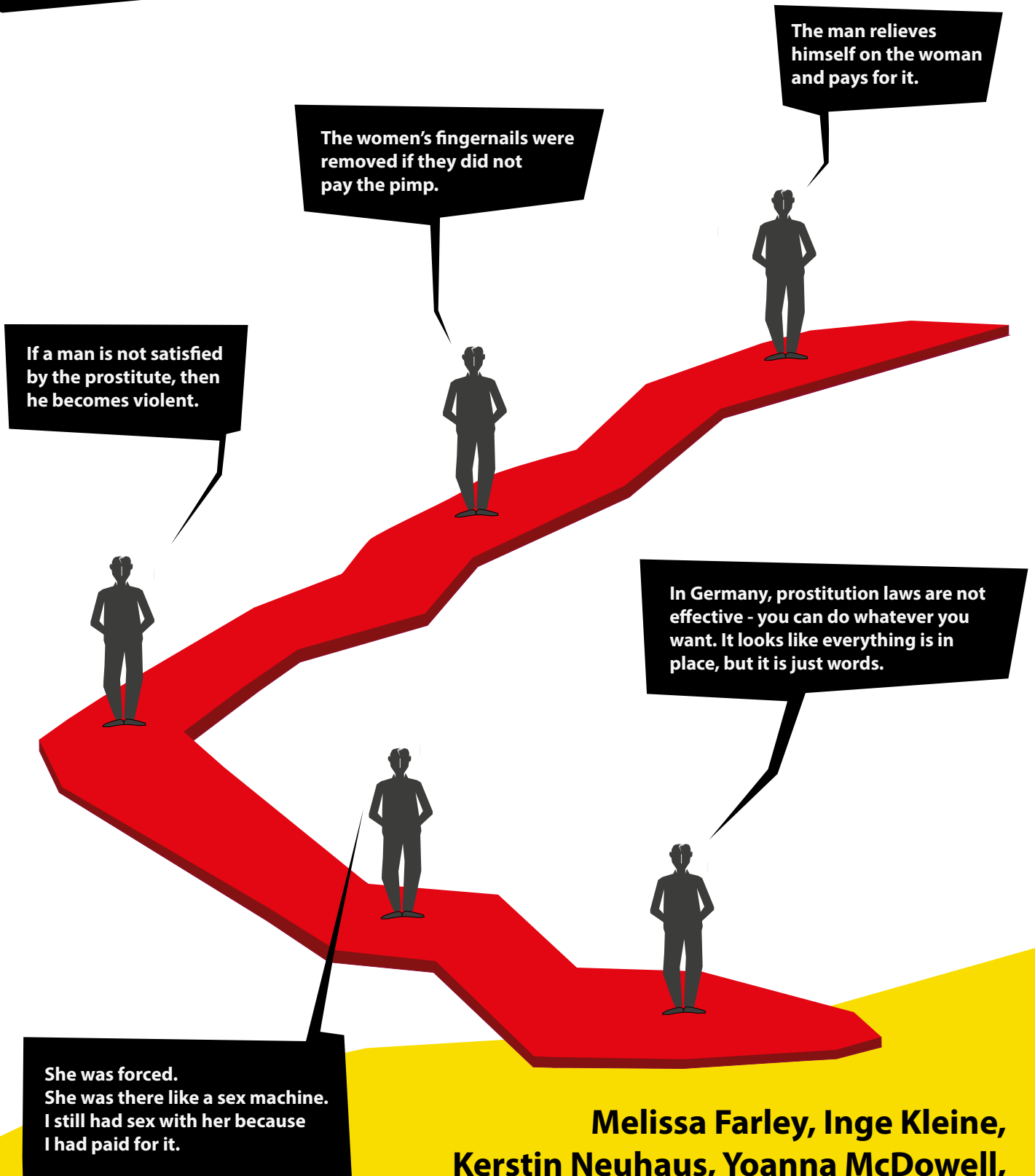


MEN WHO PAY FOR SEX IN GERMANY & WHAT THEY TEACH US ABOUT THE FAILURE OF LEGAL PROSTITUTION:

A 6-country study of the sex trade from the perspective of the socially invisible 'freiers'



**Melissa Farley, Inge Kleine,
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Table 1: Freiers describe legal prostitution in Germany

Prostitution is like washing cars or a job in the bakery.

Prostitution is a business relationship. The man relieves himself on the woman and pays money for it.

She was forced. I could see it from her behavior: she had no will. She was there like a sex machine. I still had sex with her because I paid for it.

The prostitute is under the pimp's thumb. She is his property.

No one does it voluntarily.

The Romanians and Asians are 100% conned.

She was like a good girlfriend who listened to me.

If a man is not satisfied, then he behaves with violence. Society needs the outlet. Prostitution is an outlet for all possible aggression.

Society needs the outlet. Prostitution is an outlet for all possible aggression.

You tell them what you want. You have no emotions. I know exactly what I want. I have one regular. She knows exactly what I want. I go in; I say nothing to her, she knows what to do: she licks me all over my body. After I ejaculate, I leave. I never speak to her at all.

It's like going to the bathroom. It's just fixing a need.

Prostitution is such a drastic experience for them, and that changes them a lot. I believe their experience with the nastier bad side of men will be ingrained in their psyche. It will change them forever, change their ability to have a normal sexual relationship with anybody. They are damaged from being in prostitution.

A pimp once sent a prostitute into the room and shouted at her in Czech. I realized that something was wrong, and then a muscular man went into her room. I don't know if he hit her.

The women's fingernails were removed if they did not pay the pimp, their drugs were taken from them, or the women were beaten so badly they needed to be hospitalized. The women were scared and never said anything. They never received any medical treatment.

The pimp is in charge. When he says "jump" they ask how high.

I believe that the police and the state are working together with the pimps and the traffickers. The worst are the judges and the politicians. They have so much power; they put everything undercover with the pimps.

In Germany, the laws are not that effective; you can almost do whatever you want to do. It looks like everything is in place, but it is just words.

Executive Summary

Men who pay for sex in Germany and what they teach us about the failure of legal prostitution: a 6-country report on the sex trade from the perspective of the socially invisible ‘freiers’

This research was a 6-country study (Germany, Cambodia, USA, Scotland, UK, India) with 1.5-hour in-person interviews of 763 sex buyers, including 96 freiers in Germany. In these anonymous interviews, sex buyers provided candid information about prostitution and trafficking that mirrored decades of testimony from exited prostitution survivors.

Using the extensive quantitative and qualitative data collected for this research, we want to shed light on some crucial questions about prostitution. Does legal prostitution make prostitution safer? Does legal prostitution reduce violence against women in prostitution? Does legal prostitution reduce sex trafficking? Does legal prostitution reduce organized crime control of the sex trade? Are sex buyers more likely to report trafficking if prostitution is legal? Does legal prostitution prevent or reduce rape?

Is buying sex associated with sexual coercion, including rape?

Yes. Men in all 6 countries who reported higher rates of buying sex also reported committing significantly more acts of sexual coercion, including rape.

What have sex buyers taught us about trafficking, pimping, and organized crime?

55% of German sex buyers admitted to having observed or paid a pimp or trafficker. According to sex buyers, pimps in Germany routinely commit violent acts that meet international definitions of torture. For example:

“There was one who really beat up one of his women. Really hard. With the fist two or three times in the face and thrown her against the wall.”

“When the women didn’t pay the pimp enough, they had their fingernails pulled off, or the pimps took their drugs, or they beat the women to a pulp. The women were scared and never said anything. They had bloody noses, but they never received medical attention.”

Do German sex buyers report trafficking to the authorities?

Very rarely. German sex buyers acknowledge that they have *witnessed* sex trafficking at significantly higher rates than other Western countries, but they *report* trafficking significantly less often than other sex buyers. Only 1% of 96 German sex buyers had reported the suspicion of trafficking to authorities.

Are sex buyers aware of the psychological damage caused by prostitution?

Yes. Freiers reported to us many detailed examples of psychological distress. By accurately observing the women’s dissociative symptoms, sex buyers told interviewers that they believed the capacity to detach or “switch off” differentiated prostitutes from other women. One freier explained, “*You sometimes notice that they don’t do it voluntarily, they seem absent.*”

“The pimp does the psychological raping of the woman.”

“Maybe she feels sold and unsafe.”

“Her body has to be there for everyone: it is absolutely damaging to them.”

“I saw bruises and listlessness.”

“She has an emaciated body and soul. She could no longer feel anything.”

Understanding that the payment of money was the means of coercion to prostitution, a freier explains, “*The money excludes the possibility that it is voluntary.*”

Are German (and other) sex buyers racist in their choices regarding which women to use in prostitution?

Yes. Half of the sex buyers in this research selected a woman in prostitution on the basis of racial or ethnic stereotypes. A list of German sex buyers' ethnic or racial preferences indicates that German sex buyers choose women on the basis of the lightness or darkness of their skin, using a racist hierarchy of skin color. The same racist trend was apparent in the USA, UK, and Cambodia.

Does a preference for impersonal sex accompany sexual aggression?

Across all six countries in our research, a large majority of sex buyers (77%) reported a preference for impersonal sex, which is one of several interacting factors used to predict sexual aggression. Sex buyers who reported an impersonal sex preference told us they might rape a woman if they could get away with it, and they reported having a more extensive history of committing acts of sexual coercion.

Does a lack of empathy affect sex buyers' dehumanization of women in prostitution?

Yes. A lack of empathy is an antecedent to dehumanizing a woman, which then facilitates men's sexual aggression. Men who buy sex tend to have low empathy. The sex buyers in this research gave many examples of their objectification of women: *"It's like having a cup of coffee, when you're done you throw it out."*

"It's like renting an organ for 10 minutes."

What did we learn from sex buyers about prostitution myths, rape myths, hostile masculinity, and sexual aggression?

Prostitution myths are cultural notions about prostitution that are not true but which justify men's purchase of sex. Rape myths are cultural notions about rape that are not true but which justify rape. The more accepting of prostitution myths German freiers were, the more likely they were to also accept cultural myths about rape. Acceptance of rape myths is associated with sexual aggression.

Instead of prostitution decreasing rape, our results suggest the opposite is likely to be true. In 6 countries, we found that men's frequent use of prostituted women was correlated with their likelihood to rape. German sex buyers and the men in 5 other countries, who scored the highest on our measure of hostile masculine identification, also tended to report a greater likelihood of committing rape.

All sex buyers – but especially German sex buyers – subscribe to the myth that prostitution prevents rape

Compared to men in the USA, UK, and Scotland, German freiers more often believed that women in prostitution are "unrapeable," and that prostitution prevents rape. 39% of German sex buyers felt entitled to do whatever they wanted to a woman in prostitution after paying for her.

Does sex buyers' use of pornography have an impact on buying sex or other sexually aggressive behavior?

Yes. Frequent use of pornography contributes to sexual aggression, along with other factors. In 6 countries, we found that those sex buyers who reported more frequent use of pornography also tended to buy sex more frequently. Sex buyers who most often used pornography tended to be those who committed more sexually coercive behaviors, including rape.

Are sex buyers involved in criminal activity outside of prostitution?

Yes. Sex buyers tend to engage in non-prostitution-related criminal activity. We compared all crimes for which German and US men had been arrested or convicted. German sex buyers committed more crimes overall than US men. The German freiers had committed more crimes of violence against women, more assault and battery, more homicides, robberies, burglaries, property crimes, drug sales, and drug possession. On the other hand, US sex buyers reported more weapons violations, crimes against authority, disorderly conduct, and driving infractions.

What would deter men from buying sex?

Sex buyers in all 6 countries reported that being named to a sex offender registry would be a highly effective deterrent. Other deterrents include public exposure of their sex purchase. Equally effective as a deterrent to buying sex is any amount of time in jail. An educational program on prostitution was the least effective deterrent, according to every interviewee.

Based on these findings from our research, we conclude that legal prostitution does not make prostitution safer, does not decrease violence against prostituted women, and does not reduce sex trafficking or organized crime control of the sex trade. Sex buyers are unlikely to report trafficking. Legal prostitution does not prevent or reduce rape.

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Alice Vachss is the former Chief of the Special Victims Bureau of the Queens (New York) District Attorney's Office and former special prosecutor for sex crimes in the Lincoln County (Oregon) District Attorney's Office. She is an internationally recognized expert on the prosecution of violence against women.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2003, Prostitution Research & Education and many partners published a research study about violence against women in prostitution in 9 countries and their subsequent symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). We interviewed 854 prostituted people in Canada, Colombia, Germany, Mexico, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, the United States, and Zambia asking interviewees to teach us about the multi-traumatic experience of prostitution. Of these 854 people, mostly women: 71% were physically assaulted in prostitution; 63% were raped; 89% wanted to escape prostitution but did not have other options for survival; 75% had been homeless at some point in their lives; 68% met criteria for a diagnosis of PTSD. We concluded:

“Our findings contradict these common myths about prostitution: the assumption that street prostitution is the worst type of prostitution, that prostitution of men and boys is different from prostitution of women and girls, that most of those in prostitution freely consent to it, that most people are in prostitution because of drug addiction, that prostitution is qualitatively different from trafficking, and that legalizing or decriminalizing prostitution decreases its harm.” (Farley et al., 2003).

Soon after the publication of the international study about prostitution survivors’ experiences, we shifted our research focus to men’s demand for prostitution, because we wanted to learn more about the roots of the extreme violence perpetrated against women in prostitution. We wanted to learn as much as we could about men who buy sex, also called freiers, puteros, johns, punters. We wondered: how do men think about prostitution? How do they arrive at the decision to buy a human being to use for acting out their fantasy of what sex is? Is prostitution connected with ideas about masculinity? More than a decade later we have completed in-person interviews of 763 sex buyers in 6 countries: Cambodia, UK, Germany, India, Scotland, and the United States. Some results of these cross cultural research projects have been previously published, but our findings regarding German sex buyers are reported here for the first time. We asked the men about attitudinal and behavioral correlates of violence against women, their willingness to rape if undetected, empathy, pornography use, sexual entitlement, masculine identity, frequency of sex buying, where sex was paid-for, childhood trauma, and other topics. Through our in-person interviews with sex buyers, we also sought to answer the question: to what extent is prostitution, regardless of its legal status, associated with violence against women? Most prostitution research has focused on those who have been harmed or victimized by prostitution, or on legal policy regarding prostitution. While these are important, we also find it important to investigate the attitudes and behaviors of men who are the driving force of the institution of prostitution: the men who demand sexual access to women and who pay for sex. We focus here on data obtained from sex buyers themselves to learn more about how men’s ideas about women, prostitution, and sexual violence create and maintain systems of prostitution. We investigated similarities and differences in attitudes and behaviors among 763 sex buyers in 6 countries: Germany, the USA, India, Scotland, England, and Cambodia.

Over the years, it has become clear that exited survivors of prostitution are the experts who have informed an abolitionist understanding of the sex trade. After the camouflage is removed, prostitution is more accurately described as paid rape, or voluntary slavery, or unwanted sex, or the choice that is not a choice. As Huschke Mau writes:

I had punters who wanted to fuck me at the window of a high rise and afterwards spit on me, had me crawl on all fours and squirt onto my face. I had punters – many of them – who asked: “What do you cost?” - admitting with that question that they weren’t buying just sex, they were buying a woman. I had punters who grinned at me in a revolting way when they saw that I was in pain (my first punter was one like that). I had punters who brought drugs with them, so they could use with me. I had punters who loved to violate my boundaries and go beyond what was agreed. There were punters eager to show me their cupboard full of weapons, when they were alone with me and their two huge dogs in a lonely house in the woods (surrounded by a two-meter-high fence and no cell phone connection), who enjoyed asking me over and over: “Are you afraid now?” Some were totally aware that I wasn’t consenting, but continued in spite of it.

You can’t avoid the feeling that it’s not about sex, but about tormenting and torturing some-

one — a woman. Again and again you see questions asking how “resilient” the woman is, how much anal she can stand, how much cum she can swallow without retching, how much she can take and still keep quiet. (Mau, 2016)

A woman in the United States also wrote about sex buyers:

Every day I was witness to the worst of men. Their carelessness and grand entitlement. The way they can so profoundly disconnect from what it is they’re having sex with, the way they think they own the world, watch them purchase a female. I was witness to their deep delusions. Spoiled babies all of them, and so many of them called [telephoned] prostitutes. I thought, maybe all men called prostitutes. It was a terrible thought, but really, what did I care. There was a system in place that was older and stronger than I could begin to imagine. Who was I? I was just a girl. What was I going to do about it? If I had any power I would make it so that nobody was ever bought or sold or rented. (Tea, 2004)

Abstract language does not permit an understanding of what exactly prostitution is. Crude language is necessary to know even a little bit about prostitution. Here is a list of sex acts for sale in most German legal brothels as summarized by psychologist Ingeborg Kraus. Anyone who has not been prostituted must ask herself/himself: would I perform any of these sex acts with strangers if I had the resources to avoid that? If your answer is no, then you must acknowledge the coercion that drives almost all prostitution. These sex acts paid for by freiers are what prostitution is. The following acts are for sale in German brothels: A punter can pay for a prostituted woman to take semen in her mouth without a condom, he can pay her to kiss him with a mouth full of semen, he can “play” on her body with his or her feces and with his semen. He can engage in “blood sports” including cutting her and himself. A punter can have his testicles and anus licked. He can perform gang rape with his friends, all of whom will ejaculate on her face, eyes and nose. The woman in prostitution often cries during this humiliating ritual, which sexually arouses the punter. He can buy the right to have a woman defecate on him or he can defecate on the woman he buys. The punter can pay to have a woman urinate on him or he can urinate on her. He can pay to have a woman drink his urine or he can drink her urine. For a higher price, all of these sex acts can be performed without a condom.

What are the 2002 and 2017 German laws that regulate prostitution?

From the end of WWII to 2002, prostitution in Germany was legally classified as “not prohibited but... immoral” (OLG Hamm, 1989; OLG Düsseldorf, 1999). Coexisting with these paradoxical policies were laws against trafficking and prostitution of children (Strafgesetzbuch, 1973).

In 2002, the Act on the Regulation of Legal Relationships of Prostitutes (ProstG) legalized prostitution as form of labor which included employment contracts. The 2002 law set up a partnership between legal pimps and the German State: pimps were legally mandated to pay taxes on their earnings from prostitution. Many, including the authors of this Report, view these funds as blood taxes obtained by a pimp state.

The 2002 law entitled prostitutes to pensions (Einkommenssteuergesetz, 2009) which required that the woman register with the State. Since most women in prostitution engage in it as a last-ditch survival maneuver which they would prefer to avoid, very few women in German legal prostitution are registered (Neller, 2014). Advertising for prostitution has been permitted in Germany since 2002. The law also permitted cities to restrict prostitution into red light zones, but there has been little enforcement.

The 2002 law gave employers the right to define the “job” as any other type of labor. Helmut Sporer described the devastating consequences of the 2002 law:

The Prostitution Act of 2002 turned the same actions, the very same rules set by brothel operators and pimps, from punishable offences into legal practices overnight. The new law gave them a ‘right of direction’ [Weisungsrecht, the right of legal employers to exercise authority over employees and to issue binding instructions] over women in prostitution. They could now legally give orders to the women... The women were no longer sufficiently protected from these people, and for legal reasons, the police could no longer intervene. This is precisely what we

had to experience in the course of investigations against a brothel run in Augsburg a few years ago. We found the women had been subjected to very strict rules and regulations by the brothel operators. For example, they had to be available to the punters for 13 hours nonstop; they weren't allowed to leave the brothel earlier, they had to walk around stark naked... prices were unified and set. At times, they were required to perform unprotected sex. Furthermore, they were required to pay fines to the brothel for violation of any of these rules. These conditions are degrading and are of course incompatible with human dignity. But the court declared all of this to be legal because of the 2002 Prostitution Act which has led to a massive erosion of women's rights. What has developed is a legally instituted relationship of superiority and subordination that is being exploited by profiteers in the sex trade. You could therefore say it is a new form of slavery under state supervision. (Sporer, 2013)

In the Netherlands, a prostitution advocate had a similar complaint about a similar law: "...before prostitution became legal, the women actually had more autonomy over themselves and their work; now, they have less freedom. They are easily controlled, not only by pimps... but by the [legal] system itself." (Cruz and Van Iterson, 2010).

Although the goal was to make prostitution safer and to decrease organized crime, the 2002 law was actually a gift to pimps and organized crime groups. Its vague and subjective requirements have made prosecution of human trafficking for sexual exploitation more difficult (Fokus, 2014). The definition of legal pimping seamlessly merges into the crime of human trafficking. The social normalization of pimping in Germany has made it a popular destination country for human trafficking (Fokus, 2015), effectively transforming Germany into Europe's brothel and a destination country for trafficked women from Eastern Europe, especially Ukraine as a result of the war (Abé, 2022), Africa, Latin America, and Asia (Fokus, 2015). The crime of "promoting prostitution" has been replaced by "exploiting prostitutes," which requires a "personal or economic dependence" which makes legal prosecution challenging. The crime of pimping was drastically narrowed by the 2002 law, since "procuring sexual services" had become a legal activity.

The issue of legal prostitution came to the fore in 2005 when a 25-year-old German waitress looking for work was told that she faced losing her unemployment benefits, because she had turned down a job at a brothel. The woman was desperate to work, although not in a brothel. Under a German welfare law aimed at moving the longterm jobless back into the workforce, women under the age of 55 who have been out of work for more than a year must accept any job offered to them – or give up unemployment benefits (dePommereau, 2005). "There is now nothing in the law to stop women from being sent into the sex industry," Merchthild Garweg, a Hamburg lawyer, told the German newspaper *Die Tageszeitung*. "The new regulations say that working in the sex industry is not immoral anymore, so jobs cannot be turned down without a risk to benefits." Nevertheless, the case drove the country to reexamine the difficulties connected with one of the most controversial pieces of social legislation Germany has ever created.

After release of a government report on the negative consequences of the 2002 law, Germany concluded that the attempt to regulate prostitution had failed (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, 2007). Some cities designated zones which banned prostitution, thereby effectively transforming other areas of those cities into red-light zones. In 2017, a new set of policies to regulate prostitution was passed, the Law for the Protection of Prostitutes (ProstSchG). The 2017 law introduced requirements for both prostituted people and brothel pimps but these requirements are rarely if ever met. Prostituted women are required to register as "prostitutes" but few do. (ProstSchG, 2017). The vast majority of prostituted women are not registered (Neller, 2014). Brothels are required to obtain licenses, but that also rarely occurs. A change implemented by the 2017 law removed the rights of "pimp/employers" to issue orders to prostitutes about the types of and extent of activities in their "job." The 2017 law requires sex buyers to use condoms, but provided no funding or methods of enforcement of this policy. Today, many sex acts without condoms are for sale in legal brothels and numerous elements of the law go unenforced. For example, the prostitution of pregnant women, although prohibited, is advertised on German sex buyer forums (Arrow, 2018). Many women in prostitution report having been physically and/or sexually assaulted by sex buyers, but this also

is rarely reported or criminally prosecuted (Zumbeck, 2001). “Knowing” exploitation of a trafficked person is illegal (Strafgesetzbuch, 2021), but it is impossible to legally prove what a freier or a pimp did or did not know in advance. Legal scholars generally agree that a law requiring proof of intent is a weak law. Many laws are written so that intent is irrelevant such as laws prohibiting driving through a red light. There are ways to report suspected trafficking cases anonymously which frees the freier from punishment for exploiting the woman, but the majority of johns have no interest in reporting even when they talk openly in punter forums about women they know or suspect to be trafficked (Arrow, 2021). Many of our German research interviewees saw evidence of coercion, terror, and bruises in the women they paid for in legal prostitution *but only 1% of the freiers had reported evidence of trafficking to the authorities.*

Decreased rape conviction rates in Germany reflect this lack of legal clarity regarding pimping, coercive control, and violence. Devastating legal failures to protect women from violence have resulted from the definition of prostitution as everyday labor. For example, one young woman’s experiences of sexual assault, rape, kidnapping, prostitution, trafficking, and pimping were legally disappeared and redefined as a “work accident” by a Hamburg court (Sozialgericht, 2016). In 2016, a young Eastern European woman was severely injured when she tried to escape from her pimps by jumping from a third-floor brothel window. The Hamburg Social Law Court declared that these events could be described as a “work accident” (Hamburg Legal Complaint, 2016). The young woman had no German work permit, which made her vulnerable to her pimp’s manipulative control. The pimp controlled her under conditions that have been defined as slavery in any other context: he controlled all her activities including locking her in an apartment for several days, he raped her, held her legal documents, required her to be available for sex purchase at all times, required her to pay rent for rooms rented for prostitution and demanded half of her money. Appearing to side with the pimp, the court avoided use of the word rape, which would have required a legal investigation. Avoiding a straightforward response to her kidnapping and rape, the Social Court focused instead on whether or not the woman should be categorized as independent contractor or employee. The court’s decision to mandate accident insurance payment for the woman’s injuries was lauded by pro-prostitution advocates. But legal accountability was eliminated and justice disappeared in the severe human rights violations experienced by the young woman. Prostitution was camouflaged under its description as state-taxed “labor.” Taxes collected by a pimp state in this context of coercion, rape, and trafficking, must be understood as blood money.

Since the legalization of prostitution in 2002, there has been a decrease in rape convictions, which reached a historic low of 7.5% in 2016, with 85% of all rapes unreported (Pfeiffer, 2019). The reluctance to define “coercion” or “force” has hindered rape and trafficking prosecutions. This misogynist thinking was evident during Germany’s ratification of the Istanbul Convention, which is an international agreement on prevention of violence against women. German rape laws did not meet the minimum requirements of the Istanbul Convention which states that “Consent must be given voluntarily as the result of the person’s free will assessed *in the context of the surrounding circumstances*” (Council of Europe, 2011). Consent is an oxymoron when the context is the pimping of a woman in legal brothel. A state that accepts and taxes prostitution as a business model has difficulty in the legal rejection of rape.

Has any research compared the impacts of legal prostitution to illegal prostitution?

In a 150-country review, economists discovered that when prostitution was legal, pimping or trafficking increased (Cho, Dreher, Neumayer, 2013). Another study explored the impact of living in a region where legal prostitution exists by comparing men who live in or near legal prostitution zones with men who do not live in these regions. When college-aged young men in Nevada were compared with similar young men in regions of the U.S. where prostitution was not legal, it became clear that the state’s support of prostitution in Nevada had a significant effect on men’s attitudes and behavior toward women. Nevada university students endorsed a greater number of myths about prostitution that justified sexual violence, and they were significantly more likely than non-Nevada students to use women in prostitution, to go to strip clubs and massage parlors, and to use pornography. Influenced by the state’s support for prostitution, the Nevada men normalized prostitution for their children as well as for themselves. They considered it acceptable for their future sons to use prostitutes and for their future daughters to become prostitutes. They failed to see prostitution as

sexual exploitation, while at the same time justifying acts of sexual violence against women in prostitution. For example, they assumed that it would not be possible to rape an escort. These dehumanizing attitudes placed prostituted women in harm's way (Farley, Stewart, & Smith, 2007). We expected to find similar consequences of legal prostitution in Germany.

Why did we conduct this research?

There are widely varying perceptions of sex buyers in Germany, as in other cultures. Sex buyers' motivations are endorsed by some writers who view the men as "disappointed romanticists" who suffer because of their wives' sexual deficits. Sex buyers may be seen as liberal adventurers or brave hedonists (Grenz, 2007). This view has continued in German media, where the *freier* may be understood as a fool or himself a victim of pimps, but never dangerous. Marz (2016), for example romanticized stalking instead of understanding it as a violent threat. In her account, a *freier* fell in love with a prostituting woman, fantasized a relationship with her, aggressively texted her and demanded to meet her in order to take a shower with her. Writing about the sex buyer as a "nice idiot," or as a sucker conned by a prostitute, the journalist failed to analyze the sex buyer's behavior as *stalking*, a form of violence which is a threat regularly encountered by prostituting women.

Another prostitution narrative was evident in media reports about the murder of a Romanian woman by a "regular" putero in front of a Stuttgart brothel. Men in a chat room minimized her death as a "relationship drama that ended in murder." (*Abendzeitung*, 2016; SWR, 2016; *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 2016). The killer was a 53-year old "family man" who was angry because, he reasoned, he had spent a lot paying for her and therefore felt entitled to a relationship with her. She was known to have disliked him intensely, preferring to walk 80 km to return to the brothel instead of staying the night at a hotel with him. The community of sex buyers and the newspaper *Bild* described the killing as a "relationship drama" rather than as the murder of a prostituted woman by an entitled, enraged sex buyer.

While these men's behaviors beg to be analyzed from a perspective that accounts for male dominance, racism, poverty, and sexual aggression – some sex buyer research has only hinted at the roots of sex buyers' harmful behavior toward women in prostitution, often documenting simply the type of sex act sought and the price paid for it in a local sex market. Even today, research on prostitution harms often focuses only on STI prevention rather than including STI prevention as one element of the prevention of violence against women. Doring and colleagues (2022) reported data on sex buyers from a large random sample of men in Germany: 27% of German men reported having paid for sex. The *freiers* in his sample also reported having a large number of sex partners, which is a well-documented risk for HIV and STI. Gerheim (2012) discussed sex buyers' motives: avoiding rejection, loneliness, contempt for women, emotional crisis, and enjoyment of danger.

Some research has provided evidence for the connection between prostitution and violence against women. In samples of more than 1,000 men each in Chile, Croatia, India, Mexico, and Rwanda, men who had ever bought sex were significantly more likely to perpetrate rape (Heilman, Herbert, & Paul-Gera, 2014). In South Korean research findings that supported the connection between prostitution and sex crimes such as rape and childhood sexual assault, Cho (2018) found that the more often a convicted sex offender had paid for sex, the more likely he was to commit a sex crime. Noting that "This empirical evidence indicates that one type of risky sexual behaviors – buying sex – intensifies one's propensity towards more violent, riskier sexual behaviors, such as rape, which supports the theoretical prediction of the complementary relationship between prostitution and sex crimes." Cho concluded that buying sex could be seen as a catalyst for more violent sexual behaviors, and that the legalization of prostitution exacerbates sex crimes instead of constraining them.

Another group of research studies have analyzed sex buyer online forums (Alves & Cafigliere 2020; Blevins and Holt, 2009; Rosario Sanchez, 2016; Ging, 2017). On the forums, information is exchanged about women who are prostituted and new sex buyers learn tips about becoming a *freier*. One research study analyzed hundreds of online posts by sex buyers, observing that the men were an *online community of "hunters"* who declared themselves to be victims of women. These "hunters" were dedicated to helping each other avoid becoming the "prey" of women in prostitution. Sex buyers viewed their targets as prostituted women who were hunted and distrusted (Bounds et al., 2017).

What does masculinity have to do with legal prostitution?

The social construction of masculinity is tied to aggression and includes domination of women (White & Kowalski, 1998; Trevino, 2017). Men's construction of the purchase of sex is how some try to compensate for their self-perceived failure in being "real men" (Alschech et al., 2020; Birch et al., 2017; Busch et al., 2002; Joseph & Black, 2012; Monto & Milrod, 2014). Swedish sex trade researcher Sven-Axel Mansson (2004) pointed out that for many European and North American men, the extension of equal rights to women has been experienced as a loss of male supremacy. Some men cling tightly to archaic visions of men's dominance over women, such as prostitution. Bernstein (2001), a pro-"sexwork" advocate, described prostitution as providing men who pay for sex with "servile women." In reviews of online sex buyer forums, Senent (2019) described legal prostitution as "legitimising the enactment of men's economic power to buy a fantasy of masculine sexual potency based on non-egalitarian conditions that supports and perpetuates violence against women on a larger scale." In a synchrony of psychoanalytic thinking and feminist theory, Stoller (1975) categorized prostitution as "erotic hatred" of women, which echoes Dworkin's (1997) analysis: *"When men use women in prostitution, they are expressing a pure hatred for the female body. It is as pure as anything on this earth ever is or ever has been. It is a contempt so deep, so deep, that a whole human life is reduced to a few sexual orifices, and he can do anything he wants."*

Male dominance is a core element of prostitution. A German freier explained,

"It was special if someone [in prostitution] was strong and dominant looking, it was a turn on if I could get them to submit to me and do what I want. For example, if they say they don't do anal sex and then I could get them to do it. It was like I was winning."

Another freier interviewed for this study said,

"Prostitution only works because the men are dominant. The moment when the woman is disgusted and the man knows that the woman cannot escape, it excites him even more. The best example is the blowjob. The dominance between men and women is very strong when the woman kneels on the floor and is disgusted."

Men's favorable opinion of prostitution is one of a cluster of attitudes and opinions that encourage and justify violence against women (Flood and Pease, 2009; Koss and Cleveland, 1997). Violent behaviors against women are connected with attitudes that promote men's beliefs that they are entitled to sexual access to women, are superior to women, and are licensed as sexual aggressors.

Men's attitudes of dominance, entitlement, and normalized sexual aggression were investigated in this research study. Many of these attitudes and risk behaviors are described in the Confluence Model of Sexual Aggression, an empirical framework for a multifactorial integration of the characteristics of men likely to commit sexual aggression (Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss, & Tanaka, 1991). There is much evidence for a number of interacting factors that contribute to men's sexual aggression against women including frequent pornography use, promiscuity/impersonal sex, hostile masculine identification, a history of family violence, narcissism, delinquency in adolescence, and attitudes supportive of aggression (Malamuth & Pitpitan, 2007; Malamuth & Hald, 2017). The behavioral cues described as warning signs for rape are behaviors exhibited by sex buyers in other research: an attitude of sexual entitlement, unwanted touching, persistence, and social isolation (Senn et al., 2015). There is a positive correlation between ever having bought sex and finding rape generally "appealing" (Sullivan & Simon, 1998; Brewer, Potterat et al., 2007; Lebreton et al., 2013).

Sexually aggressive male college students demonstrate greater hostility toward women, a stronger inclination toward dominance in relationships, and a greater acceptance of rape myths – all of which are factors in the Confluence Model (Abbey, Jacques, Tiura, & LeBreton, 2011; DeGue & DiLillo, 2005; Koss & Dinero, 1988; Wheeler, George, & Dahl, 2002). In a 10-year follow-up, the Confluence Model successfully predicted sexual aggression via assessment of hostile masculinity and impersonal sex (Malamuth, Linz, Heavey, Barnes, & Acker, 1995). In one study, the highest levels of sexual aggression were evident among

men who scored the highest on hostile masculinity and impersonal sex (Logan-Greene & Davis, 2011). These two relatively independent components of the Confluence Model - hostile masculinity and impersonal sex - are considered to be the strongest predictors of sexual aggression (Malamuth, Hald, & Koss, 2012; Malamuth et al., 1995).

Hostile masculinity is a personality profile combining hostile/distrustful orientation, particularly toward women, with attitudes supporting aggression against women such as rape myth acceptance and sexual gratification via domination of women. Hostile masculinity includes hypersensitivity to rejection by women. Consistent with this concept, Australian sex buyers who visited brothels had more discomfort and less confidence than non-sex buyers on a scale measuring social-sexual effectiveness (Xantidis & McCabe, 2000). Previous studies have not investigated associations of hostile masculinity with whether or not a man buys sex. Men who score high on impersonal sex prefer frequent, casual sexual relationships to long-term, monogamous relationships (Malamuth, 2003). A high number of sex partners is considered indicative of a preference for impersonal sex (Abbey et al., 2011; O'Connell-Davidson, 1998). Although a preference for impersonal or non-relational sex tends to be connected to men's sexuality in general (Levant et al., 2003), men with high scores on measures of impersonal sex and hostile masculinity are also at higher risk of sexual aggression than other men (Malamuth & Hald, 2017).

Sex buyers have a more impersonal orientation to sexuality than non-sex buyers (Monto & McRee, 2005; Monto & Milrod, 2014). Sex buyers who participated in an online subculture that promoted prostitution (Blevins & Holt, 2009) had many more sex partners than either a national sample of men or a sample of men arrested for buying sex (Milrod & Monto, 2012; Milrod & Weitzer, 2012). The Confluence Model predicts that measuring highly on impersonal sex alone is not likely to be predictive of risk for sexual aggression, but men who combine impersonal sexuality with hostile masculinity are at high risk of committing sexual aggression.

In our research on sex buyers in Germany and 5 other countries, we investigated some of the variables that Malamuth and his colleagues have found to be associated with sexual aggression: frequent pornography use, rape myth acceptance, hostile masculine self-identification, impersonal sex, and a high number of sex partners.

In a series of research studies aimed at understanding the roots of violence against women, Martha Burt hypothesized that "rape is the logical and psychological extension of a dominant-submissive, competitive, sex-role stereotyped culture" (Burt, 1980, p. 229; Burt, 1983). Burt's rape myth scale has been widely used, including in this research.

What were the methods and research protocol used in this study?

Our questionnaires were designed to learn about men's perceptions of women generally and their attitudes and behaviors toward prostituted women in particular. Standardized and validated questionnaires yielded both quantitative and qualitative data. Over the years, we expanded the questionnaire as we learned more about sex buyers. The research design is based on concepts, methodology, and ethical principles from the field of psychology, a different approach from the sociology paradigms that have tended to dominate research on prostitution (Munro and Della Giusta, 2008, p7).

Sex buyers in this research were defined as men who, in response to a question from a screener, acknowledged that they had bought sex from a woman or man in prostitution, or an escort, sex worker or massage parlor worker or had exchanged something of value such as food, drugs, or shelter, for a sex act.

Measures used in this research included a 100-item questionnaire that asked about sex buyers' attitudes toward prostitution (Farley, Becker, Cotton et al., 1998), acceptance of rape myths (Burt, 1980), sexual behaviors, condom use, pornography use, likelihood to rape (Briere & Malamuth, 1983), demographic characteristics, and the Sexual Experiences Scale (Koss & Oros, 1982) which is a self-report measure of sexual aggression. We assessed the men's acceptance of a hostile masculine self-identity as defined by a 34-item scale that inquired about their adversarial sexual beliefs, negative masculinity, and dominance as central to love relationships (Malamuth et al., 1991; Malamuth and Thornhill, 1994). Interviewers also used a 150-item structured interview to obtain quantitative and qualitative data that permitted the collection of information about the men's history of using women in prostitution, including their evaluations and perceptions of women in prostitution and non-prostituting women, pimp-prostitute relationships, awareness of coercion and

trafficking, how they discussed prostitution with their friends, and deterrents to prostitution. We included questions about the type of pornography used (based on the activity shown in it), the age of the person being acted upon, and the ethnicity of those pictured in the pornography.

Prostitution causes grave harms that are frequently perpetrated by sex buyers. In this series of studies, we sought to learn from the freiers/perpetrators of that harm - how they observed and understood the same harms that German survivors Huschke Mau, Marie Merklinger, Sandra Norak, Ronja Wolf, Viktoria, and many others have described. Prostitution Research & Education, a US-based nonprofit organization, partnered with other organizations to conduct this research: Sanjog, Roop Sen, and Pinaki Roy in Kolkata; Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation; Glasgow Women's Support Project; POPPY Project of Eaves in London; Kien Serey Phal and Cambodian Women's Crisis Center in Phnom Penh. Women affiliated with KOFRA in Munich were partners in the German research interviews. In each location, samples of approximately 100 sex buyers were interviewed and descriptive data obtained. As the research progressed from country to country and as we learned more, we added more questions to the semi-structured interview. We sought to make the various versions of the questionnaire, culturally relevant. Where English was a secondary language, the questionnaires were translated to Bengali, German, or Khmer. Reverse-translation was used to ensure that the translation was appropriate for the people we were interviewing. After interviews were completed, they were translated to English. Data entry was supervised by research coordinators in each location and by the principal investigator. Reports on sex buyers in USA (Chicago and Boston), Scotland (Glasgow and Edinburgh), UK (London), and Cambodia (Phnom Penh) have been published (Durchslag & Goswami, 2008; Farley, Bindel, and Golding, 2009; Farley, Freed, Kien, Golding, 2012; Farley, Macleod, Anderson, & Golding, 2011; Farley, Schuckman, Golding, Houser, K., Jarrett, Qualliotine, Decker, 2011).

Interviewer Training and Support

Interviewers were asked to join each research team, based on recommendations of colleagues and local NGOs. Interviewers were trained for 2-5 days in order to understand the purpose of the research, develop interviewing skills, and become familiar with questionnaires. Training on research methodology, note-taking, and ethics was included. The training included observed interviews, practice interviews, and feedback on how to ask open-ended questions. The interviewers were encouraged to process their emotional reactions to the research material, learned about common reactions to hearing disturbing material and learned about strategies for self-care. None of the research interviews were recorded. Interviews were held in public locations such as coffee houses, libraries, NGO rooms. During the training, a collaborative and supportive work process evolved which continued throughout the data collection and data entry process of the research. Where possible we created ongoing support group meetings for interviewers. These sessions served both as troubleshooting sessions for interviewers and also provided emotional support since researching sexual violence is known to be stressful (Mattley, 1997; Zurbriggen, 2002).

Reactions of interviewers to conducting research interviews with sex buyers in Germany and other countries

The ethical and methodological challenges of studying men who commit violence against women are daunting (Miller, 1997). Those of us who research sexual violence, confront it in the course of studying it (Stanko, 1997). The interviewers in this project were women and men who are dedicated to ending violence against women, yet in order to conduct the qualitative portion of this research, it was necessary for interviewers to establish a nonjudgmental and friendly rapport with men who were often deeply misogynist and sometimes overtly violent. Many interviewers felt the cruelty of the men's sexism not only against the women bought by the men but against ourselves as well. The men's sexism ranged from their stated assumptions that all interviewers were prostitutes to solicitation of interviewers, to the sadistic detailing of brutal racist and misogynist violence. This was occasionally the stuff of nightmares, as in the case of the US sex buyer who described his experience of "knocking back" children who were prostituted in Southeast Asia. Other researchers have described sexual harassment during the process of researching men's attitudes toward sexual violence (Mattley, 1997; Huff, 1997; Zurbriggen, 2002).

Interviewers who have worked on this research with sex buyers, have reported that they were deeply affected by the freiers. One interviewer explained, “I was shocked how a person can see so much suffering and know about it and still take advantage of the offer of prostitution. I felt sick during the interview. I cried afterwards. I cannot understand such an extreme lack of empathy.”

Another interviewer said, “The freier understood everything about the situation of the women in prostitution. But he was doing it anyway. I found it disgusting.”

Interviewers also felt intruded-upon, sad, uncomfortable, and fearful. Several interviewers described the freiers’ violations of their personal boundaries by trying to physically touch interviewers, asking questions about their personal lives, or by making sexualized comments: “When I asked what he was looking for when he went to a brothel, he was describing me... he was trying to take me out of my role as an interviewer and make me into a woman he would buy.”

After the interviews, many interviewers described a shift in how they perceived men. They noted that many of the freiers recognized the harms of prostitution but did not change their behavior. “They didn’t feel shame. That shocked me.”

Afterward, some interviewers wondered about the men in their lives. Men at their workplace, in their families, among friends – might they be sex buyers? “I didn’t want to confront myself with the possibility that real men would pay for sex. These were not faceless johns, but real people in front of me.”

Interviewers said they felt angry, frustrated and sometimes helpless in the face of the German legal system that legitimizes purchasing sex.

No interviewer was untouched by the men’s attitudes toward women. The interviewers reported feeling skeptical about some men’s professed ignorance about prostituted women’s feelings and sexuality, angry at the men’s cruelty to women, fearful about the possibility of being stalked by interviewees, physically revolted, had flashbacks to their own previous experiences of sexual violence, questioned some aspects of their own relationships with the men in their lives, and at times felt the inclination to dissociate or to drink alcohol in order to numb painful emotional reactions to the interviews.

Reflecting the feelings of several other interviewers, one researcher described some of her feelings during and after the research interviews:

“Several people have said to me that they don’t know how I could have managed to interview these men; how I could stand it and that they don’t think they could have done that. People say this to me with respect, like they admire me for being able to have done this work. I don’t feel it is something to admire and it sometimes concerns me that I could do it. What does that say about me? How did I manage to interview so many men and not lose my temper, not react angrily or indignantly with them? It is a comfort to me that I do feel anger now, and did after the interviews. It is a comfort to me that some of the things they said, hurt me. This reassures me that I’m not some sort of hard-hearted individual who is at ease with hearing about the abuse of women.”

Recruitment of interviewees

In all locations, we first advertised the research project, and then used a snowball sampling technique. Informed consent was provided and interviewees’ questions about the research were answered. Interviewees were anonymous and no identifying information was collected. Interviews were not recorded. Research participants were paid an honorarium in appreciation of their time and transportation. In each location where the research was conducted, interviewees were provided contact information for a local mental health professional who was available for counseling in the event that any part of the research interview caused distress. Interviewees were informed that they could choose to not answer any questions and that they were free to stop the interviews at any point. None of the interviewees stopped the interviews. None requested a meeting with a mental health professional. The research protocol was reviewed by Prostitution Research & Education Ethics Review Committee, and by Pacific Graduate School Institutional Review Board. An early version of a questionnaire was reviewed and a group administration protocol was approved by University of Nevada, Reno, Institutional Review Board.

In London, four of the interviewers had previous experience in using the same questionnaires to interview men who bought sex in other countries (India, Scotland, USA). Hundreds of phone calls were received in response to the London newspaper advertisements. Not all phone calls were returned because of the high volume of calls. All those who were spoken to by phone were accepted for research interviews unless 1) they stated that they had not used a woman in prostitution, 2) they were seeking sex from the person who answered the phone, or 3) they were seeking a second interview after having already been interviewed. The London men were interviewed in a public place and were told that they were not expected to give their names to anyone working on the research project and that if they used a real name, then that would not be used to identify them in the research protocols. Some men disclosed that they would not have participated if they were identified. For example, "I haven't ever told anyone I have been to a prostitute, and I never will. It is like a dirty secret," and "It is something that I would not reveal, I am talking to you because you are a stranger." A third man stated that in conversations with others, "I'd never let on I know anything about it."

In Glasgow and Edinburgh, we used a range of approaches to recruit interviewees. We distributed flyers among taxi drivers and at sauna establishments where prostitution is common. We distributed cards describing the research in Glasgow city centre. We used a snowball recruitment technique, asking employees who might encounter punters at health clinics or university networks to tell other men about the research. These methods resulted in only a few interviews. The majority of our interviewees responded to a newspaper or online ad that stated,

EVER BEEN A CLIENT OF A PROSTITUTE?

International research team would like to hear your views

An honorarium will be paid. Confidentiality guaranteed.

Please call -----

Some newspapers were apprehensive about whether or not they were advertising prostitution by publishing the advertisement for this research. For example, the Scottish Sun refused to publish our advertisement, stating that the word 'prostitute' might offend their readers.

In Phnom Penh, interviewees were recruited using a snowball sampling technique. The eight interviewers recruited the first group of men by asking their neighbors and acquaintances if they would like to participate in a survey about sexual attitudes. The research coordinator then screened the men over the phone to ascertain that they had bought women in prostitution.

In India, we first sought to interview sex buyers near the Sonagachi brothel-city in Kolkata. Sonagachi is the largest prostitution zone in Asia where between 10,000 and 60,000 prostituted women and children live. Although we did not enter the brothels, pimps became suspicious and then angered by our presence, and physically threatened the interviewers. It was necessary to stop interviewing in Kolkata and to move the research program to another city, Murshidabad. Literacy was limited among interviewees in both cities. Our recruitment methods included putting a sign on the window of taxis that gave our phone number and very simple instructions about participating in the research. However, after we recruited several men, we encouraged them to tell their friends, and we were able to interview 102 men who had used women in prostitution.

Participants for the Chicago research were recruited by an advertisement that was published weekly in the Chicago Reader and Chicago After Dark (free news publications). The advertisement also ran daily in the "Erotic Services" section of Craigslist, since we knew that sex buyers viewed that website.

In Munich and in Karlsruhe, 12 interviewers interviewed 96 men. As in other countries, we advertised in local free newspapers, in regional and national newspapers, and in online forums for sex buyers. We tracked responses to our advertisements in the online forums. At first, sex buyers were suspicious about our intentions. However, one interviewee reported back to the forum that he had been treated respectfully by his interviewer and that we kept our agreement to provide an honorarium for the 90-minute interview. When asked about his reaction to the research interview, a freier said, "It goes into the depths of the man's soul,

asking about things that one does not like to admit. Some questions are very confronting. Some questions you have to think about yourself. I've never had a conversation like this with anyone.”

We read all questionnaires aloud to most interviewees in order to exclude literacy as a confounding factor. Because of literacy and educational variation between dominant and nondominant countries, we think that the Indian and Cambodian men may have been less knowledgeable about test-taking. Thus they may have been less inclined to base their responses on the appearance of social desirability, a common test taking bias which results in a decrease in endorsement of questions that admit engaging in socially undesirable behavior, such as rape or wife battering. This may have led to more candid responses or, on the other hand, a more difficult time responding because of word uncertainty. For some of our analyses, we compared Germany to UK, USA and Scotland only.

How did we summarize the data we collected from interviews with 763 sex buyers in 6 countries?

We used quantitative data collected during this research to provide descriptive statistics on German men, with comparable statistics on men from five other countries. We conducted bivariate analyses, comparing German sex buyers to sex buyers in three western countries (UK, USA, and Scotland) that are most similar to Germany. We also compared the relationships between a number of variables such as frequency of watching pornography and sexual coercion. Sometimes, as we learned more from these interviews with sex buyers, a certain question evolved and was added to our questionnaire. We used multiple regression to compare German sex buyers to sex buyers in other countries. Multiple regression predicts a single outcome using multiple predictors. A benefit of this approach is that the impact of several factors on an outcome can be examined together, which provides a clearer understanding of the relationships between those variables and the outcome. Results from these statistics helped us explore whether there are differences between German and non-German sex buyers' attitudes and behaviors towards women.

For the qualitative questions, interviewers took notes as the sex buyers responded to approximately 40 open-ended questions. Their responses were then compiled into separate documents for each question, each of which was then reviewed by several researchers. The qualitative data was reviewed and analyzed for trends. Many responses were directly quoted.

Demographic Characteristics of 96 German sex buyers interviewed for this research

Age

The average age of the 96 German men we interviewed was 45 years (SD 16, median 47, and ranged from 18 to 89 years). The German men were slightly older than sex buyers interviewed in USA (41, Farley, Golding et al., 2015), UK (38, Farley, Bindel & Golding, 2009), Scotland (37, McKeganey, 1994), or another US sample (39, Busch, Bell et al., 2002). The average sex buyer in the Czech Republic was 35 years old (Ondráš, Řimnáčová, & Kajanová, 2018).

Table 2: Ages of German men interviewed for this research

18-35	33%
36-54	34%
55-89	32%

Ethnic identity

Most of the men we interviewed (85%) described themselves as German, with the other men describing their ethnic identity as former Yugoslavian (6%), Romanian (3%), Russian (3%), or Asian (2%).

Table 3: Religious affiliation of German sex buyers

Catholic	39%
No Religious Affiliation	35%
Protestant	12%
Muslim	6%
Orthodox	6%
Jewish	2%

Sexual orientation

Nearly all the German freiers (96%) identified as heterosexual, with the remaining 4% identifying as homosexual or bisexual. This compares to 89% of US sex buyers and 88% of the London sex buyers who identified as heterosexual. None of the German men identified as transgender or non-binary.

Family income

Three-quarters (68%) of our interviewees reported their incomes. Almost a third (31%) had a family income of € 35,001 to € 52,500. 21% reported that they were on welfare or receiving financial assistance (Hartz4). Another 21% reported an income greater than € 52,500.

Table 4: Family Income of German sex buyers

Family Income	Percentage of German Sex Buyers
€ 8000 or Hartz4	21%
€ 17,500-35,000	10%
€ 35,001-52,500	31%
€ 52,501 or more	21%

Educational Background of German sex buyers

Almost half (48%) of the German men we interviewed had a high school education, with another 28% having taken some college courses, and 21% having graduated from college or having obtained a post-graduate degree.

Table 5: Education of German Sex Buyers

Education	German Sex Buyers
Less than high school diploma	2% (2)
High school diploma	48% (46)
Some college	28% (27)
University diploma or graduate degree	21% (20)

Family educational background of German sex buyers.

Our interviewees told us that 51% of their fathers and 60% of their mothers had completed high school. 27% of their fathers and 15% of their mothers had received a university diploma.

Do men buy sex because they do not have a current sex partner?

Other researchers have found that men's decision to buy sex is not because they lack a sex partner. 66% of Glasgow sex buyers were married or living with a partner (McKeganey, 1994). 50% of New Zealand sex buyers were married or partnered (Chetwynd & Plumridge, 1994). More than half (56%) of the freiers we interviewed in Germany had a wife or girlfriend, a percentage that was comparable to UK (52%), Scotland (52%), and USA (61%). Sex buyers in India and Cambodia reported greater percentages of current partners. See Table 6.

Table 6: Percentage of sex buyers in 6 countries who had a current partner

Overall (N=763)	Germany (n=96)	USA (n=214)	UK (n=106)	Scotland (n=112)	Cambodia (n=133)	India (n=102)
63 %	56 %	61 %	53 %	52 %	83 %	67 %

Is the total number of sex partners in a man's lifetime associated with sexual coercion, including rape?

A large number of sex partners suggests a preference for impersonal sex (Abbey et al., 2011; O'Connell-Davidson, 1998). Men who score high on impersonal sex prefer frequent, casual sexual relationships to long-term, monogamous relationships (Malamuth, 2003). While a preference for impersonal or non-relational sex tends to be ideologically connected to men's sexuality in general (Levant, 2003), men with high scores on measures of impersonal sex are also at higher risk for sexual violence (Malamuth & Hald, 2017). We asked the men about the total number of sex partners they ever had. 76% of the freiers in Germany reported more than 10 sex partners in their lifetime. Over half (57%) reported 11 to 50 sex partners, 11% reported 51 to 100 sex partners in their lifetime, and 8% reported having more than 100 sex partners. See Table 7. Similarly, 77% of the UK punters and 85% of Scottish punters in this research project had more than 10 sex partners in their lifetimes, with 29% of UK men reporting more than 50 sex partners. A large majority (83%) of US punters also reported having more than 10 lifetime sex partners, with 30% reporting more than 50 sex partners. In a separate study in UK, Ward (2005) found that men who paid for sex were likely to report ten or more sex partners in the past five years. *Across all 6 countries, we found that the sex buyers' total number of sex partners was significantly associated with their sexually coercive behavior, including rape ($r=0.19, p<0.001$).*

Table 7: Lifetime Number of Sex Partners reported by Sex Buyers in 6 countries

Number of sex partners	Overall (N=763)	Germany (n=96)	USA (n=214)	UK (n=106)	Scotland (n=112)	Cambodia (n=133)	India (n=102)
Fewer than 10	18 %	24 %	16 %	23 %	16 %	15 %	21 %
11 to 50	62 %	57 %	53 %	49 %		50 %	
51 to 100	12 %	11 %	19 %	11 %	85%	20 %	80%
100 or more	8 %	8 %	11 %	17 %		15 %	

How old are sex buyers when they buy sex for the first time?

Across all 6 countries, men reported their first purchase of sex on average within a narrow range from age 19-23. See Table 8. Age of first sex purchase is important with respect to deterrence: research from Scotland found that if a man had not paid for sex by the age of 25, he was less likely to do so in the future (Groom & Nandwani, 2006).

Table 8: Average age of sex buyers when they buy sex for the first time

	6-country average (N=763)	Germany (n=96)	USA (n=210)	UK (n=106)	Scotland (n=112)	Cambodia (n=133)	India (n=102)
Average age	21	22	21	23	23	21	19
Age range	10-70	14-70	10-52	12-58	14-49	14-40	12-35

What is the average number of women used in prostitution by sex buyers in 6 countries?

German sex buyers reported having paid an average of 55 prostituted women for sex in their lifetime, which is a greater number of women used in prostitution than in USA (47), Scotland (32), and Cambodia (45). In the UK (85) and India (76), men reported buying sex from a greater average number of prostituted women than German sex buyers. See Table 9.

Table 9: Average number of prostituted women used by sex buyers

6-country average (N=763)	Germany (n=96)	USA (n=214)	UK (n=106)	Scotland (n=112)	Cambodia (n=133)	India (n=102)
55	55	48	85	32	45	76

Is buying sex associated with sexual coercion, including rape?

Across all 6 countries in this research, *men who reported higher rates of buying sex also reported committing significantly more acts of sexual coercion, including rape* ($r=0.10$, $p=0.01$). See Table 10. Our finding is similar to Heilman's 5-country study which found that in samples of more than 1,000 men each in Chile, Croatia, India, Mexico, and Rwanda, men who had ever bought sex were significantly more likely to perpetrate rape (Heilman, Herbert, & Paul-Gera, 2014).

How often do men in 6 countries buy sex?

40% of sex buyers paid for women several times a month to once a month, with another 42% of sex buyers paying for sex every 2 months or less often. 17% of all sex buyers bought women in prostitution once a week or more often. Indian and Cambodian sex buyers paid for sex more often than sex buyers in the other four countries. See Table 10.

Table 10: Frequency of Buying Sex in Germany and 5 other countries

	6-country average (n=688)	Germany (n=74)	USA (n=195)	UK (n=104)	Scotland (n=110)	Cambodia (n=113)	India (n=92)
Frequency							
Once a week or more often	17%	11%	14%	9%	14%	27%	33%
Several times a month to once a month	40%	41%	34%	34%	27%	65%	47%
Once every couple of months or less often	42%	49%	52%	58%	58%	9%	20%

What is the social context of men's first experience of buying sex?

Sex buyers from Germany, USA, UK and Scotland most often paid for sex by themselves for the first time, while men from India and Cambodia most often paid for sex the first time with a group of friends. Men in the USA (15%) most often paid for sex the first time with a relative. See Table 11.

Table 11: Social context of men's first experience buying sex in 6 countries

Social context of buying sex	6-country average (N=763)	Germany (n=96)	USA (n=214)	UK (n=106)	Scotland (n=112)	Cambodia (n=133)	India (n=102)
With a group of friends	55%	43%	43%	43%	41%	83%	79%
By himself	49%	63%	63%	79%	55%	14%	21%
With a relative	7%	3%	15%	4%	3%	9%	1%

Where do men buy sex? Indoors? Outdoors?

About half (53%) of the men we interviewed in 6 countries had paid for sex indoors. In Germany, 30% of sex buyers reported they had paid for sex indoors, with most of those men (87%) reporting use of brothels. A third (33%) of German men also paid for sex outdoors, with most of those men reporting that they bought sex on the street (79%) or in a vehicle (72%). Compared to other countries, a higher percentage of men in USA (71%) and in Germany (38%) had paid for sex in stripclubs. See Table 12.

Table 12: Locations where men buy sex in Germany and 5 other countries

LOCATION	6-country average (N=763)	Germany (n=96)	USA (n=214)	UK (n=106)	Scotland (n=112)	Cambodia (n=133)	India (n=102)
INDOORS	53%	30%	59%	48%	55%	55%	62%
Of those men who paid for sex indoors, they were in a:							
Brothel	71%	87%	45 %	59%	50%	98 %	92 %
Hotel or guest house	55%	44 %	51 %	53 %	--	68 %	--
Bar	49%	45 %	77 %	20 %	34 %	59 %	27%
Massage parlor	48 %	32 %	47 %	48%	66 %	55 %	11 %
Escort agency	42 %	20 %	62 %	32 %	20 %	55 %	50 %
Private party	39 %	28 %	67 %	20 %	--	35 %	--
Karaoke	38 %	13 %	7 %	--	--	73 %	--
Stripclub	36 %	38 %	71%	23 %	18%	23 %	26 %
Sauna	25 %	26 %	19 %	27 %	56 %	11 %	0 %
Drug/crack house	12 %	8 %	34 %	2 %	--	7 %	--
OUTDOORS	48 %	33 %	60 %	36 %	56 %	44 %	48 %
Of those men who paid for sex outdoors, they were in:							
Street	82 %	79 %	90%	--	--	74 %	--
At a park	59 %	34 %	51 %	--	--	81 %	--
In a car or vehicle	43 %	72 %	62 %	--	--	9 %	--

What have sex buyers taught us about trafficking, pimping, and organized crime?

Most sex buyers are careful observers of trafficking and pimping. "Prostitution is forced on her, not always physically, but definitely mentally," said a German freier.

More than half (55%) of the 96 German sex buyers who we interviewed had observed a woman who was trafficked or pimped by her “manager.” Further, the German freiers estimated that 60% of all women in German prostitution are trafficked. Cambodian men observed that many more women (98%) were trafficked by a pimp, a number that is closer to estimates of trafficking provided by experts and researchers. Sex buyers from the other four countries in this multicountry comparison reported similar but slightly lower estimates of trafficking. See Table 13.

Despite reporting some of the highest rates of witnessing sex trafficking, German sex buyers reported among the lowest rates of reporting trafficking to the police. Only 1% of the German men we interviewed had ever reported the suspicion of trafficking to authorities, even though purchasing sex is legal in Germany, and even though reporting a suspicion of trafficking would pose no legal risk to them. Although men in USA, UK, and Cambodia had somewhat higher rates of reporting their suspicions of trafficking than Germany, nonetheless only a small number (11-17%) of sex buyers in those countries reported trafficking.

We compared rates of trafficking reported by German sex buyers, on the one hand, to sex buyers in USA, UK, and Scotland. These four countries are culturally more similar to each other than to India and Cambodia. German sex buyers on average reported having observed significantly more women trafficked into prostitution compared to similar observations of trafficking in USA, UK, and Scotland ($t = 5.3, df = 137, p < 0.01$). We also compared rates of reporting trafficking by German sex buyers to rates of reporting trafficking by sex buyers from USA and UK. We found that German sex buyers had a significantly lower rate of reporting trafficking than did sex buyers in USA and UK ($\chi^2 = 8.9, df = 1, p < 0.01$). Together, these results indicate that German sex buyers witness sex trafficking at significantly higher rates than other Western countries but report such crimes significantly less often.

There is similar evidence from other countries that a majority of sex buyers are aware of trafficking, but most choose not to assist the women. According to a spokeswoman from the Glasgow Women’s Support Project (one of the partners of this research in Scotland), “Men are very aware of the terrible circumstances some of these women are in, but choose to do nothing” (Naysmith, 2014). The Scottish trafficking hotline received only three calls from punters in one year. In similar findings, we found that only 21 punters (9%) of the 763 sex buyers in this research, had ever reported suspicion of trafficking to the authorities.

Table 13: Percentage of sex buyers in 6 countries who observed, estimated, or reported trafficking

	6 countries (N=763)	Germany (n=96)	USA (n=214)	UK (n=106)	Scotland (n=112)	Cambodia (n=133)	India (n=102)
Observed trafficking or pimping	54 %	55 %	40 %	51 %	29 %	98 %	52 %
Estimate of trafficking	51 %	62 %	41 %	41 %	41 %	50 %	40 %
Reported trafficking to authorities	9 %	1 %	17 %	14 %	N/A	11%	N/A

A number of freiers interviewed in this research described the relationship between pimps and prostitutes as marked by intimidation, violence, abuse, and dependency. The freiers described in detail the coerced subordination demanded of the women by their pimps. One man explained,

“Whatever the brothel owner told the prostitutes to do with clients, the prostitutes never argued, but followed orders regardless of whether they liked it or not. All the power was in the hands of the brothel owners. The majority of prostitutes dared not talk or argue with the brothel owners.”

Another man said, *“If the women did not come out [of their rooms] the pimps will go in and beat them, lock them in a room without food until they accept and agreed to receive clients.”*

“The prostitute is under the pimp’s thumb. She is his property”.

“For the pimps, women are only a means to an end. They don’t care if the woman is sick or mentally unstable.”

In Germany and in Nevada (USA), women are controlled, abused and harmed by at least two pimps. First, there are the state-protected legal pimps who own and control the brothels. But there are also pimps outside the legal prostitution system who recruit and control the women, and who negotiate deals with the legal pimps. A woman who had been prostituted in legal Nevada prostitution explained that if she did not earn her pimp’s quota by prostituting in her hometown of Chicago, she was moved to a Nevada legal brothel as punishment by her pimp. Pimps know that women are captive in the legal brothels in Nevada and that they are subject to violent abuse if they do not obey the legal pimps regarding quotas.

Similar coercive control by pimps over women in prostitution was observed by sex buyers in German strip clubs: *“In the [Munich]strip clubs, the women are not acting on their own free will, there are pimps behind them, directing them to go after more business.”* Another freier observed about strip clubs, *“The women have to undress in order to tease the men and earn money. It looked like a relationship of subordination to which women had to submit.”* Some of the men we interviewed spoke of their own fear of pimps.

“I’ve sometimes thought about it: what if this woman doesn’t do it voluntarily? But I can’t help her as an individual. I can’t talk to the pimp, he scares me, I can’t just say: let the woman go, it won’t work. Then you get beaten and I don’t want that.”

A US sex buyer made a similar observation. Although he maintained that prostitution had no negative effect on prostitutes because they had no feelings, nonetheless he also told the interviewer he had never tried to rescue a prostitute because *“you can get killed doing that.”*

The German freiers described extreme violence perpetrated by pimps. They told us that they saw prostituted women being verbally abused, pushed and shoved, pulled, dragged, and beaten up by pimps. They noticed the fear and terror in the women they paid to use for sex. Some freiers were aware of violent threats made by pimps against the women’s families. *“The prostitute was frightened by the pimp; she was defenseless.”*

“He hit her until she gave him more (money)”

“The prostitutes had black eyes and their teeth were knocked out.”

A German freier said, *“The pimp is in charge. When he says ‘jump’ she asks how high.”* A punter in the UK said, *“It’s like he’s her owner.”*

Drugs were provided to the women who then became dependent on their pimps. Sometimes the women were forcibly addicted by pimps, because people are more easily controlled if they are addicted. One freier explained, *“Drugs are given to make them more docile.”*

Another man said, *“Many prostitutes are on cocaine and heroin. Certainly 80% are on some kind of drug.”* Perhaps understanding the overwhelming stress of prostitution, another freier told his interviewer, *“The prostitutes had to take a pill. Possibly because of the fear or the violence that she was threatened with.”*

The following examples include well known methods of torture.

“When the women didn’t pay the pimp enough, they had their fingernails pulled off, or the pimps took their drugs, or they beat the women to a pulp. The women were scared and never said anything. They had bloody noses, but they never received medical attention.”

“There was one who really beat up one of his women. Really hard. With the fist two or three times in the face and thrown her against the wall.”

Do sex buyers in Germany and in other countries, have extensive knowledge about the recruitment tactics, and the coercive control employed by pimps who are members or associated with organized crime groups?

Many women are tricked and deceived into prostitution. In order to recruit the women, pimps lie to them about how much the women will earn. Then they are charged extortionate rents and high costs for food and other basics. The women are driven into debt bondage by this process. One freier explained,

“They lure the girls in by telling them they can make easy money because there are hundreds of guys coming in [to the brothel] and they can pick a nice guy who they like. The pimps tell the girls they can get the room for € 500 and they can make that with three guys. But the reality is that the men will only pay € 25 for oral and vaginal sex or € 50 for anal sex. So then they can’t pay the pimp back. You can count how many people they have to go through to pay them back. They don’t realize it until they are already in debt to the pimp. And then they have to work it off.”

A freier described pimps’ use of the love-bombing technique used by cults, sometimes called Romeo or loverboy pimping:

“I also saw a guy who would get girls from Hungary. He would tell the girls they could work in a bar and its good work. Then they would come, and he would show them the bar and say that the job fell through. He would then also make them fall in love with him. He would bring one or two girls. He would tell them we need to make money somehow: ‘I know a friend, we can work with him.’ And then it would be an apartment for 500 euro and she would fall into the cycle. Then he would also use threats because he would have guys in the girl’s village in Hungary and he would threaten her family with violence. She would want to run away but they would tell her that they will just find her family” (Bundeslagebild 2019).

“The pimps are all organized in various ways. Depending on where a pimp comes from, he has to pay money to the mafia from his home country. The pimps take the money from the women, one time for themselves and one time for any protection rackets. Criminal gangs also collect protection money in brothels.”

Sex buyers from USA, UK, and Scotland discussed their awareness of trafficking pimping, exploitation and violence in prostitution. For example, *“The pimp controls her and forces her to do things she’s not ready or wanting to do.”*

“She is definitely afraid of him. She’ll get slapped around if she don’t do what she’s told.”

“He controls her by hitting her. And by playing mind games with her.”

“It’s sad and obviously exploitive. One person is compromising themselves in manner that they’d rather not for the benefit of another.”

“The pimp is the owner and the prostitute is the slave to make money for the pimp.” (Farley, 2007; Farley, Bindel, & Golding, 2009; Farley, Macleod, Anderson, and Golding, 2011).

The same qualities in women that are sought by men who buy sex are also risk factors for trafficking, for example, young age, low price, foreigner or “exotic,” and inability to speak the local language. A UK punter said that he had paid for women with *“bruises, cuts and Eastern European accents in locations where lots of trafficked women and girls are.”* A German interviewee who travelled to Amsterdam to purchase sex, said that he assumed a woman was trafficked *“because of the way it was set up with a big guy standing outside,”* adding that *“the woman looked younger than sixteen, and looked Polish, Russian, Albanian or Romanian.”*

Nearly all of the men we interviewed in Cambodia (98%) had paid for a woman in prostitution who they knew was controlled by a pimp, usually in a brothel. A US sex buyer was acquainted with pimps who recruited women from psychiatric hospitals. Many research studies and experts' reports have shown that trafficking and third-party control, is prevalent in all forms of prostitution (Paulus, 2020; Farley, Franzblau, and Kennedy, 2013).

For the prostituted woman herself - it is impossible to tell the difference between pimping (coercive physical and mental control) and trafficking (coercive physical and mental control). Former Chief superintendent Helmut Sporer, Kriminalpolizei, Augsburg explained,

“...prostitution and human trafficking are closely connected. There is no such thing as ‘clean’ and ‘good’ prostitution that exists separately from the horrible realities of human trafficking and pimping.” (Sporer quoted in Haggstrom, 2016).

Sigma Huda, the former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Aspects of the Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children noted that prostitution as it is practiced in the world “usually satisfies the legal elements for the definition of trafficking” and therefore, legalization of prostitution is “to be discouraged.” The Special Rapporteur observed that “By engaging in the act of commercial sex, the prostitute-user is directly inflicting an additional and substantial harm upon the trafficking victim, tantamount to rape, above and beyond the harmful means used by others to achieve her entry or maintenance in prostitution.” (United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 2006).

In a 150-country study, economists discovered that when prostitution was legal, trafficking increased (Cho, Dreher, Neumayer, 2013). This influential research study has been validated by numerous reports in Germany regarding the large numbers of trafficked women in the legal brothels. For example, a 2016 report found that 90% of the women in German legal brothels are not from Germany, instead, many women are from Romania, Albania, and Nigeria (PRIMSA, 2016).

Sex buyers' estimates of the nature and extent of trafficking in this study – an average of 51% across all 6 countries – was lower than estimates from other countries. Davidson (2003) reported that 75% of sex buyers in Japan were aware of trafficking of women. According to estimates from 18 sources in another study: on average 84% of all adult women in prostitution are pimped or trafficked. Sources for that statistic included research studies, government and nongovernmental reports from Germany, USA, UK, Poland, India, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, and Spain (Farley, Franzblau, and Kennedy, 2013, FN#14). Sex buyers, women in prostitution, pimps, and police officers in Romania, agreed that sex buyers “are not interested if the girls are actually trafficked or not but are rather more interested in satisfying their sexual needs” (Dragomirescu, Necula & Simion, 2009). The knowledge that women in prostitution have been exploited, coerced, pimped, or trafficked does not deter sex buyers. A punter said, “The girl is instructed to do what she needs to do. You can just relax, it's her job” (Farley, Bindel, & Golding, 2009).

In an interview for this Report, Manfred Paulus explained that although it is freiers' obligation to report visible evidence of violence to the police, such reports very rarely occur. Paulus stated that he was not aware of any case in which the testimony of a freier was used in the prosecution of traffickers.

Organised crime is defined in German law as any crime committed in a group of three or more persons with division of labour. To prove organized crime, the law also requires either “political or economic influence,” or a highly organized, corporate-like structure (Bundeskriminalamt, 1990). The vagueness of this definition makes investigating and prosecuting organized crime very difficult. Because of this vague definition, Helmut Sporer explained to the authors of this Report that only 20-25 trafficking cases are prosecuted per year in Germany.

The profits from prostitution are massive. More than 20 years ago, it was estimated that one million men a day buy women for sexual use in German brothels (Tagesspiegel, 2001). In order to meet the freiers' demand for women, organized crime groups partner with legal pimps and businessmen to ensure that they meet the businessmen's demands for profit. Legal prostitution makes it easy for organized criminals to hide trafficking victims in brothels and stripclubs. The endless debates about trafficking victims as opposed to so-called voluntary prostitutes in pimp-sympathetic states like Germany are a waste of time and resources. The

focus on locating trafficking victims in legal prostitution tends to derail abolitionist initiatives by sending us all on a wild goose chase when in fact most adults in either legal or illegal prostitution are under the control of pimps or traffickers. Estimates of pimping/trafficking/organized crime control by Manfred Paulus (2014) suggest that more than 90% of women in prostitution in Germany are under pimp coercion. Former Mayor of Amsterdam Job Cohen acknowledged that in a context of legal prostitution, it appeared “impossible to create a safe and controllable zone for women that was not open to abuse by organised crime” (Cruz & van Iterson, 2010).

These alliances between organized criminals who sell women for sex in Germany’s brothels and their business partners who own shares in the brothels – together produce the demand for a constant supply of new, vulnerable, controllable women to fill the legal brothels. Businessmen and sports heroes who invest in the legal brothels and partner with organized criminals drive the legal sex trade in Germany. Politicians who support legal prostitution are often the best friends of these businessmen. The highly organized criminal collaboration between businessmen, media stars, social influencers, and politicians are the bedrock of legal prostitution in Germany. The businessmen invest large amounts of money in the legal brothels, stay carefully out of public view, and demand massive profits from the pimps. During the investigation into a Stuttgart brothel, it was revealed that several businessmen had invested millions of euros in one brothel (Lorenz, 2019).

A similar partnership between organized crime groups, legal pimps, and businessmen exists in Nevada, USA, where prostitution is also legal. A retired police officer was a co-owner of a brothel near Las Vegas (Farley, 2007). The Hell’s Angels, actively involved in the control of legal brothels throughout Germany, also pimp women in Nevada, Australia, New Zealand, and the UK. Recently the Netherlands banned the Hell’s Angels, Banditos, Outlaws and other biker gangs from their country because of the “culture of violence” they inflicted on the Dutch (DW.com, 2019).

As in any international business - in this case, the business of sexual exploitation and abuse – pimps and organized criminals collaborate for the purpose of obtaining more money. For example, Nigerian pimps work with the Sicilian Mafia to traffic women into Palermo and from there to other countries in the European Union, including Germany (Grillone, 2019). The same criminal collaboration of legal pimps/traffickers occurs with German and other countries’ traffickers within the European Union. Within the EU, the primary countries where traffickers operating in Germany come from are Bulgaria, Estonia, Serbia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Hungary, and Belarus (Cho, 2015).

On the one hand, Cho (2015) points out, migrant networks may enlarge the number of traffickers, possibly because the presence of migrant networks may encourage more low-skilled individuals to take risky migration options, thus creating a larger pool of potential victims whom traffickers can target. On the other hand, traffickers may operate their criminal business more actively if migrant networks increase demand for sexual services provided by victims from the same country. In this case, the migration effect on traffickers can be either from the supply or demand side.

Despite their extensive knowledge of violence, coercion, trafficking, and prostitution’s psychological harms, men interviewed for this research continued to pay to use women for sex. We suspect that to some extent, sex buyers simply avoid thinking about the consequences of their actions. If the opportunity to buy sex arises, and if it’s easily accessible for them, and if prostitution’s legal status removes the risk of being held accountable for their exploitation and violence – then they pay for the sexual use of women. The sex buyers are assisted in their denial by pimps and their business partners who design brothels so that the coercion is obscured, and there is a “veil between trafficking operations and sex buyers” (Martin, 2017).

Are sex buyers aware of the psychological damage caused by prostitution?

Many of the men we interviewed were aware of the harms they caused to the women they paid for. A German sex buyer explained, “*Maybe she feels sold and unsafe.*” Another said, “*The pimp does the psychological*

raping of the woman.” And another freier put it this way: *“Her body has to be there for everyone: It is absolutely damaging to them.”*

“I saw bruises and listlessness,” said another man, connecting the physical harm and a learned helplessness in response to her inability to escape (Maier & Seligman, 2016).

The psychological trauma of prostitution can be understood as a process of victimization across the life cycle (Brannigan & Van Brunshot, 1997). The lifetime experiences of the majority of those prostituted usually includes childhood sexual assault by family and community (Silbert & Pines, 1982a, 1983; Nadon, Koverola, Schludermann, 1998; Abramovich, 2005; Putnam, 1990; Widom & Kuhns, 1996), emotional neglect (Cusick, 2002; Mayfield-Schwarz, 2006; MacLean, Embry, & Cauce, 1999), childhood physical abuse (Dalla, 2006; Giobbe, 1991), domestic violence (Dworkin, 1997; Stark & Hodgson, 2003; Zimmerman et al., 2006; Potterat et al., 2004), rape in prostitution (Silbert & Pines, 1982b; Oberman, 2004; Farley, et al., 2003), verbal abuse, and domination (Herman, 1992; Schwartz, Williams, & Farley, 2007), all of which most frequently occur in a social context where racism and poverty increase vulnerability and interact with the other vulnerabilities (Tyler, 2009; Farley, Lynne, & Cotton, 2005; Carter & Giobbe, 1999; Raymond et al., 2002).

Many interviewees were able to connect these long-term harms of long-term sexual abuse to prostitution. A freier explained,

“It is such a drastic experience for them and that changes them a lot. I believe their experience with men, especially that nastier bad side of men, that is so drastic and will be ingrained in their psyche. It will change them forever, change their ability to have a normal sexual relationship with anybody. They are damaged from being in prostitution. For a time, I was with a girl who was raped when she was a teenager. There were always times when we were sexual that you could see the damage that was done. I think with these women [in prostitution], it would be even more drastic. They experience things that are not natural to go through.”

Sex buyers rarely publicly reveal what they know about prostitution. Yet after 763 interviews with anonymous sex buyers, we found that many sex buyers have a nuanced understanding of the harms of prostitution when we provided them with the opportunity to speak anonymously (Farley, 2007a; Farley, Bindel, & Golding, 2009; Farley, Freed, Kien, & Golding, 2012; Farley, Golding, Matthews, Malamuth, Jarrett, 2015; Farley, Schuckman, Golding, et al., 2011; Farley, Macleod, Anderson, & Golding, 2011). For example, a US sex buyer interviewed for this research, described the situation of women in prostitution:

“They have very low self-confidence. I think they’re very disturbed. I think a lot of times they feel degraded. They feel like they’ve been used. They feel useless. I mean the ones I know have no self confidence, so they feel less than a person, and more like a commodity.” (Farley, Schuckman, Golding, et al., 2011).

“The freiers exploit the women mentally and physically.”

“It was exhausting for her. She has an emaciated body and soul, she could no longer feel anything.”

“They are often alone and have no family.”

“She’s seen as a commodity, not as a living being.”

“It has long-term consequences, if you do prostitution for a few years, you feel like a piece of meat.”

A German sex buyer explained, *“With one woman, it looked like she wanted to say: ‘Just help me out of here, do something ...’”* Another interviewee noted, *“The women are made to feel insecure and lose self-respect. They probably are made to feel like prostitution is what they have to do and that is all they can do. The whole idea*

for pimps is to keep them there and so that is how they want to them to feel.” This man clearly understood the destructive assault on self-esteem perpetrated by traffickers in order to control the women, create dependence, and prevent escape.

Placing prostituted women in a special category of human beings who exist to be tortured, a US sex buyer told us, *“You get to treat a ‘ho like a ‘ho...you can find a ‘ho for any type of need - slapping, choking, aggressive sex beyond what your girlfriend will do - you won’t do stuff to your girlfriend that will make her lose her self esteem.”*

Verbal abuse is the most common form of abuse in prostitution, according to what we have learned from survivors of prostitution. Verbal abuse in prostitution is frequently ignored by researchers and advocates, even though it results in long-lasting psychological harm. Although the sex buyers in this research described *pimps’* verbal abuse of women, no sex buyer discussed *his own* verbal abuse of women. The most common form of violence against prostituting women in Poland, for example, was sex buyers’ verbal aggression ranging from insults to threats and intimidation. In a research report, the women felt that the verbal abuse from sex buyers not only objectified them, but it also served as a warning sign that the sex buyer might soon initiate physical aggression (Ślęzak-Niedbalska, 2017).

Self-harm is one way that people attempt to cope with overwhelming and inescapable psychological distress. *“Prostitutes don’t value themselves and are always punishing themselves by cutting their hands or body with razor blades. They are so-called leftover girls, who are hopeless and no longer care about their lives,”* said a Cambodian sex buyer who understood the emotional function of cutting. *“I wonder how much some of them think about suicide,”* pondered a German freier. Sex buyers in diverse cultures accurately observed psychological symptoms that are a result of prostitution. These symptoms include low self-esteem, depression, substance abuse, anxiety, eating disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and dissociative disorders. Dissociation is a psychological defense commonly used by people who are suffering from unbearable and inescapable stress – most often stress caused by deliberate human cruelty. Many of the freiers recognized dissociative symptoms in the women they paid for sex.

A US sex buyer explained, *“it’s like she’s not really there.”* Accurately connecting the cruelty of prostitution with her dissociation, a sex buyer observed, *“Let’s face it; sex with 3000 guys tends to diminish real feelings.”* Carefully and accurately observing the women’s dissociative symptoms, sex buyers told interviewers that they believed that the capacity to detach or “switch off,” differentiated prostitutes from other women. A Scottish sex buyer said, *“They put what they do to the back of their mind – they couldn’t exist otherwise as a prostitute 24 hours a day”* Also explaining the dissociation in the women he paid for, two freiers explained, *“You sometimes notice that they don’t do it voluntarily, they seem absent.”*

“They certainly suffer from panic attacks and repress that with alcohol; [they] become depressed or bipolar, drug addicted.”

Freiers have an understanding of men’s predatory behavior. At first, explained a freier, the women think they will be OK, *“...but they don’t know what kind of men they are dealing with.”* Another man explained men’s attitude of entitled temporary ownership – and the great danger that this supremacist attitude presents to the woman he pays for.

“I think it’s a traumatic experience every time. There is no trusting relationship between a freier and a prostitute. They have never met before. Then money is exchanged and the john assumes that he now owns the body for the time that he has rented. That sounds pretty dangerous to me. It’s like a situation where the prostitute is at the mercy of the freier.”

“When men pay money for prostitutes, some think they can do anything with the prostitute. The women become dull from it.”

A freier described the assault on women’s autonomous sexuality by men’s insistence on the impersonal sex of prostitution. *“A prostitute has learned to have sex without too much meaning, while women who are not*

prostitutes put a lot of meaning into sexual intercourse. You cannot be a prostitute if sexual intercourse means anything to you.”

“The women who have been doing this for 20 years are very superficial and there’s not much left inside their heads. They’re only toys for old men ... They are jaded, they are sad, they have lost all spirit. I think they are depressed, they’re half broken.”

Sex buyers are aware that women are prostituted as a result of economic coercion (Anderson & O’Connell Davidson, 2003; Durschlag & Goswami, 2008; Farley et al., 2009). Some of the German sex buyers we interviewed explained the overwhelming stress of poverty among prostituted women,

“I believe that the majority of prostitution happens out of coercion, for example out of financial need. Every john who goes to a prostitute takes advantage of a financial hardship. And the further you go from Europe, the more violent it becomes. You only have to look at the Philippines, there is the center of child prostitution. There is basically something wrong with poverty prostitution. In Germany around 10 percent do this voluntarily, the other is poverty prostitution or forced prostitution. Poverty prostitution is also not voluntary.”

Many of the men we interviewed had a clear awareness of economic coercion and the lack of alternatives in women’s entry into prostitution – but that did not stop them from buying or renting women. Cambodian men noted the low social status and the economic vulnerability of women as a factor driving them into the sex trade, with one man explaining:

“Prostitution is related to the low status of women in the society and it is also related to the rich-poor relation in the society. As long as the gap between the rich and the poor still exists, as long as women and men still have unequal social status, I think that this kind of business [prostitution] will still happen in the society and can not be eliminated.”

A German freier had been on an “Ethiopian sex vacation. It was cheap there and the women were willing. A high percentage – 90% of the female population are prostitutes. It was a very poor country.”

Another freier explained, “In East Africa (Tanzania, Kenya) - the reason for prostitution there is to send children to school and to be able to feed them. In East Africa there is no alternative to make money.”

This man failed to understand the combined impact of being female and being poor. For example, in Zambia, another country ravaged by colonization, poor men sell pencils and wash car windows, while poor women prostitute.

In Germany, as elsewhere, the sex buyer’s money is used to erase the harm to the woman he buys – at least in his own mind. For example, an empathy-free freier explained that prostitution “causes a complete breakdown – you see it. But at least 30 Euros is a lot of money in Romania.”

When we asked sex buyers to indicate how negative or positive the effects of prostitution were on the woman herself and on the community – our interviewees became more evasive, and suggested that perhaps prostitution was not really *that* bad and its effects on the community weren’t that bad either. We show in Table 14 the percentage of men from 5 countries who rated the positive and negative consequences of prostitution. On average, 30% of the men from 5 countries indicated that prostitution had negative or extremely negative effects on the woman in prostitution, and 23% reported that prostitution had negative or extremely negative effects on the community. It is noteworthy that *German sex buyers rated the negative effects of prostitution on the community as minimal: only 5% said prostitution had negative effects on their community.* This may be a result of the normalization of prostitution in Germany, which causes social confusion and political denial about prostitution’s harms both to women in prostitution and to the community.

Table 14: Positive and Negative effects of prostitution on the prostitute and on the community, according to sex buyers from 5 countries.

	Overall (N=630)	Germany (n=96)	USA (n=214)	UK (n=106)	Scotland (n=112)	India (n=102)
Prostitution has negative or very negative effects on the prostitute	30%	28 %	28 %	41 %	34 %	22 %
Prostitution has positive or very positive effects on the prostitute	13 %	9 %	13 %	18 %	7 %	15 %
Prostitution has negative or very negative effects on the community	23 %	5 %	33 %	21%	36 %	4 %
Prostitution has positive or very positive effects on the community	11%	21 %	3 %	13 %	3 %	26 %

Do sex buyers engage in minimization and denial about prostitution harms?

In our research in Germany and 5 other countries, we have repeatedly heard freiers explain that they pay for sex despite their awareness of trafficking and pimping. Although most men who buy sex have witnessed exploitation, coercion and trafficking - this does not affect their decision to buy sex. A German sex buyer said, *“There may be some people who have chosen that profession. There are also those who may have been forced there and you might not be able to tell who’s who...”*

A US sex buyer explained,

I think the thing I am most ashamed of is that I’ve been to Asian massage parlors. And call me naive, but what I discovered after a couple of trips to these places is that many of these women are victims of sex trafficking. They’re imported into the country under the ruse of getting a good job...And even after they work off their debt, often they just return to the sex industry, because they lack skills, they lack a verifiable work history, they don’t speak very good English, and the sex work is what they know and it becomes, in a way, easy money. Thing is, they are not glassy-eyed robot slaves sobbing under their oppressor like you see in movies about this kind of thing.

INTERVIEWER:

But it’s not consensual. It’s coercion. It’s sex slavery.

SEX BUYER:

And I felt very remorseful when I learned this. And then I did it again (Crane, 2012).

Although the interviewees for this research described many harmful consequences of prostitution, when pressed, they often retreated into denial and minimization. The pervasive violence of prostitution is deliberately hidden from the freiers, the public and from policymakers. This enables sex buyers to rationalize their predatory decision to buy a human being for sexual use. Pimps facilitate this denial of human cruelty. For example, a pimp who called himself a “pleasure guide,” renamed the trafficking of women to German brothels as *“aggressive girl importing:”*

Importing fresh girls from Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia every month, the Munich and Berlin red light districts are internationally famous in large part because of their reputation for aggressive girl importing from neighboring countries. It is common insider knowledge that there are more Polish working girls in Berlin than in Warsaw! (Germanredlightdistrict.com)

Public misconceptions about prostitution are based on sex buyers’ and pimps’ cover narratives which are aimed at concealing the risks of violence against women in prostitution. Like public awareness regarding the

risks of smoking tobacco, public awareness regarding the harms of prostitution is not a profitable business model. Instead, sex buyers blame the victim for the harms she sustains, viewing women in prostitution as intrinsically different from other women and as morally deficient. Sex buyers justify prostitution by telling us that she's getting rich or that she's simply doing an unpleasant but necessary job like factory work. Sex buyers and sex trade advocates may acknowledge a fraction of the risks for abuse and exploitation in prostitution, but adverse effects are minimized and the abuse is justified because the women are alleged to make a lot of money. Once paid for, the harms of prostitution are magically disappeared. Unlike other forms of violence against women such as incest, rape, or wife battering - prostitution is paid for. In his view, his payment releases the buyer from any obligation to treat the person he is buying as human. A Canadian prostitution tourist commented about women in Thai prostitution, "*These girls gotta eat don't they? I'm putting bread on their plate. I'm making a contribution. They'd starve to death unless they whored*" (Moore 1991, Bishop & Robinson, 1997). A sex buyer interviewed as part of this research, described the rapes of a woman by her pimp. But, he said, the rapes happened only "... *once in a while, not every week*" (Farley, Schuckman et al., 2011).

Women have described their prostitution as voluntary slavery, paid rape, or the choice that is not a choice. A freier we interviewed observed these same contradictory realities: "*The prostitute has to do it but she does it voluntarily.*" On the other hand, understanding that the payment of money was the means of coercion to prostitution, a more thoughtful freier said, "*The money excludes the possibility that it is voluntary.*"

A German freier told his interviewer that if he could not deal with the cruel reality of prostitution, "*I just don't think about it.*" Another said, "*Why should I feel bad about something I can not change? I'm not responsible for her landing there [in a brothel].*"

Men studiously avoid the obvious fact that the woman he is paying for does not want to have sex with him: "*Maybe I had sex with a woman who did not do it willingly, but I don't know for sure because I didn't ask.*" Sex buyers use this fuzzy and self-serving logic to avoid emotional or ethical accountability, instead viewing themselves as simply there, or as victims of circumstances, blaming the woman in prostitution for the harms perpetrated against her. "*For them it's work, normal work. They want more money than other women.*"

Are German (and other) sex buyers racist in their choices regarding which women to use in prostitution?

Men often select specific women in prostitution on the basis of racial/ethnic stereotypes. Ethnicity itself is eroticised in prostitution. One man said, "*I had a mental check list in terms of race; I have tried them all over the last five years but they turned out to be the same.*" Another man sought as much "variety" as he could buy in prostitution: "*Eastern European; Oriental; African European.*" European researchers found that "*In the customers' narratives, the young, beautiful and exotic prostitutes were often described as fetishlike objects and were also collected like such objects*" (Marttila, 2008, p 43). "*I collect nationalities,*" declared a sex buyer (Ondrasek et al 2018). An interviewee in our research explained that his use of Chinese women in prostitution was in order to fulfill a fantasy that he held about them. "*You can do a lot more with the Oriental girls like blow job without a condom, and you can cum in their mouths.... I view them as dirty.*" The ethno-sexualisation of 'other' women may be used to justify the objectification and exploitation of women of a different nationality. Correspondingly, the desexualisation of 'our own' women has been used by some men as an explanation for the use of paid sexual services, since these men were reluctant to ask their wives or girlfriends to perform acts that they considered deviant or perverse (Marttila, 2008, p 44).

We asked sex buyers in Germany, USA, UK, and Cambodia if they select a woman in prostitution based on her race/ethnicity/nationality. 54% of sex buyers in these four countries told interviewers that they select a woman based on her race, ethnicity, or nationality. Of the 96 German freiers we interviewed, 57% reported that they chose a prostituted woman based on her ethnicity/race. The German freiers selected women based on race or ethnicity more often than sex buyers in USA (49%) or UK (52%) but less often than Cambodian sex buyers (60%). See Table 15.

Table 15: Percentage of sex buyers in 4 countries who choose prostituted women based on the woman's race/ethnicity/nationality.

	Overall (N=549)	Germany (n=96)	USA (n=214)	UK (n=106)	Cambodia (n=133)
Do you select a woman based on her race/ethnicity?	54%	57%	49%	52%	60%

We asked German sex buyers to list the ethnicity/race of the women they selected. In Germany, in order from most often to least often, the men told us that they chose women to buy for sexual use based on the following ethnic/race categories: German, Czech, Polish, Hungarian, Russian, Austrian, Scandinavian, South American, Ukrainian, Slavic, Asian, North American, Turkish, Romanian, African, and Bulgarian. Upon review of this list of sex buyer preferences, it appears the men are selecting women on the basis of lightness/darkness of their skin, using a racist hierarchy of skin color. All four countries surveyed here (Germany, USA, UK, and Cambodia) have racial caste systems, as described by Wilkerson (2020):

A caste system is “an artificial construction, a fixed and embedded ranking of human value that sets the presumed supremacy of one group against the presumed inferiority of other groups on the basis of ancestry and often immutable traits, traits that would be neutral in the abstract but are ascribed life-and-death meaning in a hierarchy favoring the dominant caste.”

Davidson (2003) made a similar observation about caste/ethnic prejudice among Indian sex buyers:

Thus, interviewees typically placed different groups of sex workers on different rungs of a racial or ethnic hierarchy. In Delhi, most clients imagined dark-skinned women and girls from the Nat Bedia community as standing at the bottom of this hierarchy, followed by dark-skinned local sex workers, then by lighter-skinned Nepali sex workers. White European sex workers were placed at the apex of the hierarchy.

How do sexual objectification and dehumanization function as antecedents for the sexual violence of prostitution?

One of the men we interviewed explained his process of objectifying the women he paid for, “*When I buy something, I have a desire for the item. But you have no feeling when you pay them. For me it was an object.*” Another man explained, “[Prostitution is] like when I go to an Italian restaurant: I can put together my own individual pizza.”

Men’s dominance over women is established via the dehumanizing process of sexual objectification, which is at the root of violence against women (Leidholdt, 1980; Dworkin 2000). When she is sexually objectified, a girl or woman is defined by her sexual characteristics and “*made into a thing for others’ sexual use*” (American Psychological Association Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, 2007; Coy, 2008). Sexual objectification enables a perpetrator to view another person *as an object* via a process of compartmentalization, fragmentation, and exploitation (Adams, 2010). Sexual objectification precedes sexual violence because, the reasoning goes, objects have no feelings even if great harm is perpetrated against them. Sexual objectification has been linked to men’s likelihood to rape (Gervais et al, 2014; Rudman and Mescher, 2012) and to intimate partner violence (Saez et al., 2022; Vasquez, Ball and Pina, 2017; Stratemeyer, 2019).

Women are objectified by pimps’ transformation of them into profitable commodities (Farley, 2015; Herrington and McEachern, 2018). Prostitution is the purchase of a sex act or the exchange of a sex act for goods such as food, shelter, or drugs. In order for such a sale or exchange to occur, there must be an objectified, dehumanized, and commodified class of women, usually poor and most frequently ethnically marginalized, who are sold for sex to men who are more privileged. This commodification requires objectification, a process that transforms people into objects with economic value (Sharp, 2000). A pimp explained commodification at its most basic level: “*I took the kind of girl no one would miss so when they were resold, no one would look for them. It is as if I sold a kilo of bread*” (Crumley, Simmons, & Schoenthal, 1993).

Those who are commodified as products in the prostitution transaction then become entrenched as part of a subordinated class of humans. Noting that the poor and disempowered are likely to engage in what they call “*desperation exchanges*,” Radin and Sunder (2005) commented, “... it is unacceptable for society to embrace commodification of aspects of the self when it is in practice the only avenue of survival for the powerless.” When a person is turned into an object, then exploitation and abuse are irrelevant; the abuse seems almost reasonable.

Once an individual has been labeled as a commodity, he or she ceases to be viewed as human. Removal of a woman’s human status permits the commoditizer to engage in consumption acts regarding the commoditized person that would never be undertaken with someone considered fully human. (Hirschman and Hill, 2000)

Explaining his preference for objectified, impersonal sex, a man explained that his perception of women had changed since using women in prostitution, “*I no longer see women for what they are*,” he said. “*I’ve slept with so many that they’re objects to me. I sometimes sleep with the same girls three or four times, but then it gets boring*.” (Osborne, 2013).

Preferences for a variety of sex partners or for multiple sex partners are indicators of a preference for impersonal sex, one of the predictor variables in Malamuth’s Confluence Model of Sexual Aggression. Across all six countries in our research, a large majority of sex buyers (77%) reported a preference for interpersonal sex. See Table 16. About the same percentage (75%) of sex buyers reported preference for multiple partners. About half of our German freiers indicated a preference for a variety (55%) or multiple (58%) sex partners. However, sex buyers from USA, UK, and Scotland indicated even stronger preferences for impersonal sex than German freiers (variety of sex partners = 75%; $\chi^2 = 14.5, df=1, p<0.001$; multiple partners = 69%, $\chi^2 = 4.5, df=1, p = 0.033$).

Consistent with previous research on the Confluence Model of Sexual Aggression, we found that *sex buyers who reported impersonal sex preference via their preference for a variety of sex partners also tended to indicate a likelihood to rape* ($r = 0.18, p < 0.001$) and were likely to report a history of having *committed acts of sexual coercion, including rape* ($r = 0.11, p = 0.002$). The pattern was similar for sex buyers with a preference for multiple sex partners, who also reported a greater rape likelihood ($r = 0.18, p < 0.001$) and history of committing acts of sexual coercion ($r = 0.13, p < 0.001$)

Table 16: Preference for impersonal sex by sex buyers from 6 countries

Item	Overall (N=763)	Germany (n=96)	USA (n=214)	UK (n=106)	Scotland (n=112)	Cambodia (n=133)	India (n=102)
I like having sex with variety of people	77%	55%	71%	84%	75%	93%	88%
I like having multiple sex partners	75%	58%	67%	77%	65%	94%	92%

Objectification and dehumanization deprive a woman of her personality and dignity. Objectification is especially devastating for women who are racial or ethnic minorities, indigenous, or disabled. In prostitution these groups of women are treated with unique levels of cruelty by freiers and traffickers because they are defined by their perpetrators as non-human or less-than-human. There is extensive documentation that in prostitution, women of color, and transwomen of color (men of color who self-identify as women) are subjected to especially severe harm (Carter & Giobbe, 1999; Butler, 2015; Deer, 2010; Flores et al., 2018).

Treating a person like an object often results in the violence that has been widely documented in prostitution (Oselin & Blasyak, 2013; Argento et al., 2014). “*It’s like domestic violence taken to the extreme*,” explained a prostitution survivor (Leone, 2001). Because they are not considered fully human, women in prostitution are murdered at a higher rate than any other group of women ever studied (Potterat et al., 2004; Dalla et al., 2003; Quinet, 2011). Online forums indicate a consumer mentality among sex buyers that promotes objectification (Holt and Blevins, 2007; Kern, 2000; Monto & Julka, 2009; Senent, 2019). Turning

a woman into a body part – a vagina, a breast, a mouth, an anus – is profoundly dehumanizing. A US sex buyer described prostitution as *“renting an organ for 10 minutes.”*

How does a lack of empathy affect sex buyers’ objectification and dehumanization of women in prostitution?

In order to objectify and commodify women, it is necessary for the sex buyer to first shut down his feelings and to remove his empathy for the woman in prostitution. Asked for words that would describe the prostitute’s feelings during prostitution, a freier said with surprise, *“That’s a good question, you never think about that.”* Another man spontaneously described prostitution as involving the removal of empathy. In prostitution, he explained, you *“think about what you want and how you want it and you don’t pay attention to how the other person sees it. In a prostitution transaction, the empathy is just less from the freier.”* – *“It’s a service, sex for money, 99% of feelings excluded,”* said a German interviewee.

A unique interview with a tearful UK sex buyer illustrates the impact of empathy on his behavior. The young man said that he had only ever used one woman in prostitution. When the interviewer asked *“why only one woman?”* he responded that while he was with the prostituted woman that one time, he looked in her eyes, and there he saw the same expression that he knew was in his own eyes when a priest raped him as a child. His empathy and his understanding at a deep emotional level that prostitution was sexual abuse – prevented him from perpetrating that harm on a woman. That was his first and last experience of paying for sex.

The lack of empathy exhibited by sex buyers is associated with their objectification of women in prostitution. Our interviews with sex buyers provide evidence of their emotional and sexual disconnections, their lack of interest in the emotional well-being of the prostituted person, and the profound objectification that was a core element in their purchase of sex. A number of the men we interviewed explained that they literally saw women in prostitution as objects or consumable products: *“Prostitution treats women as objects and not beings. Not humans. You have to make a person feel like an ‘other,’ like a vessel, like a hole to stick your penis into, that is all she is...”*

“For me, being with a prostitute is not a relationship. It’s like having a cup of coffee, when you’re done, you throw it out.”

“Prostitution is for satisfying a man. It makes the world interesting; it creates variety, like a delicatessen – you order this, you order that.”

“She is just a biological object...that charges for services”

The “sexual service” sought by buyers actually put women in the position of being the thing provided, *“All you have to do is pay for it like any other convenient service you use.”*

Empathy is an important variable in understanding sexual aggression. People who lack empathy tend to see others as mere objects (Baron-Cohen, 2011). Empathy deficits have been reported in studies of sexually aggressive men (Lisak and Ivan, 1995; Varker, Devilly, and Beech, 2008). Men who were in other respects at high risk for sexual aggression were unlikely to aggress if they were “sensitive to others’ feelings” (empathetic) rather than self-centered (Abbey et al., 2006). Similarly, empathy reduced college-aged men’s likelihood of committing sexual violence in another study (Hudson-Flege et al., 2020).

A key element in empathy is the ability to identify what someone else is feeling. We asked sex buyers to estimate how women in prostitution felt during prostitution. Empathy was operationally defined in this research as the degree of similarity of the number of positive and negative words that sex buyers used to estimate women’s experiences in prostitution – compared

to the words used by prostituted women to describe their own experiences. Sex buyers were asked to list 5 words that describe how they think a prostituted woman feels during a session. Independent coders

rated the words based on whether they were positive (powerful, financially happy, fun), negative (degraded, used, dirty) or neutral (normal, business as usual, it's her job). Table 17 lists the frequency of these three types of words. We then compared the sex buyers' words to prostituted women's responses to the same questions (Farley, Matthews, Deer, Lopez et al., 2011).

Freiers described the feelings of women in prostitution quite differently from the way that women themselves described their feelings during prostitution. We found statistically significant differences between German sex buyers' descriptions of what prostitution was like for the women, and how prostituted women from USA described their own feelings during prostitution ($\chi^2 = 230.6$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$). See Table 17. *Freiers used significantly more positive and significantly fewer negative words than the words that prostituted women themselves used to describe prostitution.* Almost half (48%) of the German freiers' words to describe prostitution were positive compared to only 7% of prostituted women's positive words. 42% of the freiers' words were negative compared to 90% among prostituted women.

We used chi-square tests to compare sex buyers in each country to prostituted women in USA. See Table 18. As in Germany, a lack of empathy was evident in all countries where we asked men to estimate prostituted women's experiences. The sex buyers' estimates of how women in prostitution felt, differed significantly from the women's own descriptions of their feelings. This failure to accurately estimate how she felt is an indication of a lack of empathy by the sex buyer.

Table 17: Positive and negative words used by sex buyers and prostituted women to describe the feelings of women during prostitution

	Prostituted Women (n=105)	All Sex Buyers (n=548)	Germany (n=96)	USA (n=101)	UK (n=106)	Scotland (n=112)	Cambodia (n=112)
Positive feeling words	7%	49%	49%	40%	40%	45%	70%
Negative feeling words	90%	37%	42%	44%	33%	44%	21%
Neutral feeling words	3%	15%	9%	17%	27%	11%	9%
Total number of words	456	1943	420	459	377	292	395

The prostituted women were from Minnesota, USA (Farley, M, Deer, S., Golding, J.M., Matthews, N., Lopez, G., Stark, C., & Hudon, E., 2016. The Prostitution and Trafficking of American Indian/Alaska Native Women in Minnesota. *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research* 23(1): 65-104. These questions were not asked of sex buyers in India.

Table 18: Chi-square tests by country comparing positive, negative, and neutral words used to describe prostitution by sex buyers and by US prostituted women

	Chi-square	<i>p</i>
Germany	230.6	.001
USA	224.3	.001
UK	300.7	.001
Scotland	194.9	.001
Cambodia	419.2	.001

Is prostitution intergenerational?

We asked the men if it was acceptable for their sons to go to brothels. We also asked them if it was acceptable for their daughters to work in stripclubs. There was a dramatic difference in the freiers' responses. 75% of the men said that it was acceptable for their sons to pay for sex but only 32% said it was acceptable for the daughter to work in a stripclub. See Table 19. Men's promiscuity and sexual continence is taken for granted by the sex buyers. Yet in their desire to protect their daughters from the sexual aggression that they know is omnipresent in prostitution, the sex buyers tend to reject prostitution as an activity for their daughters. This difference reflects their awareness of how damaging prostitution is to women, and their acceptance of

the prostitution of someone else's daughters but not *their* daughters. The sex buyers separate a special group of women from their daughters – young women who they categorize as commodities, objects, subhuman, contemptible.

Table 19: Acceptable and unacceptable activities for sons and daughters

	Overall (N=763)	Germany (n=96)	USA (n=214)	UK (n=106)	Scotland (n=112)	Cambodia (n=133)
It's OK for my son to buy sex	51%	75%	45%	59 %	56 %	61 %
It's OK for my daughter to work in strip club	23%	32 %	24 %	30 %	37 %	11 %

What did we learn from sex buyers about prostitution myths, rape myths, hostile masculinity, and sexual aggression?

Legal prostitution is intimately connected with rape. A German sex buyer explained his understanding of the experience of the women he paid for, “*It is psychologically disturbing to be forced to do something that you don't want. At that moment it's rape.*” Prostituting women are in need of cash, not sex. The sex acts of prostitution are tolerated by women only because they need the money and cannot obtain it in other ways. This fact has been widely documented (Alschech et al., 2020; Bindel and Kelly, 2003; Erdmann, 2006; Farley, Cotton et al., 2003). A common definition of rape is unwanted sex. By that definition, most prostitution is rape. As a Canadian survivor of prostitution said, “*What is rape for others, is normal for us.*”

A freier interviewed in Munich described transformation of this paid-for-rape of prostitution into a service: “*If I'm paying for it, then it's a service.*” Moran (2016) explained the harm caused by this belief. “If sex is just a service, rape is just theft. If sex is to be equated with any other service, then we cannot complain about the rape of a woman in prostitution any differently than we could complain about someone having their sink fixed and not paying the plumber. Rape is disappeared here. In ‘sex work’ ideology, we are dealing with theft, not rape.”

Davidson (2003) described the extreme entitlement of some men who “seemed to think that in prostitution, women/girls actually become objects or commodities, and that clients can therefore purchase temporary powers of ownership over them. ‘When there is violence,’ said a sex buyer, ‘it is mostly the prostitute’s fault. See, I am going to buy something... I will be violent when I am cheated, when I am offered a substandard service. ... the fact is, she is a commodity offering a service.’” (Davidson, 2003).

Prostitution myths are cultural notions about prostitution that are not true, but which justify men’s purchase of sex and that deny prostitution’s harm. For example, “most prostitutes make a lot of money” and “prostitutes enjoy their work.” Rape myths are cultural notions about rape that are not true but which justify rape, for example, “many women secretly desire to be raped,” and “when women are raped, it’s because the way they said ‘no’ was ambiguous.” A 2002 study of US college students found a significant association between their acceptance of prostitution myths and acceptance of rape myths (Cotton, Farley, & Baron, 2002). Hostile masculinity is a personality profile combining hostile/distrustful orientation, particularly toward women, with attitudes supporting aggression against women, sexual gratification via domination of women, and hypersensitivity to rejection by women.

How are rape myths connected to men’s sexual aggression?

Sexually aggressive men are more accepting of rape myths than men who are not sexually aggressive (Truman, Tokar, & Fischer, 1996; Vogel, 2000). Many studies have found a strong link between rape-tolerant attitudes and sexual aggression (Bohner, Jarvis, Eyssel, & Siebler, 2005; Chapleau & Oswald, 2010; Malamuth, Hald, & Koss, 2012; Stotzer & MacCartney, 2016). Arrested sex buyers who most often purchased prostitutes strongly endorsed rape myths (Monto & Hotaling, 1998). Schmidt (2003) found that college-aged men who used women in prostitution reported having committed more sexually coercive

behaviors than men who had not used women in prostitution. Support for Schmidt's (2003) research is found in similar results from Farley et al., (2015) and in Kinnell's (2008, p 86) observation that many men who buy sex believe that "buying sex entitles them to do anything they want" or that paying "gave them the right to inflict any kind of assault they chose." Sexually aggressive male college students demonstrate greater hostility toward women, a stronger inclination toward dominance in relationships, and a greater acceptance of rape myths (Abbey, Jacques-Tiura, & LeBreton, 2011; DeGue & DiLillo, 2005; Koss & Dinero, 1988; Wheeler et al., 2002).

We found a highly significant association between prostitution myth and rape myth acceptance across all 6 countries: $r = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$. German freiers' acceptance of myths about prostitution and their acceptance of myths about rape was significantly correlated, $r = 0.269$, $p = .0081$. *The more accepting the German freiers were of prostitution, the more likely they were to also accept cultural myths about rape.*

All sex buyers – but especially German sex buyers – subscribe to the myth that prostitution prevents rape

Men's stubborn refusal to see women in prostitution as human is at the root of their acceptance of these myths about rape and prostitution. Sex buyers justify their maltreatment and rape of women by declaring that there is no such thing as rape when you are referring to prostitutes since prostituted women are classified as different and dehumanized. "I was buying a product," said a Canadian sex buyer interviewed by Malarek (2011), "They didn't exist as people. They were just whores."

A "deviant sense of justification" is common in rape and prostitution cultures where men feel entitled to sex because of their acceptance of rape myths (Morgan, 2021). An attitude of entitlement is common among rapists (Alsech, 2020; Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, & Dunkle, 2011). We found that an attitude of entitlement to sex was also connected to sex buyers' violence. See Table 20. 44% of men who buy sex in 6 countries believed a man can do whatever he wants when he pays for sex and 35% believed the concept of rape does not apply to prostituted women. Over a third (39%) of German sex buyers felt entitled to do whatever they wanted to a woman in prostitution after paying for her and 35% believed the concept of rape does not apply to prostituted women. *While sex buyers in six countries all tended to subscribe to harmful beliefs that women in prostitution can't be raped, the highest percentages of sex buyers accepting this lie were in Germany and India.*

In some of our analyses, we compared German men to men USA, UK and Scotland since they are more culturally similar to Germany than Cambodia and India. That comparison revealed that *significantly more German freiers than men from USA, UK, and Scotland, believed that women in prostitution are essentially "unrapeable"* ($\chi^2 = 21.9$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$).

Many of the freiers we interviewed believed that a benefit of prostitution was that it reduces rape at a societal level. As one of our interviewees explained, "Prostitution is good for society because men have an excessive sex drive and men can take it out on them without attacking other women or attacking children." Similarly, a man in the United States explained how prostitutes take the brunt of men's rage at women, "You wouldn't have to rape somebody if there are prostitutes. You don't have to beat up your wife if prostitutes are available." A German freier we interviewed for this research, explained how prostitution decreases rape: "The nature of men is that they have no control over themselves. But because they can use prostitutes, there are fewer sexual offenses."

In this research, we found that sex buyers in diverse cultures tend to believe the myth that prostitution reduces rape. 58% of sex buyers in six countries agreed with the myth that legal prostitution prevents or decreases rape. Three-quarters (76%) of German men were convinced that prostitution reduces rape. *German men were significantly more likely to believe that prostitution prevented rape when compared to men in the USA, UK, and Scotland* ($\chi^2 = 37.5$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$). See Table 20.

Table 20: Sex buyers' acceptance of myths about prostitution and rape

	6-Country Total (N=763)	Ger- many (n=96)	UK (n=106)	USA (n=214)	Scot- land (n=112)	Cam- bodia (n=133)	India (n=102)
A man can do whatever he wants when he pays for a prostitute.	44 %	39%	26 %	40 %	22 %	74%	63 %
The concept of rape does not apply to prostitutes.	35%	35%	23 %	13 %	10 %	79%	61%
The availability of prostitutes makes rape less likely.	58 %	76%	54 %	36 %	41 %	72 %	91%

Sex buyers focus on the alleged benefit of the institution of prostitution to nonprostituting women while ignoring the rapes - and the humanity - of prostituted women. Women in prostitution are placed by sex buyers into a degraded category of humans who deserve men's sexual aggression. If men's sexual expectations are unmet, rape and prostitution are assumed to be inevitable. Women who fail to provide the sex acts demanded by their partners are blamed for their partners' use of women in prostitution. "If my fiancé won't give me anal, I know someone who will," said a US sex buyer interviewed for this research (Farley, Schuckman et al., 2011). Referring to prostituted women, a London interviewee said, "I feel sorry for these girls but this is what I want."

Is men's use of women in prostitution connected to hostile masculinity and sexual aggression toward all women?

Instead of prostitution's decreasing rape, the results from this research suggests that the opposite is likely to be true: across 6 countries, we found that the frequency with which men used prostituted women in the past year was significantly correlated with their likelihood to rape ($r = 0.20, p < 0.001$). Sex buyers who paid for sex more frequently were also more likely to report they engaged in more sexually coercive behaviors, including rape. Higher rates of buying sex were associated with use of alcohol or drugs to obtain sex from a woman ($r = 0.09, p = 0.018$), threat of physical force to obtain sex ($r = 0.11, p = 0.004$), use of physical force to have sex ($r = 0.07, p = 0.045$), and threats or physical force to obtain anal or oral sex ($r = 0.09, p = 0.016$).

We investigated other variables that might increase German sex buyers' likelihood of perpetrating sexual aggression, such as lifetime number of sex partners. We ran a linear regression, and using the first predictor, we found that the lifetime number of sex partners was significantly associated with sexual aggression, $b = .04, p = .0244$. *For German sex buyers, the higher the number of sex partners in his lifetime, the more likely he was to report having committed sexually aggressive behaviors, including rape.*

In the same linear regression, we found that hostile masculine identification was reliably associated with sexual aggression, $b = .12, p < .0001$. *German sex buyers who scored the highest on our measure of hostile masculine identification, also tended to be those most likely to perpetrate sexually aggressive behaviors, including rape.* We found the same statistically significant association between hostile masculine identity and sexual aggression across all 6 countries ($r = 0.24, p < 0.001$).

In the second step of the regression, we combined two predictor variables. His lifetime number of sex partners combined with a hostile masculine identity, together increased the likelihood that a sex buyer would perpetrate sexual coercion, including rape ($b = .04, p = .0051$). *The greater the number of sex partners and the stronger his hostile masculine identity, the more likely German sex buyers were to have reported sexual coercion including rape.*

We used a second measure of sexual aggression - self-reported likelihood to rape. There was a highly significant correlation between German freiers' self-reported likelihood to rape and hostile masculine identification, $r = .434, p < .0001$. *German sex buyers who scored the highest on hostile masculine identity were also those most likely to report that they might commit rape if they could be guaranteed they would not be caught. Across all 6 countries sex buyers who had a strong hostile masculine identity tended to report a greater likelihood of committing rape ($r = 0.30, p < 0.001$).*

Does sex buyers' use of pornography have an impact on buying sex or other sexually aggressive behavior?

A number of interacting factors contribute to men's sexual aggression against women including frequent pornography use. Other factors that tend to increase the likelihood of sexual aggression include promiscuity/impersonal sex, hostile masculine identification, a history of family violence, narcissism, delinquency in adolescence, and attitudes supportive of aggression (Malamuth & Pitpitan, 2007; Malamuth & Hald, 2017). In one study, military soldiers were more likely to commit interpersonal violence if they used pornography on a weekly basis, even while controlling for other variables such as age, race, relationship status, drinking, depression, and PTSD (Beymer, Hill, Perry et al., 2021). When frequent pornography use is combined with an impersonal sexual attitude, the likelihood of engaging in impersonal sexual behavior is increased (Tokunaga, 2018; Deogan, Jacobsson, Mannheimer & Björkenstam, 2021). Prostitution itself can be understood as an example of impersonal sexual behavior and at least one study has supported that interpretation: if men had ever looked for or met sex partners online and if they also used pornography frequently, then they were more likely to purchase sex in prostitution (Deogan et al., 2021). In the Scotland research that was part of this study, we found that the most frequent pornography users were also the most frequent users of women in prostitution (Farley, Macleod, Anderson, & Golding, 2011).

We investigated sex buyers' use of pornography in this research and explored its relationship to frequency of paying for sex and other measures of sexual aggression. We asked sex buyers how often they viewed pornography via the Internet, videos, movies and magazines. See Table 21. About half of sex buyers (53%) in 6 countries said they viewed pornography once a week or more often. Similarly, about half of the German sex buyers (55%) reported pornography use weekly or more.

Table 21: Percentage of sex buyers in 6 countries who used pornography once a week or more often

	6 country average (N=763)	Germany (n=96)	USA (n=214)	UK (n=106)	Scotland (n=112)	Cam-bodia (n=133)	India (n=102)
Percentage of men with frequent pornography use	53%	55%	60%	54%	35%	62%	42%

Is frequent pornography use related to buying sex?

Across 6 countries, we found that *those sex buyers who reported more frequent pornography use also tended to buy sex more frequently* ($r=0.11$, $p=0.003$).

Is pornography use associated with sexual coercion?

Across all 6 countries, we found a significant association between weekly or more frequent pornography use, and sexual coercion, including rape ($r=0.15$, $p<0.001$). *The more frequent pornography users tended to be those same sex buyers who reported more sexually aggressive behaviors.* Sex buyers who reported pornography use at least once a week or more often, also tended to report that they coerced a women into sex because of their sex drive ($r = 0.15$, $p = 0.011$), used physical force to have sex ($r = 0.24$, $p = 0.013$), and use threats or physical force to make a woman have anal or oral sex ($r = 0.35$, $p<0.001$). Sex buyers who reported weekly or more frequent pornography use in UK, USA, and Scotland also tended to report greater use of threats and physical force to obtain oral or anal sex ($r = 0.46$, $p = 0.006$).

How does frequent viewing of pornography impact men's sexual aggression?

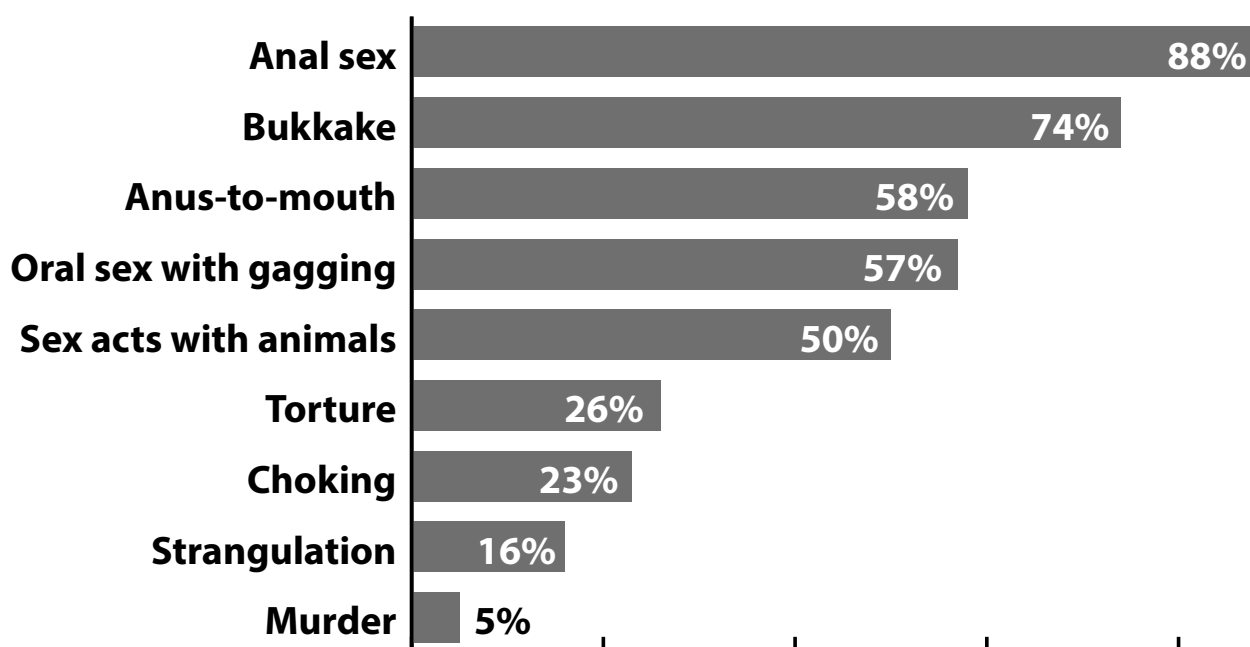
Sexual objectification is known to be an antecedent of sexual aggression (Dworkin, 2000; Gervais, 2014; Saez, 2022). A 55 year old man in an online support group explained the increasing objectification of women that accompanied his pornography use,

“When on porn, the features of a woman's face, or her cleavage, legs, etc., all seem to be highlighted in my brain. While in a meeting, I might find myself admiring someone's lips as they talk, instead of listening to what they say. Once off of porn for a while though, woman seem

like normal humans... sometimes slobs, sometimes dressed nicely, some old, some young, but I can listen to them and watch them without objectifying and judging them. Not objectifying and judging woman seems impossible when I am using porn.” (7891asc, 2020)

As discussed above, objectification is often an antecedent to sexual violence. This man’s thoughtful comment seems to support the theory that people learn behaviors by watching those same behaviors being performed by others. We were curious about what types of sex acts the men were viewing in the pornography that they watched. Figure 1 shows the percentage of sex buyers from three countries who reported that they had seen those specific types of sex acts in their pornography viewing. Respondents were 96 German men from Munich and Karlsruhe, 133 Cambodian men from Phnom Penh, and 101 US men from Boston. Most men (88%) viewed anal sex, three quarters (74%) viewed bukkake (a group of men together ejaculating on a woman’s face, she is usually crying), and more than half (58%) saw anus-to-mouth pornography. 5% of the 330 sex buyers had seen pornography of sexual murders.

Figure 1 Sex acts viewed by German, Cambodian, and US sex buyers (N=330)



Are sex buyers involved in criminal activity outside of prostitution?

Sex buyers tend to engage in non-prostitution-related criminal activity. In the USA, we compared sex buyers with a sample of men matched for age, race/ethnicity, and education who were not sex buyers. We found that sex buyers were more likely than non-sex buyers to commit felonies, misdemeanors, crimes associated with violence against women, substance abuse-related crimes, assaults, crimes with weapons, crimes against authority, to have been subject to a restraining order, and to have been charged with violence against women. Sex buyers who had more often purchased sex had also been arrested more times, were more likely to have been charged with violence against women, and were more likely to have been subject to a restraining order than sex buyers who had less often bought sex (Farley & Golding, 2019). The findings are consistent with the Confluence Model of Sexual Aggression that recognizes criminal activity in adolescence as a variable that increases the likelihood of sexual aggression.

In this research study, we asked sex buyers in 3 countries (Germany, USA and UK) about history of arrests and conviction. In Germany and USA, we then asked sex buyers to describe in detail what crimes they had committed. German freiers (31) had been arrested more times than British punters (21). German

sex buyers (39) had been convicted of approximately the same number of crimes as British punters (37). Only a small number of men in each sample reported having committed or being convicted of crimes. This was most likely an underestimate of arrests and convictions. Nonetheless, we think that these findings add some information to our understanding of sex buyers' involvement in criminal activity outside of prostitution.

We then asked men in Germany and USA to list the specific crimes for which they had been arrested or convicted. In most cases, a review by attorneys revealed that the crimes listed by the men were comparable in the two countries, but in a few cases, there was no comparable law in either Germany or USA. Table 22 lists the specific crimes that freiers in Germany and USA told us they had committed. A trend is evident: German freiers committed more crimes in general than US men. The German freiers had committed more crimes of violence against women than US punters (11 vs 6), German sex buyers committed more assault and battery than US sex buyers (27 vs 14). German sex buyers reported having committed 2 homicides while the US sex buyers reported none. One German sex buyer reported having been arrested on organized crime charges. The trend continued with German sex buyers committing more of the following types of crimes than US sex buyers: robbery, burglary, property crimes, drug sales, and drug possession. The same number of men in each country (7) reported arrests for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. On the other hand, US sex buyers reported 3 weapons violations while German sex buyers reported none, and US sex buyers committed more crimes against authority, disorderly conduct, and driving infractions than did German freiers.

Table 22: Crimes committed by sex buyers in Germany and United States

	German Sex Buyers	US Sex Buyers
Type of Crime	n = 97	n = 101
Violence Against Women or Typically Associated with VaW		
Impersonating a police officer	0	1
Subject to restraining order	5	0
Violating a restraining order	0	1
Indecent exposure – public urinating	2	1
Intimidating witnesses	2	1
Lewd and lascivious behavior	2	1
Destruction of property	4	1
Total VaW-related crimes	11	6
Assault and Battery		
Assault and battery on police officer	0	2
Attempted murder or manslaughter	2	2
Assault and battery	21	6
Assault and battery with a weapon	1	2
Resisting arrest	0	1
Hit and run	1	1
Assault but charges were dropped	0	0
Shoplifting/fighting	2	0
Total Assault and Battery	27	14
Homicide		
Manslaughter	2	0
Total Homicide	2	0

Table 22: Crimes committed by sex buyers in Germany and United States

Type of Crime	German Sex Buyers n = 97	US Sex Buyers n = 101
Weapons		
Possession of a firearm	0	2
Carrying a concealed weapon	0	1
Total Weapons	0	3
Robbery		
Conspiracy to commit a robbery	0	1
Armed robbery		0
Unarmed robbery	4	3
Aggravated or armed robbery	2	?
Total Robbery	6	2
Burglary		
Burglary	3	
Breaking and Entering/Home Invasion	2	4
Total Burglary	5	4
Property crimes		
Theft	11	3
Selling balloons without a permit	0	1
Larceny over \$1,200	0	1
Fare evasion on the train	13	1
Breaking into safe deposit box	0	1
Larceny by check bouncing	0	0
Fraud	1	0
Insurance Fraud	1	0
Embezzlement	1	0
Total Property Crimes	27	7
Organized Crime		
	1	0
Total organized crime	1	0
Crimes Against Authority - Police/Parole Officer		
Disobeying a police officer	0	1
Evading police	0	1
Parole violation	0	1
Faking a crime	1	0
Total Crimes against Authority	1	3

Table 22: Crimes committed by sex buyers in Germany and United States

Type of Crime	German Sex Buyers n = 97	US Sex Buyers n = 101
Disorderly Conduct		
Disorderly conduct	1	4
Drunk in public		3
Spitting on doctor in public	1	0
Drinking in public		2
Open container		1
Camping in illegal area		0
Disturbing the peace		0
Total Disorderly Conduct	2	10
Driving Infractions		
Driver's license suspended	1	1
Driving without a license	0	2
Total Driving Infractions	1	3
Substance Abuse/Drug Sales		
Possession with intent to distribute oxycontin	0	1
Possession with intent to distribute cocaine	0	1
Drug trafficking/Drug Importing	8	1
Distribution – crack cocaine	0	2
Drug Distribution in school zone	0	1
Total Substance Abuse/Drug Sales	8	6
Substance Abuse – Driving Under the Influence/Dangerously		
Drunk driving or DUI	5	5
Drunk driving on bicycle	2	0
Attempting to commit suicide – driving over 100 mph	0	1
Driving under influence of narcotics	0	1
Total Driving Under the Influence/Dangerous Driving	7	7
Substance Abuse – Drug Possession or Drug Paraphernalia		
Drug Use	1	0
Drug possession (cocaine, marijuana, heroin, oxycontin)	0	7
Drug possession or nonspecified drug-related crime	15	2
Possession of Drug Paraphernalia	0	2
Total Substance Abuse – Drug Possession or Drug Paraphernalia	16	11

What would deter men from buying sex?

In five countries, we asked sex buyers to respond to a list of possible penalties for buying sex. Each interviewee told us whether or not it would be effective in stopping him from buying sex. The consistency with which sex buyers in diverse cultures ranked 12 possible deterrents was noteworthy. See Table 23. Sex buyers told interviewers that adding their names to a sex offender registry would be a highly effective deterrent. Sex buyers do not like the notion of being labelled as sex predators, placing them in the same category with pedophiles and rapists. Normalization of prostitution as a job or a “service” tends to name the freier as simply a customer or a “client.”

The next-most effective deterrent is public exposure of a man’s purchase of sex. There is a stigma applied to men who buy sex, and rightly so. The possibility of having their names made public via the Internet, newspaper, or a poster – are also strong deterrents. Equally effective as a deterrent, 82% of men said that jail time would be an effective deterrent. Half (49%) of the German sex buyers said that *any amount of time in jail would deter them*. See Table 24.

The least effective deterrent, according to sex buyers in five countries, would be an educational program about prostitution. We hope that it is clear from the findings in this Report that sex buyers tend to be well educated about prostitution, often knowing far more about its harmful consequences than most people.

Table 23: 661 Sex Buyers’ Responses to “what would deter you from buying sex?”

Deterrent	5-country average (N=661)	Germany (n=96)	USA (n=214)	UK (n=106)	Cambodia (n=133)
Added to the “sex offender” registry along with rapists and pedophiles	87%	89%	90%	84%	84%
Your photo and/or name in the local newspaper	85%	83%	85%	84%	87%
Your photo and/or name on a poster	85%	85%	84%	86%	84%
Your photo and/or name posted on the Internet	83%	82%	83%	84%	87%
Spend time in jail	82%	85%	82%	84%	81%
A letter sent to your family saying you were arrested for soliciting a woman in prostitution	77%	68%	78%	79%	81%
Greater criminal penalty	76%	72%	73%	77%	88%
Larger amount of money paid for the fine	74%	69%	68%	80%	86%
Having your driver’s license suspended	73%	68%	75%	78%	71%
Your bicycle/car/taken away by police	71%	60%	70%	76%	75%
Having to do community service	59%	53%	52%	70%	6%
Required to attend educational program for men who buy prostitutes	48%	34%	39%	47%	75%
Other	12%	18%	14%	9%	4%

Table 24. What amount of time in jail would deter you from buying sex?

Time in jail	3-country average (N=254)	Germany (n=75)	USA (n=75)	Cambodia (n=106)
Any time	26%	49%	24%	12%
Several hours	3%	1%	5%	3%
1-3 days	26%	21%	41%	18%
1-3 weeks	11%	8%	13%	11%
1 month or more	34%	21%	16%	56%

Numbers in this table are based on a subset of sex buyers who endorsed “spend time in jail” as a deterrent.

German sex buyers’ comments regarding deterrents included “*I won’t get caught,*” or declarations that only “*castration*” or “*the death penalty*” would stop their purchase of sex. On the other hand, some men clearly would be guided by a law prohibiting the purchase of sex: “*I would agree to a ban immediately...If that [paying for sex] is criminalized, it will be good for society. Exploitation must be prohibited in principle.*” Another man said, “*I do only what is allowed. If the purchase of sex is banned, I will no longer go to prostitutes.*”

Concluding thoughts

This 6-country research study provides new information about men who buy sex and offers evidence that debunks commonly-held myths about legal prostitution. According to interviews with 763 sex buyers, we found that legal prostitution does not make prostitution safer. Compared to western regimes where prostitution is illegal, legal prostitution in Germany was associated with more sex trafficking, and did not reduce violence against women. Sex buyers' observations of women under the control of pimps and traffickers confirmed existing reports from organized crime experts that there is extensive gang and organized crime control of the legal sex trade. German sex buyers were less likely to report trafficking than were sex buyers in other countries where prostitution is not legal. Sex buyers in Germany rationalized sexual aggression toward women in prostitution using the harmful myth that prostitution prevents rape.

Sex buyers in this research reported many of the attitudes and behaviors that are associated with sexual aggression: a self-reported likelihood to rape, a preference for impersonal sex, endorsing beliefs that justify rape, greater hostile masculine identification, and a lack of empathy. Many sex buyers believed that it was not possible to rape a prostituted woman. While the men were aware of prostitution's harms, including trafficking, they generally failed to report signs of trafficking or extreme violence to the authorities.

Limitations of this research

It is possible that men who respond to advertisements requesting participation in research in general, and those who respond to advertisements requesting participation in research on sexual attitudes and behaviors, may differ in unknown ways from the general population of men, including sex buyers. A random sample of respondents in any study of prostitution is virtually impossible (McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; Brewer et al, 2000). Nonetheless we sought to include as broad a sample of sex buyers as possible, not excluding anyone.

Most of the information collected in this research was obtained by self-report. It is likely that some of the men's responses were influenced by their attempts to respond in a socially desirable way, a common response set on self-report measures (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964). For example, a socially desirable response set has been documented in self-reports of men attending batterer intervention programs (Craig et al., 2006). An advantage of our in-person interviews was our ability to directly observe sex buyers' behavior, which is not possible with most online research.

Policy implications of this research

Prostitution is an institution of men's dominance over women, an institution of race/ethnic dominance, and an institution of class dominance. In states that legalize or decriminalize the sex trade, prostitution is a state-guaranteed infrastructure for the sexual use of women by men who pay a fee. Prostitution is the idea of sex without reciprocity, of one-sided sexual gratification in which one person dehumanizes the other person; she does not even have to be psychologically present (as noted by these sex buyers and also by prostitution survivors) since she can dissociate and mentally disappear and act like someone that she is not. Feminists have struggled fiercely against this type of coerced sex. But for many, the sex of prostitution remains normalized and most countries' laws do not even name it rape. It is deeply disturbing to see one's state or region endorse, even champion, the dehumanized, dissociated sex of prostitution. In their prostitution laws, their concessions to the sex trade's demands, and in their pandering to men who buy sex as their rightful entitlement, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nevada/USA, and other pimp states across the globe have sent a clear message of contempt to one half of their populations.

Many Germans cling to the fantasy that legalizing or regulating prostitution will resolve the human rights abuses that are at the heart of prostitution. However, bureaucracies, management, regulation, health registration forms, educational campaigns to turn sex buyers into nice men who respect women's rights, unions, legalization - none of this has changed or will change what is fundamentally wrong with prostitution. Legal prostitution's proponents have utterly failed to explain how they will "monitor" prostitution in such a way that women's safety is ensured. Regulationist approaches to prostitution have been tried and failed, recently acknowledged as a failed experiment by the Dutch (Meyer, Neumann, Schmid, Truckendanner, & Winter, 2013). The *der Spiegel* investigative journalists noted that,

The Netherlands chose the path of legal deregulation two years before Germany. Both the Dutch justice minister and the police concede that there have been no palpable improvements for prostitutes since then. They are generally in poorer health than before, and increasing numbers are addicted to drugs. The police estimate that 50 to 90 percent of prostitutes do not practice the profession voluntarily. (Der Spiegel, 22/2013)

In the same article, Dutch Social Democrat Lodewijk Asscher noted that legalization of prostitution had been a national mistake. Today, there is a movement for change in Germany, with more and more citizens who favor an abolitionist legal model.

The voices and analyses of exited survivors – those who are no longer under pimp or sex trade control – direct us to the obvious legal solutions. Men who buy sex must be held accountable for their predatory aggression. Those in prostitution must be offered real alternatives for survival, and never arrested. Pimps and traffickers must also be held accountable. Many countries have successfully passed legislation that acknowledges the risks and harms of prostitution and that shifts the legal focus to sex buyers. A human-rights-based or abolitionist approach to prostitution would decrease risks to the prostituted and offer them alternatives. In these legal approaches, prostitution is understood as an institution imbued with risk for the person who is bought as sexual commodity. A number of countries have passed legislation that recognizes prostitution as the business of sexual exploitation: Sweden (1999), Iceland, (2008), Norway (2009), Canada (2014), Northern Ireland (2015), France (2016), and Republic of Ireland (2017) and Israel (2018). In these countries, sex buyers are penalized (as are pimps and traffickers) and people in prostitution are decriminalized and are also provided with exit services and job training. Once prostitution is understood as a form of violence against women, this legal approach makes sense.

Critically important but too often ignored in Nordic Model laws is provision of support and exit services to women who want to escape the sex trade. In order to end prostitution, women in it must be provided governmental support so that they do not have to seek out pimps to provide them with food and shelter in exchange for prostitution. The 2016 French law on prostitution followed Sweden's model but expanded it to provide funding for exiting survivors so they could access housing, jobs, healthcare, and longer-term support services with federal subsidies for "social and professional integration" (CAP 2017, p. 5-6). The French law offers tax debt forgiveness for exiting survivors and a temporary residence permit for foreign victims of prostitution which is not contingent on whether or not the victim assists in prosecution of sex buyers or traffickers (as is currently required in Sweden and the United States). Enforcement of laws against the sex trade are most effective in abolishing the sex trade when funding is legally mandated to assist women in escaping the sex trade. Access to these support services must precede arrests and prosecutions of pimps and sex buyers.

Sex buyers' knowledge about the sex trade is not yet well used by law enforcement although it would likely yield valuable information. Based on these sex buyers' extensive information about pimps, coercion, trafficking, organized crime and other violent crimes against women in prostitution, it would make sense for law enforcement to interrogate sex buyers about these crimes. Our interviewees' extensive knowledge about trafficking for prostitution suggests to the authors that law enforcement strategies to extract information from freiers is far more appropriate in pursuing trafficking investigations than the unjust and largely ineffective practice of interrogating prostituted women who are often under pimp control and have been threatened with extreme violence if they cooperate with police. If paying for sex is criminalized, then if arrested, freiers would be highly motivated to cooperate with law enforcement and share their extensive knowledge of pimps, trafficking networks, and general information about how the sex trafficking industry operates.

The existence of prostitution anywhere is society's betrayal of women, especially those who are marginalized and vulnerable because of their sex, ethnicity, poverty, and their history of abuse and neglect. Our goal should be to abolish prostitution, not to fix or regulate it. Until vulnerability is removed and equality is in place, women will continue to enter prostitution as a last-ditch survival maneuver. Overwhelming poverty coerces women into prostitution, for example to pay for a tank of gas (Hardin, 2011) or food (Bradenton Herald, 2012). Until income equality exists, and until climate refugees are offered support, poor women will continue to be vulnerable to prostitution.

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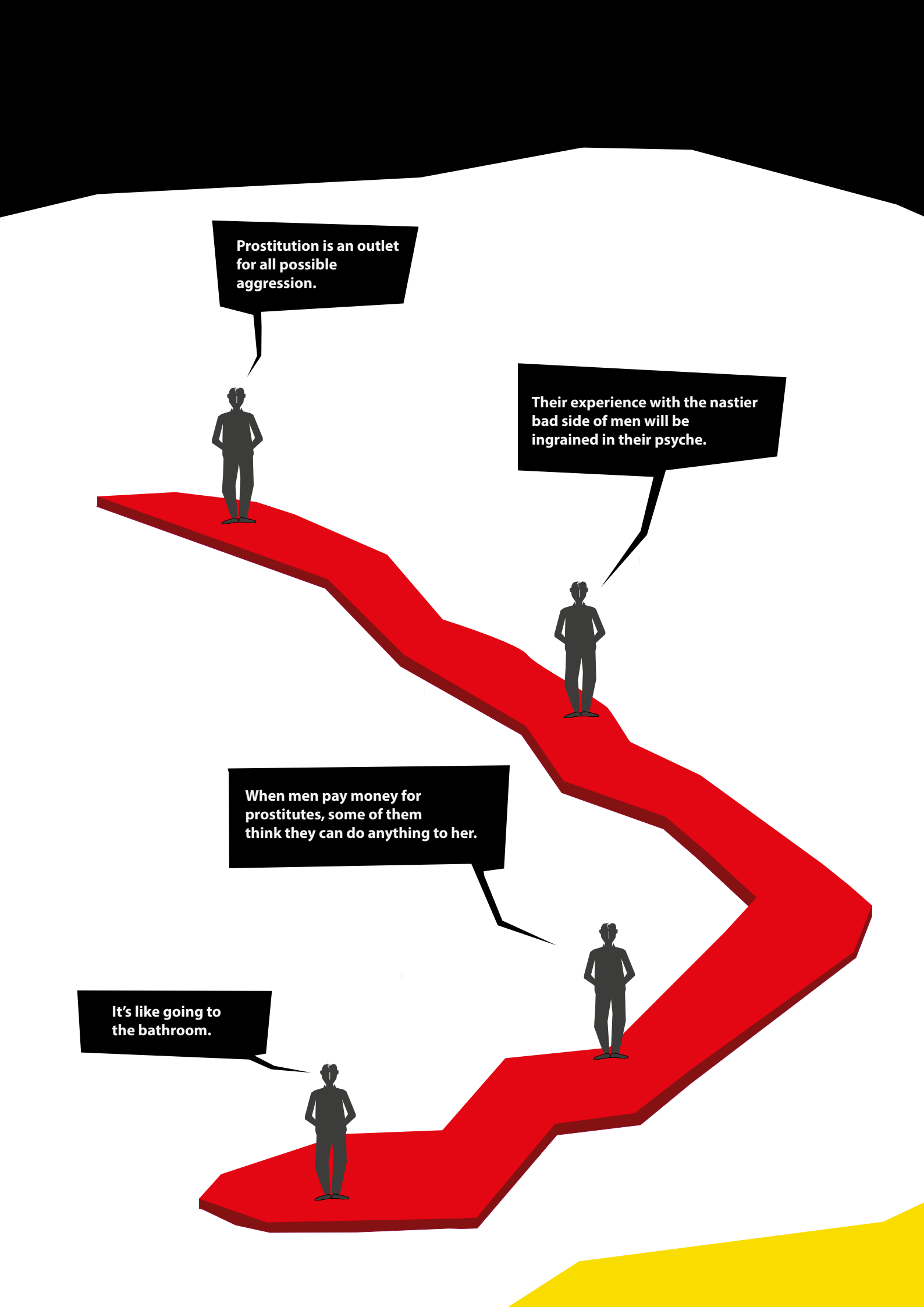
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Prostitution is an outlet
for all possible
aggression.

Their experience with the nastier
bad side of men will be
ingrained in their psyche.

When men pay money for
prostitutes, some of them
think they can do anything to her.

It's like going to
the bathroom.