to the criminalization of the purchase of sex this focus was also very obvious.

The initiatives reported that the direction the prostitution debate took prior to and in connection with the new law has had a large influence on how the average person view women who sell sex, and they hear more women speak of being harassed in public now than they did previously.

The last few years the prostitution initiatives have regularly had reports of people going to the prostitution district in Oslo and harassing the women. The incidents that have been described are, among other things, verbal abuse, objects thrown at the women, and derogatory treatment. This has especially occurred subsequent to negative media coverage of these women.

Additionally to the change in how women in prostitution are talked about in the public debate, we also see that the increased judicialization of prostitution has led many to perceive those who sell sexual services as criminals, despite the fact that they are not.

The prostitution initiatives have in the last few years experienced an increase in inquiries from women in prostitution who experience discrimination on the rental market. This applies to apartments, business facilities, and hotel rooms. The women report difficulties renting a hotel room or renting apartments/business facilities, because they have an ethnic background which is associated with prostitution. There are also reports of hotels and serviced apartments establishing “black lists” of women involved in prostitution and refusing them the possibility of staying in their hotels. In 2010 the Church's City Mission prostitution initiative, Albertine, contacted the Data Protection Agency. Some women contacted Albertine after being denied a hotel room because of a black list. An evaluation of the legality of such a practice was requested. The Data Protection Agency concluded that this was not legal. Despite this the prostitution initiatives regularly receive reports of women who have been denied staying in a hotel in Norway because they are suspected of selling sexual services, without the women bringing customers to the hotel or having planned to do so.

Some women tell the support services that they have been denied admission to clubs/various entertainment locations in Oslo because they suspect/associate the women with prostitution and do not want people in that line of work in their establishment. Directly after the sex purchase law was introduced in 2009, the police contacted the entertainment industry and told them to be “observant about sex purchase in their facilities”. The police feared that prostitution would move to this industry²¹. This could have contributed to more women being denied access to various entertainment facilities.

3.3.6 Exploitation of the women's vulnerability

Several of the support services experience that the women are subjected to violence, crime, or exploited/forced by people who use the fact that many of the women are in a very difficult situation. The market is as previously mentioned put under a lot of pressure, prostitution has become more individualized and judicialization has increased.

Examples of these incidents could be customers pressuring the women to do things they initially did

21 <http://www.dagbladet.no/2009/01/05/nyheter/prostitusjon/sexhandel/forbud/4252626/>

not want to do, because they desperately need money. This could be giving in to pressure to not use a condom, travel to unsafe locations to perform the service, accept a lower price, and perform sexual services they do not want to do. It has also been experienced that customers who subject the women to violence threaten to contact the police about illegal residency in Norway or prostitution in massage parlors, if the women were to press charges.

The indoor market has experienced criminal groups seeking out apartments and massage parlors, posing as police to get inside the facilities. When they get inside they rob, rape, and abuse the women. These gangs speculate that the women have to let the police in; thus, getting easy access, they also know that very few women in this community will contact the police after their visit. The women are afraid that they will suffer from operation “Husløs”, as previously described.

3.4 Main findings

The changes reported can not be solely be attributed to the introduction of the sex purchase law. They have to be seen in a larger context with the fact that the prostitution market has undergone other large changes in the last few years, among other things nationality composition among sellers, the police enforcement of various laws and regulations, and changes in society's views about prostitution.

In Pro Sentrets study the following changes to the Norwegian prostitution market in the last few years was reported:

- The prostitution market is characterized by being a buyers market.
- The customer base has changed in that a large share of the “nice” customers have disappeared.
- The market is characterized by increased judicialization which means the sellers of sexual services are being more controlled by the government and therefore see themselves as (more)criminalized.
- The terms for how prostitution is conducted has changed for a great deal of the women who sell sexual services.
- Prostitution has for many who sell sexual services become an individual project and the community has been weakened.
- Many support services express a concern about increased vulnerability for the women who sell sexual services in relation to their customers.
- The women rarely speak about their violent experiences and few seek help from support services after being subjected to violence.
- Harassment and discrimination of women in prostitution from society in general has increased.
- Some people/criminals have realized that many women in prostitution are selling sexual services under new terms and are grossly exploiting the women's vulnerability.

4. Results from the survey in 2007/2008

4.1 Project resources from the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety.

Subsequent to the publishing of “Fritt vilt” Pro Sentret applied to the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety for resources to take a closer look at some of the results from the 2007/08 survey that had not been published in “Fritt vilt”. Pro Sentret were granted part of the resources we applied for.

4.2 What results have we looked at?

Here we present a summary of the answers the women provided in the survey about what survival strategies the women used to protect themselves against violence, what measures Pro Sentret could employ to better protect the women from violence, what politicians and other support services could do to improve the safety of women in prostitution and what the women themselves could do to better protect themselves against violence.

4.3 What survival strategies do the women use?

84% of the respondents answered the question “what do you do to protect yourself against violence/threats and harassment?”.

The answers show that there are various survival strategies in prostitution, but many of the women use the same strategies. By reviewing the answers we have compiled and identified 5 main categories. Some of the strategies were compatible and could be used in parallel, while others were to an extent conflicting. This shows that there is no simple “recipe” the women in prostitution use that they believe can best protect them. For some it's important to follow concrete rules and to take many precautions, while others assess how best to protect themselves only when they end up in a dangerous or threatening situation. The strategies the women reported were:

4.3.1 “I try to get a feel for people and carefully select customers”

-follows certain rules in regards to who, what, where, and when

The majority of the women gave answers that fit this category. The answers primarily concerns where they work, what sexual services they sell, where they go with the customer, what time of day they sell sex, and what type of customers they sell sex to.

Many of the women said they had strict rules for where they worked. Among the women on the indoor market nearly all said that working with others in a massage parlor was their strategy to protect themselves against violence, while the women who worked on the street were concerned with working in well lit areas and places where people in the community could see them. Common to all the women, regardless of arena, was the fact that they wanted someone(preferably a colleague or friend) to always know where they were and who, if any, they were with.

It is interesting to note than some of those who worked on the street felt that it was safer than the indoor market, while those who worked indoors claimed the opposite.

A lot of the women said that they had various ways to “screen” customers. Some were concerned about avoiding customers who were violent, intoxicated, mentally ill, who tried to negotiate price and/or condom use or who gave them a negative “vibe”. Some of the women also said that they did not sell sex to foreign men. Several emphasized that they were good at reading people and could separate the “nice” customers from the “mean” customers by talking to them during the negotiation, either face to face or over the phone, and by asking the customer a series of control questions. If they got a bad

feeling or the customer did not seem to be taking it seriously, seemed unstable or threatening they would withdraw from the negotiation.

Some of the women reported that they were concerned with avoiding risk filled situations and setting clear boundaries for the customers. Examples that the women saw as risky situations was taking on more than one customer at a time, selling sexual services they were uncomfortable with, not using a condom, going to the customers home/to an unfamiliar place and working at night in the weekends. By avoiding situations like these they would have more control over the situation and be less vulnerable to violence. Some also mentioned that they only sold “soft” sex, and not sexual services that included violent elements like bondage²². They did not wish to blur the boundaries between sex and violence.

4.3.2 “I am always acting and am who they want me to be”

-adapts to the customer

Some women said that their strategy for avoiding violence was to always adapt to the customers, his needs and his desires. These women believed that a satisfied customer who got what they came for and was treated well, seldom became bad tempered, angry and violent.

For some of the women this adaptation was a matter of finding out what kind of mood the customer was in and what the customer wanted out of the deal, so that they could provide the service and experience he desired. In these cases the women entered different roles depending on what the customer wanted and could sell everything from a “girlfriend experience” to rougher sex. Further they used various effects to fulfill the customer's desires. These effects could be role play, clothes, wigs, makeup, different modes of behavior and sex toys.

Other women emphasized that they tried to do their best to not make the customers angry by always acting happy, speaking politely to them, being calm, and not arguing with him about his desires or other things. Several claimed to be good at manipulating the customers.

A few of the women said that they would accept all the customers that contacted them and let the customers set the terms, to avoid the customers getting angry about being rejected and therefore become violent.

4.3.3 “I call the police”

-seeks help

Some of the women said that they would seek various forms of help to protect themselves against violence. This was a strategy they employed when a dangerous situation occurred, not a strategy they used to prevent dangerous or threatening situations. The argument for seeking help in a threatening situation was that the person acting in a threatening or violent manner would lose the upper hand when they were outnumbered.

Most of the women who said they would seek help to protect against violence said that they called or threatened to call the police when they found themselves in a dangerous or threatening situation. This would often scare the customers, or others, who were acting threatening/violent away.

There were various support services in the prostitution community, friends/acquaintances, people they worked with on the street or in a massage parlor/apartment or women who happened to pass by that they would ask for help.

²² Bondage is a game, often with sexual tones, which involves one the parties being tied up, chained or otherwise restrained or restricted movement.

Two women reported that they would ask God for help.

4.3.4 “Tough behavior”

-be tough, threatening, and use weapons

Some women said that the best way to protect themselves against violence and threats was to be tough and strict with the customers who acted threatening, and to respond to violence with violence.

Among the women who used this strategy some said it was important that they demanded respect from the customers, and that they showed confidence and kept a strict demeanor during negotiations. In this way the customers would realize that these were women that it would be inadvisable to get into trouble or argue with, and that they would therefore treat them with respect and not try any “funny business”. If a threatening situation should occur it was important to act threatening in return, so the customers would not believe they had the upper hand.

Some of the women said that they always carry various weapons they could use to defend themselves and inflict injuries to a potential attacker with. The weapons that were mentioned were pepper spray, knives, and umbrellas.

Several women said that they would physically attack to protect themselves by punching, kicking, hair pulling, and pinching their attacker.

4.3.5 “Nothing really, I deal with what happens”

-pragmatical and intuitive

Among the women in the survey some said that it was difficult to create strategies to protect yourself against violence in prostitution, because prostitution means that you can never be sure what situations you will find yourself in. The women who gave this answer said that even though they did not have any regular strategies they used to avoid being exposed to violence or threats, they were very careful about paying attention to what situations they would find themselves in and do what they could to protect themselves if they should find themselves in a threatening or dangerous situation.

Even though they did not have a specific safety strategy, their answers showed that they actually described a form of strategy by always paying attention to their situation and the customer when they would end up in a dangerous situation, so that they could then assess what the best approach would be. Choosing to improvise is also a form of strategy, and many of the women who gave this answer said that they were good at reading people and trusted their instincts and gut feelings, and that they therefore were able to protect themselves in potentially dangerous situations.

4.4 What did the women believe could be done to better protect them against violence?

4.4.1 Measures Pro Sentret could implement.

In the survey we asked: “What measures can Pro Sentret implement in order that you can better protect yourself against violence/threats/harassment?”. 90% of the women who participated in the survey answered the question.

One answer that was consistently reported by many of the respondents was that we had to be more visible in the community, perform outreach work more often, hand out assault alarms and pepper spray, and provide information/warnings about violent customers. Some also wanted Pro Sentret to establish

discussion groups that focused on prevention of violence, boundaries, and self-defense.

Many said that Pro Sentret already did a good job in this area and that it was important to continue with warnings, handing out alarms, outreach work, free healthcare and providing the police with anonymous tips about violent offenders. Some said that they wished to learn Norwegian, and to learn more about laws and rights related to being the victims of violence in Norway. Some also said that there was nothing Pro Sentret could do to protect them against violence.

Several of the women believed that it was important that Pro Sentret used the media to tell potential customers not to subject women in prostitution to violence, and that we had to inform society about how much violence women in prostitution were actually being exposed to. Some also said that Pro Sentret had to ask politicians to not implement criminalization of the customers, and that we had to influence politicians to grant more foreign women residency permits in Norway so that they could quit prostitution and get some other job. Others felt that Pro Sentret should work more with the Crisis Center and the police, so that the women would get help from them when they needed it.

Among the women who worked on the indoor market there were many who said that Pro Sentret had to ensure that it was legal to sell sexual services in massage parlors. At the time the survey was conducted the police was very active with operation “Husløs” and many perceived that they could no longer work together in the massage parlors. These women believed that they would be exposed to more violence if they could no longer work in a parlor.

4.4.2 Measures politicians and other support services could implement.

In addition to asking what Pro Sentret could do to better protect the women against violence, we also asked the following question: “What can politicians and other support services do to improved the safety of women in prostitution?”. 83% of the participants in the survey answered the question.

When it came to politicians many of the answers revolved around laws and that the women wanted them to change in various ways. Many said that selling sex from an apartment or in a massage parlor should be legal, because they considered it the safest way to sell sexual services. Some wanted prostitution to be legalized, and many said that the proposed customer criminalization must not be implemented.

Other argued that the foreign women must be given more rights in Norway, so that they could find work and stay here legally. Further many wanted stricter punishment of violence against women in prostitution, and more resources used to pursue facilitators, pimps, and violent customers.

Some of the women thought that the laws should be changed so that women who sold sex could legally carry weapons and pepper spray.

Further some of the women argued that politicians should try to understand their situation better, and keep the promises they had made to look after and protect people who sell sex. Several said that Pro Sentret and various support services had to be granted more money in order to assist them better, and that money should be allocated so that they could get free psychological treatment after being exposed to violence. Some also thought that more money should be given to the police, so that the police had more resources to be there for them and investigate violent incidents that were reported. Some also wanted politicians to spend more money on lighting in the prostitution district.

To the question of what other support services could do to improve the safety of the women they were concerned with the support services being available, showing the women respect, recognize them as people who needed help, and be there for the women when they contacted them. Several wrote that

they did not feel that they were taken seriously when they called and asked for help (they did not say who they had called), and that they wanted recognition from the support services that prostitution was risky and that the employees had to believe what the women told them.

4.4.3 Can the women do something to improve their own safety?

87% of the participants in the survey answered the question about what the women could do to better protect themselves from violence/threats and harassment.

Many of the answers here coincided with what they did to protect themselves against violence. These included working together, using weapons like pepper spray, knives, tear gas, not working at night, show that you were tough and making strict demands of the customers, stay in touch with the police, and be careful what customers they sold sex to.

A fairly large amount of the women said that there was little they could do to protect themselves against violence. The reason they gave for this was usually that they already did what they could, and that prostitution was so risky that it was impossible to protect yourself against violence. Some of the women who said there was little they could do, also said the only thing they might be able to do was quit prostitution.

Some of the women also said that they had to change in various ways to strengthen their own safety. They mentioned loving themselves more, taking better care of themselves, become mentally stronger, become better at setting boundaries, and to not be naive. Some also said that they should work out more, so that they would become physically stronger and could defend themselves better.

4.5 What relevance do the answers in the 2007/08 survey have to the situation the women reported in 2012?

4.5.1 Have the changes in the market affected the survival strategies the women use?

The survival strategies reported by the women in the 2007/08 survey, and that was reproduced in section 4.3 of this report, matches quite well with the findings Fafo made in 2008 when they mapped the scope, contents, and organization of the Norwegian prostitution market. In Fafos report the women emphasized that they set certain rules for themselves concerning where they sold sex, who they sold sex to, and what sexual services they sold (Tveit and Skilbrei 2008:108-112).

In section 3 of this report we could see that different initiatives that are in contact with the prostitution communities in Oslo reported that the market had changed considerably the last few years. The changes they reported were among other things that the pool of customers had shrunk and that the market was characterized by being a buyers market, an increased judicialization and that the terms for how prostitution takes place has become more individualized.

How the prostitution market organize and adapt to various changes will partially influence what strategies women in prostitution use to protect themselves against violence. In Fafos report from 2008 the researchers wrote that some of the survival strategies the women use can be maintained regardless of changes to the conditions of the market, while other strategies will be more difficult to use when the customer pool shrinks (Tveit and Skilbrei 2008:112-113). Our findings in the survey among support services in 2010/11 suggests the same. Strategies some of the women have most likely been able to

maintain since the study in 2007/08 is to adapt to the customer, be pragmatic and intuitive, and to be tough/threatening/use weapons to protect and defend themselves. Seeking help and having strict requirements for who, what, where and when, is more difficult for some of the women to maintain as strategies.

When it comes to the most common strategy reported by the women, namely to set rules for who, what, where, and when they sold sex, it is likely that some of the women subsequent to the survey have had to lower their standards. The reasons for this is among other things that the market is characterized by being a buyers market and that the customers therefore have the upper hand in negotiations about who, what, where, and when. Since it is also reported that some of the “nice” customers have disappeared, while a reduction in the amount of “mean” customers has not been observed, many of the women who depend on a certain income have had to sell sex to customers they previously avoided by screening and strict requirements. This increases the vulnerability of the women. As Tveit and Skilbrei pointed out, the violent episodes the women have experienced are usually linked to situations where they have been desperate for a drug fix or money and took risks they otherwise would not have(2008:113). That prostitution has become more individualized and that more work alone have led to the women being unable to ask colleagues for help, which they reported doing in 2007/08. This is true both for women who sell sex on the street and for women who sell sex on the indoor market.

On the indoor market we see that many work alone in their own apartments. This is especially linked to the fact that the police has been very active with operation “Husløs” and that it therefore is difficult for the women to sell sex in massage parlors where many work at the same time, something many emphasized as an important safety strategy in the responses from 2007/08.

In the study from 2012 we see in section 2.2.4 that as many as 41% of the women on the indoor market who have been exposed to violence report that the violent incident occurred in their own apartment. The source of the violence was usually a customer.

For some of the women in street prostitution vulnerability has increased because they have less time to negotiate due to the fact that the customer is worried about being caught by the police for purchasing sex. This means that they can no longer “screen” customers by gut feeling, intuition, and by looking for signs of danger during the negotiation as well as they used to. That they often have to travel far from other people in the community to perform the sexual service, also means that few of the women can use the strategy that was based on having others nearby when the sexual act was performed.

In relation to the survival strategy that was based on contacting the police and support services, we see from the numbers in 2012(in section 2.2.8 of this report) a considerable decrease of people contacting the police or support services when they are exposed to violence. This suggests that fewer have used this survival strategy in the years after the study in 2007/08 was conducted.

In Fafos report from 2008 the possibility that criminalization of customers could protect the women is mentioned; they can threaten the customers who are acting badly, or want to violate the agreement, by reporting them as sex buyers to the police(Tveit and Skilbrei 2008:113). Nothing in the studies we have conducted among the women and the support services suggests that the criminalization of the customers have protected the women from violence from their customers, rather the women are protecting the customers from the police.

4.5.2 Important knowledge

Even though the prostitution market have undergone large changes since study in 2007/08 was conducted, the results are still very relevant when attempting to shed light on the situation today.

The results that have been presented in section 4 of the report give us both insight to how the women try to better their situation and safety, and what they believe that the support services and politicians could do to improve their safety. Additionally the result from 2007/08 can contribute to shedding light on what changes we see in the market, and what challenges this poses in relation to maintain the safety of and reduce the violence against women in prostitution.

We will also use the feedback from the women regarding what support services, politicians, and Pro Sentret can do to improve the safety of the women in section 5.5 of this report were we suggest possible measures.

4.6 Main findings

- In the 2007/08 study the participants reported five different strategies that are used to protect against violence in prostitution.
- Some of the strategies the women reported in 2007/08 are probably still being used by the women in 2012.
- Some of the strategies the women reported in 2007/08 has been difficult to maintain due to large changes in the prostitution market. The reason for the difficulties of maintaining these strategies are linked to increased judicialization, a reduction of the customer pool, and changes to the terms under which the women sell sex.
- In the 2007/08 study it is clear that the women do not think that the focus the government has had on increased judicialization and using laws on the prostitution market leads to reduced violence and improve the safety of women in prostitution. At the same time many of the women express a desire for an increased judicialization, but in other areas than it is today. They call for more protection by the police, better legal protection for women in prostitution, a system that takes them seriously and stricter punishments for people who use violence against people who sell sex.

5. Closing comments

5.1 Women in prostitution – one of the most vulnerable and victimized groups in our society

In the 2012 survey 59% of the participants said that they had been exposed to violence in the last three years. That is 73 people in a sample of 123 people. It is extremely rare that you see this many violent incidents in a population as small as the prostitution community in Oslo. This is discouraging and very worrying.

In the debate about rape and violence against women in general the focus is frequently on the fact that this is something that could happen any woman in all walks of society. That is correct, but it is important to remember that there are some groups that are especially exposed and especially vulnerable. People who sell sexual services belong to one of the most vulnerable and victimized groups in our society. Why this group is so vulnerable is also described by the police in their sexual assault report when they define rape vulnerability.

“Rape vulnerability concerns abuse of people who lead a life that puts them in especially vulnerable situations. These are victims that are alone, isolated and exposed to unstable and/or aggressive people. Those who are vulnerable lack social network, competency, and have few or no forms of social capital available to them that they can use to get out of the situation. This particularly applies to people who live in an environment of heavy drug use, in the prostitution market and/or in psychiatric institutions”(Sætre and Grytdal 2011:24).

Women in prostitution are in a very vulnerable situation because among other things their means of making money involves little interaction with the rest of society. Their “workplace” does not contribute to integration and the formation of networks in society, but rather separates and isolates you from it. At the same time the environment is characterized by the people in the community being in constant flux, something which makes it difficult to form a stable social network.

The isolation and the lack of a social network is amplified by the fact that these women in so many ways are unwanted by society. They are unwanted because they are seducing temptresses, they are addicted to drugs which places an economic burden on society, they are (illegal) immigrants from other cultures or they are people who bring criminality with them. They disturb us in public spaces and they lead a life that is incompatible with our values. The women themselves are aware that they are unwanted, which leads to feelings of shame and a perception of stigma. This makes them isolate themselves further and pulls them even further from the rest of society.

Additionally the environment attracts people who seem to wish to violate the women. The vast majority of men who seek out the women do so to have sex with them, not to inflict violence on them. However this report establishes that the violent offender is in most cases a customer and the violence they inflict on the women is frequently severe. This must mean that these women attract unstable and/or aggressive people, perhaps because they know that these women are vulnerable, will rarely seek aid and that the risk of being prosecuted is low.

Many women in prostitution lack competency. This could be a lack of knowledge of Norwegian laws and regulations, little understanding of the systems of Norwegian society, a lack of knowledge of rights, insufficient language skills and/or low integration in society.

Having few forms of social capital is among other things linked to having a low ranking in the social hierarchy, little education, poor physical/psychological health, a lack of rights in regards to residency status, and a lack of contact or trust in the existing support services and justice system.

5.2 Has the criminalization of the purchase of sexual services affected the vulnerability of women who sell sex in Oslo?

In section 2 and section 3 of this report we have tried to answer the question that many have asked both prior to and subsequent to the introduction of the sex purchase ban 1. January 2009: Has criminalization of the purchase of sex led to more violence against women in prostitution?

In section 2 of the report we presented the results from a survey Pro Sentret conducted in the spring of 2012, where we surveyed the violent experiences of the women in prostitution after 1. January 2009. The survey was conducted according to initiative 3a in Oslo municipalities action plan against prostitution. The initiative specified that “the purpose is to evaluate whether the women are more exposed to violence after the introduction of the law”.

In section 3 of the report we have examined the interviews Pro Sentret held with various support services in the winter of 2010/11. The purpose of the interviews was to determine whether the criminalization had led to more violence and whether it had affected the safety and vulnerability of the women.

This data does not answer whether the high amount of violence and the vulnerability women in prostitution experience is caused by the criminalization of the purchase of sexual services or other factors. What we can state with certainty is that there are no fewer women in prostitution who report being exposed to violence subsequent to the introduction of the sex purchase law, and that women in prostitution is a group that is still highly vulnerable.

Whether the sex purchase law has led to changes in the prevalence of violence among those who sell sex in Norway is something we will most likely never know.

The prostitution market in Norway is a mobile one that is in constant flux. The market is constantly adapting to the changes that are occurring both in Norway, internationally and in the various prostitution arenas. Changes to the laws, economy, politics, police activity, and migration patterns all affect the development of the market and how the women organize their workday. This also affects the safety, vulnerability and the frequency of exposure to violence among the women.

This report points out various changes the market has been characterized by in recent years. It ascertains that the number of respondents that are exposed to violence in prostitution has not decreased. The numbers are, if anything, pointing in the opposite direction. In the 2007/08 survey 52% of participants reported experiencing violence in the course of their career in prostitution. In the 2012 survey 59% report violent experiences in prostitution in the last three years.

5.3 Reports to the support services – some figures

In part 2.2.8 of this report we saw that many of the women reported that they had not received help from support services after being exposed to violence. In the following we present some of the records of violence in recent years, from some of the key operators in the field.

5.3.1 The police

In section 2.2.8 we saw that 16% of the women who had been exposed to violence in our 2012 survey, had received aid from the police in connection with their exposure to violence. If we look at the number from the 2007/08 survey, 27% said they had received aid from the police. The figures are not directly comparable since the 2012 survey ask about experiences in the last three years, while the 2007/08 survey asked about experiences from an entire career in prostitution. The figures can nevertheless indicate a decrease in the number of people who seek out the police for help after being

exposed to violence in prostitution. Whether the reduction is caused by the sex purchase ban can not be determined.

If we look at the polices' statistics of reported rapes in 2010, we see that eight of 189 reported rapes came from women in prostitution. Among these two was from Norway, two from Hungary, two from Lithuania, one from Russia, and one from Romania(Sætre and Grytdal 2011:66).

Strategic staff in Oslo police precinct reports that they have received nine charges of rape linked to prostitution in 2011. Six were from women and three from men. Two of the incidents happened in the distant past, when the victims were minors. The police report that three were Norwegian, three were European, one was Asian and two were African.²³

The equivalent figures from prior rape survey with the police showed 13 in 2001, 13 in 2004 and 12 in 2007. The number of reported rapes has therefore gone down somewhat in recent years, but the numbers are too small to call it a trend(Sætre and Grytdal 2011:66)

That eight people in prostitution reported rapes in 2010 and nine in 2011 is good. This shows that some of those who work as a prostitute, and who are exposed to violence, do in fact seek aid from the police in order to press charges against the offender. At the same time our survey shows that the majority of the respondents who are exposed to violence in prostitution do not contact the police for aid. The possible reasons for this are many. It is likely partially due to feelings of shame and guilt on the part of the victim, something experienced by many victims of violence. Furthermore many of the women's actions are probably due to a fear of prejudice from the police, the justice system, and health services. The double stigma as both victim of violence and prostitute can be a heavy burden to bear. Other reasons could be among other things a lack of knowledge of the police and reporting violence in Norway, fear that the police will enforce other laws against the prostitute, a lack of trust in the police, or that the women for some other reason does not wish to press charges.

5.3.2 Pro Sentret

In section 2.2.8 we saw that only 15% of the participants in 2012 said they had received help from Pro Sentret after being subjected to violence. In the 2007/08 survey 33% said they had received help from Pro Sentret. That the number has dropped by over 50% is very worrying.

As mentioned in section 3.3.4 of the report many of the support services reported that they felt that there was little openness about violence, and that Pro Sentret have experienced a decrease in the amount of women who use the board in Pro Sentrets common room to post warnings of violent customers.

The reason for this decrease is not answered by the study, and the Pro Sentret do not have any answers for why so few ask us for help after being subjected to violence. Many of the women in the prostitution community in Oslo frequently come to Pro Sentret for other forms of assistance and help, and we believe that most of the women in the community trust us as a support service.

When we conducted the survey in 2012 we experienced that some of the clients of Pro Sentret, especially the Nigerians, said that they did not want to answer the questions because Pro Sentret could not protect them against violence. Although it is true that Pro Sentret cannot physically protect the women against violence, it is very serious that the women do not see the point in telling Pro Sentret that they have been subjected to violence subsequent to the incident. Pro Sentret can inform about rights, escort the women to get emergency care or to the abuse center, offer free health services and conversations, put the women in touch with legal counsel, help with contacting the police, help with a claim for damages, and general support for the women. Additionally Pro Sentret can provide guidance and advice about safety, and precautions they should take to avoid risky situations.

²³ The figures for 2011 was provided by Strategic staff in the Oslo Police precinct at Veslemøy. Grytdal per e-mail 8. June 2012.

Since 2008 Pro Sentret offered its clients free legal aid, financed by project funds from the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety. In practice this means that we have two lawyer who are well acquainted with prostitution who provide consultations in Pro Sentret once a week²⁴. When reviewing how many of these consultations was about violence in prostitution²⁵ we saw that it was two out of 27 cases in 2008, 3 of 71 cases in 2009, 4 of 41 cases in 2010 and 4 of 52 cases in 2011. Which means that few of the cases are about violence in prostitution.

A preliminary review of the 40 cases the lawyers have had from 1. January til 5. June 2012 we see that six cases are about violence in prostitution. Four of the cases were about rape. This is the highest amount we have had since the start of the project and the numbers are only about the first five months of 2012. The health department of Pro Sentret also experienced an increase in the amount of people who reported about violence. In 2011 they registered 14 cases of violence and/or rape. A review of their registered cases of violence this year, shows that they registered 10 cases of violence in the period from 1. January to 11. June 2012. Eight of these cases were about violence in prostitution, six of the cases were rape and one of the cases was a rape attempt. In two of the eight cases the women were stabbed. That more have contacted Pro Sentret and reported about violence recently is good in as much as the women are asking for and receiving help. At the same time it is worrying that the violence they report is so severe. Despite the fact that we see a trend towards more openness and more people asking Pro Sentret for help in 2012, the study shows that not nearly enough of our clients ask for our help. This would indicate that Pro Sentret needs to be better at putting violence on the agenda as well as inform about what assistance we can offer when they are subjected to violence.

5.3.3 Other offers

In section 2.2.8 we saw that 14% of the participants in the 2007/08 survey said that they had received emergency care after being subjected to violence. In 2012 only 3% reported this. Oslo emergency care do not have any numbers showing how many of the people who sought out the abuse center for help in 2011 were prostitutes. In 2011 they had 424 patients and they believe that approximately 8-10 of them sold sexual services.²⁶ They have also experienced that few women in prostitution seek them out after being subjected to violence and abuse.

The reason why so few utilize this offer is not explained by our data, but based on experience it could be because some are not aware of the offer, and that some have little trust in and bad experiences with public health services and emergency care. For those women that are addicted to drugs it could also be because they cannot get the medicine they need (Methadon, Subutex and similar) to stay there long enough for the necessary examinations to be carried out and receive treatment. For some of the foreign women it could be because they have to pay – or believe that they have to pay – for treatment because of their residency status and lack of rights.

We have also collected information from lawyer Trine Rjukan. She is one of the lawyers that is connected to the legal first aid project at Pro Sentret. Rjukan is a recognized legal counselor for violence and rape victims. She reports that she from 2008 have had 18 cases about violence and rape in prostitution. Most of the cases involved severe violence and rape. In 17 of the cases charges were pressed.

5.4 The governments focus

²⁴ More about how the project is organized in Pro Sentrets yearly report from 2008-2011.

²⁵ Human trafficking is not included in these numbers.

²⁶ The figures were supplied by Elisabeth Jensen, director of the Health Department in Oslo municipality.

A stated goal for the government is to reduce the size of the prostitution market. The resources and the priorities the politicians have given the police have revolved around this: to reduce the market. Prostitution politics have in later years been characterized by using legal means to reduce the prostitution market, as well as other crime linked to prostitution. The government have given the police guidelines to uncover crimes like pimping and human trafficking, and much of the resources the police have received have been used to enforce laws that are tangential to these activities. Further the government introduced a law that criminalized the purchase of sexual services on the 1. January 2009.

The police enforce laws that are linked to pimping (among other things through operation “Husløs”), the sex purchase law, human trafficking, immigration control. The result is that it has become more difficult to operate in the prostitution market for buyers and people who wish to profit from other people's prostitution, but it has perhaps become especially difficult for people who sell sexual services.

The resources and guidelines politicians have given to the support services have primarily be focused on getting men and women out of prostitution.

This report shows that violence and vulnerability among women in prostitution discussed here have not been reduced in the same time period. Women in prostitution are still highly vulnerable to violence. They are frequently subjected to violence, threats, and harassment and it is primarily the customers who expose the women to violence. The violence experienced by the women is often severe and at times life threatening.

The findings of this report show that prostitution has become more individualized and that fewer people seek out support services after being subjected to violence. Additionally some of the women feel that they have little legal protection because parts of the legal framework – which is in principle intended to protect the women – also leads to the women not going to the police for help. They are worried about losing their apartments and/or their livelihood. Some of the women also experience that they now have to protect the customers from being fined. This means that the customers have gone from being a form of “business partner” to an ally, while at the same time the police have gone from being an ally the women could go to for protection, to someone they themselves have to protect the customers from.

It is very important that the Norwegian government pay attention to the development in the prevalence of violence, threats, and harassment in these communities, and that it is evaluated whether the desired goals are met with current measures and priorities, and also whether the measures lead to unintended and/or unwanted consequences.

5.5 The road ahead?

A report like this should contain some suggestions for measures which could improve the situation, prevent violence, and reduce the women's vulnerability and victimization. That is no easy task with this report as the basis. The report tells of a complex group of marginalized women who live under very complicated conditions. The support services could do somethings to improve some of these conditions, but ultimately changes at a higher structural and political level is necessary to make these women less vulnerable than they are today.

To get more women to seek help after being subjected to violence we have the following suggestions:

- That the abuse center in Oslo should be granted resources to be mobile, in order to meet the needs of people who are especially vulnerable to violence/abuse and who are reluctant to visit

health services.

- Improve the competence level at every level of the support services, police, and the judicial system which might lead to a change in attitude to people in prostitution.
- That regular contact personnel is established in the police who works with violence and rape cases involving vulnerable groups.
- Establishing a crisis center/low threshold services for people who experience violence outside of close relations which is open to everyone regardless of drug addiction or legal status in Norway.

Pro Sentret have in 2012 applied to the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety for resources for a project that will focus on crime prevention directed at women in prostitution.

The goal of this project is to prevent violence against women in prostitution by raising awareness in the individual women, increase the ability to handle threatening situations and supply the women with knowledge of rights, support services, and problems relating to violence. This will be done by the Pro Sentret:

- Organize drop-in courses about violence in prostitution and violence in close relations with a focus on knowledge about violence, practical tips and information about offers of aid. The courses will be organized in cooperation with Oslo Crisis Center and a provider of self-defense courses.
- Work out and distribute information material adapted to the users of Pro Sentret about violence, rights, and tips about maintaining their own safety.

Attachment

Pro Sentrets survey about violence in 2012

Information about the survey

In the spring of 2012 Pro Sentret conducted an anonymous survey about what experiences women in prostitution have had with violence, harassment and threats after the law which criminalized the purchase of sex was introduced 1. January 2009.

The questionnaire consists of two sections:

Section 1: Personal information

Section 2: Your experiences with violence, threats, and harassment in connection with prostitution after 1. January 2009.

In our study we have chosen to call the following acts for violence, threats, and harassment:

Threats/force	Restrained	Shoved	Trapped
Struck with fist	Struck with palm	Pinching	Thrown from car
Kicked	Hair pulling	Biting	Scratching
Threatened /w weapon	Stranglehold	Raped	Murder attempt
Spat on	Verbal abuse	Burned	Unwanted touching
Robbed/inc. Attempted	Threatened/forced into sex that was not agreed to		
Objects thrown at			

You also have the option to provide your own actions that you define as violence, threats, and

harassment in the form.

How do you answer the questionnaire?

On the questions that have multiple options you draw a circle around your answer. On the question that have a dotted line after it you write your answer on the dotted line. If you have questions about the study or you need help filling out the form you can ask one of the employees for help.

The study is conducted in various support services for women in prostitution. If you have answered the questionnaire in a different location for women in prostitution you do not have to fill out the form again.

We appreciate it if you spend your time answering the questionnaire! Violence against women in prostitution is something it's important to focus on and we need more information about your situation after the purchase of sex was criminalized.

Questionnaire about experiences connected to violence, threats, and harassment

Section 1: Personal information

1. How old are you?.....
2. What country are you from?.....
3. How much experience do you have with prostitution?.....
4. Are you addicted to any drugs?.....
5. Are you active in prostitution currently?.....
6. Where do/did you work/worked? Outside Inside Both outside and inside
7. Have you worked in prostitution in other countries than Norway?
No Yes If yes, where?.....

Section 2: Violence, threats, and harassment in connection with prostitution

1. Have you experience being exposed to violence, threats, and/or harassment in connection with prostitution after 1. January 2009?

Yes

No

(If you answered yes go to the next question, if you answered no you are done with the questionnaire)

2. How many episodes of violence, threats, and harassment?

Can't remember 1-3 4-6 7-10 More than ten times

3. Abuser

a) Man/men Woman/women Both man and woman

b) Was the abuser:

Regular customer Chance customer Unfamiliar, in a car
Boss/pimp Unfamiliar, passerby Another woman in the district
Acquaintance from the drug community
Other:.....

4. Crime scene

a)
On the street In a car In a hotel
In own apartment In abusers apartment In a massage parlor
In a work apartment
Other:.....

b)
In Norway In another/other countries Both in Norway and another country

If another country, where:

.....

5. Form of threat/violence/harassment

a)
Threats/force Restrained Shoved Trapped

Struck with fist Struck with palm Pinching Thrown from car

Kicked Hair pulling Biting Scratching

Threatened /w weapon Stranglehold Raped Murder attempt

Spat on Verbal abuse BurnedUnwanted touching

Robbed/inc. Attempted Threatened/forced into sex that was not agreed to

Objects thrown at

Other:.....

b) Have you been exposed to multiple forms of threat/violence/harassment at the same time?
(for example been raped, pinched, and kicked in the same incident)

No

Yes

If yes, what forms?.....

If yes, how many abusers were there?.....

If yes, who were the abuser/abusers?.....

6. Weapons

Were any weapons/objects used to harm you?

Yes No

If yes, which?.....

7. Consequences of violence/threats/harassment (physical and psychological)

None Scared Short term pain
Visible injury Serious threat to life Anxiety/psychological distress
Long term pain(more than 1 hour)
Other:.....

8. Who helped you after this?

No one Emergency care Police Friends
Hospital Partner Family Customer
Did not need help Pro Sentret Natthjemmet Nadheim
Crisis center
Other:.....

Thank you very much for spending your time on answering the questionnaire!

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