Dangerous liaisons

A survey of the violence experienced by women working as prostitutes in Oslo

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background for the report
This report is based on the findings from three surveys the Pro Sentret has completed on violence against women in prostitution between 2007 and 2012.

In the spring of 2008, Pro Sentret published the report “Fair Game: A survey of the violence experienced by women working as prostitutes” (Bjørndahl and Norli 2008). The report from the autumn of 2007 presents some of the findings from a survey on the services available to prostitutes in Oslo, where there were 95 female respondents.

The report concluded that female sex workers in Oslo are frequently victimized, both privately and in prostitution. The violence they had experienced could be characterized as severe, often very severe. Further findings from the participants in the survey expressed the concern that the criminalizing of purchasing sex would lead to a higher level of violence.

After “Fair Game” had been published, Pro Sentret applied for funds from the Ministry of Justice and Public Security to dig deeper into some of the findings from the 2007/08 survey on violence that had not been published in “Fair Game”. Pro Sentret was awarded some of the funding it applied for. In this report we closely examine the answers given by the women in the 2007/08 survey with respect to “defence strategies” and what the women thought the services for sex workers and politicians could do to decrease violence perpetrated against women in prostitution.

On 1 January 2009, the purchasing of sexual services was criminalized in Norway. Many expressed a concern that this criminalization could increase the level of violence against those selling sexual services. Oslo local authority included in their Plan of Action against prostitution that Pro Sentret would conduct another survey on violence a few years after the criminalization was in effect to ascertain if women in prostitution had become more prone to violence. Pro Sentret completed the new survey in the spring of 2012 and the findings are presented here.

In the winter of 2010/11, approximately two years after purchasing sex was criminalized by law, Pro Sentret conducted interviews among employees at the help centres in Oslo about their experiences of the level of violence their clients had been subjected to after the purchasing of sex had been criminalized. This report also has a section discussing the feedback from the help centres involved in this survey.
1.2 Structure of the report
In addition to the introduction, this report has four chapters:
Chapter 2 presents the findings from the “survey of violence” in 2012. Chapter 3 presents the findings from surveying experiences from the help centres in Oslo after the Act that criminalized the purchasing of sex came into effect. This work was carried out during the winter of 2010/11. Chapter 4 presents some of the unpublished findings from the violence survey from 2007/08, focusing on defence strategies the women use to avoid being victimized, including what women think the welfare services provide and what politicians can do to shelter women in prostitution from being victims of violence. Chapter 5 provides some closing comments.

1.3 The term violence
There is no comprehensive definition as to what violence is (Bjørndahl and Norli 2008). Isdal (2000:36) defines violence as: “Violence is an act aimed at another person to harm, inflict pain, frighten or violate, in order to get the person to perform an act against their will or make them stop doing something they want to do”. Furthermore, he subdivides violence into five categories: physical violence, sexual violence, material violence, psychological violence and latent violence. By using this definition with these subcategories Isdal aims to broaden the understanding of violence so that it seen as more than just a physical act.

Hjemdal, Pape and Stefansen (2004:11) define violence as “non-legitimate intimidation of a person’s integrity”. Their argument for using this definition is that it takes into consideration both a subjective definition and external, normative assessments of the impermissible nature of violence.

This report highlights the experienced violence, threats and harassment as stated by the users of Pro Sentret. By using the above definitions of violence, both threats and harassment can be defined as violence. For that reason, the report will mostly use the word “violence” as an umbrella term to avoid repeating all three terms throughout the report.

The meaning and interpretation of the word “violence” will differ from person to person. Since the foundation of this report is interviews with welfare service providers and a survey among the users of Pro Sentret, we have chosen to let the participants in the different surveys define what they mean by violence.1

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1 More about this in Chapter 2 under research method.
1.4 Main findings of the report

- 59% of the participants in the 2012 survey say they have been the victims of violence in prostitution after the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services was introduced.
- The perpetrator is most often an unknown male client.
- Many of the women report being victims of severe violence over the last three years. Among the 123 participants in the survey, 25 say they have been raped/forced to perform sexual services not agreed upon, 24 say they have been threatened with a gun, 17 have been robbed/attempted robbed and 11 report murder attempts.
- The figures in the survey can only be interpreted as telling us that women selling sex in Oslo comprise a group that has been the victim of severe violence over the last three years. The high frequency of this severe violence in such a small group of people is rare in the city of Oslo.
- The premises of prostitution have changed for a large proportion of the women selling sex. The market is affected by increased judicialization, which means those selling sex are increasingly controlled by the authorities and thereby have a sensation of being further criminalized.
- The women do not talk much about their experiences of violence, and few seek help after being victimized.
- Harassment and discrimination of women in prostitution by society has increased.
- Some of the defence strategies women reported using in 2007/08 have been difficult to maintain due to major changes in the prostitution market. This is a result of the increased judicialization, reduction of the number of clients and changed premises for women selling sex.
2 Survey on violence, threats and harassment of women in prostitution in 2012

2.1 Background, research method and definitions

2.1.1 Background of the survey
The survey was conducted according to the mandate in the Oslo local authority’s Plan of Action against prostitution 2011-2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan of Action 3a: Survey of violence among women in prostitution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro Sentret’s survey from 2007/08 will be repeated two years after the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services came into effect. The purpose is to assess if women are more prone to violence after the Act came into effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline 01 June 2012.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above-mentioned Action Plan is part of “Section 3” entitled “Knowledge and competence about prostitution in Oslo and services to prostitutes”. The mandate is defined as to “be updated on the development of prostitution in Oslo and the situation for women and men in Oslo” (Oslo Local Authority 2010:17).

2.1.2 Choice of method
As the survey from 2007/08 was based on a questionnaire, it was a natural choice to choose the same method for the new survey.

2.1.3 Designing the survey
The questionnaire was designed almost identically to what was used in the 2007/08 survey on violence, but was somewhat shorter. The 2007 form had five parts: Personal information, general experiences with violence in prostitution, violence in prostitution during the last year, violence in their private lives and thoughts women in prostitution have about victimization and violence.

As we wanted to catalogue their experiences of violence after the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services came into effect, we found no reason to ask about other topics than their experiences of violence after the Act came into effect. For that reason the questionnaire only had two parts:

1. Personal information
2. Experiences of violence, threats and harassment of sex workers after the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services came into effect on 1 January 2009.

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2 The survey is attached at the end of the report.
2.1.4 Collecting the questionnaires
The surveys were filled in and collected from the end of January to the end of March 2012. Pro Sentret collected them at their own office and in the outreach services working with the Thai prostitution indoor market. Employees and an intern at Pro Sentret collected the questionnaires, while a social worker and a cultural mediator covered the Thai market.

In addition, Natthjemmet\(^3\), an emergency shelter service provided by the Church City Mission in Oslo collected questionnaires at their facilities. Everyone who completed the survey at Pro Sentret was given a complimentary gift, an inexpensive cosmetic product, for participating.

2.1.5 Participants in the survey
A total of 123 women participated; seven filled in the survey at Natthjemmet, while the remaining surveys were collected by Pro Sentret.

The respondents are from 16 countries: Thailand (50), Nigeria (24), Norway (21), Bulgaria (5), Romania (4), The Dominican Republic (4), Estonia (3), Ecuador (3) and Russia (2). In addition there was one respondent from each of these countries: Sweden, Poland, Morocco, France, Spain, Lithuania and Albania.

With respect to where sales of sex took place, 51% (63 persons) responded it took place indoors, 23.5% (29 persons) responded the streets and 19% responded they sold sex in both arenas. Eight persons did not answer the question about where they sold sex.

Everyone in the survey confirmed they had sold sexual services after the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services was introduced on 1 January 2009. A total of 81% (100 persons) responded they were working as prostitutes at the time of the survey, while 16% (20 persons) responded "no" to the question asking if they were selling sex. Three persons did not answer this question.

A total of 79% (97 persons) reported being addicted to drugs, 17% (21 persons) were not addicted, while five persons did not answer the question on addiction.

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

When comparing the range of the respondents in this survey with users of Pro Sentret in 2011, the number of users from the various nations does not correspond with the selection in this survey. In 2011, Pro Sentret had 1218 unique users, 41% from Nigeria, 18% from Norway, 17% from Thailand and 24% from other countries. In this survey with 123 respondents, a total of 41% were from Thailand, while 20% were from Nigeria and 17% from Norway. Twenty-two per cent came from other countries.

\(^3\) Natthjemmet is an emergency shelter for female drug addicts and prostitutes, run by the Church City Mission in Oslo.
The respondents from Norway and other countries reflect the user groups at Pro Sentret, while Thailand is represented in disproportionately large numbers and Nigeria is under-represented in this survey.

The country representations affect the average age when comparing to Pro Sentret’s user group. Thai users at Pro Sentret are frequently women in their 40-50s, while Nigerians are mainly between 20 and 30 years of age. This means the average age among respondents to this survey is higher than among users of Pro Sentret.

Keeping the discrepancy of age in mind is important when reading the report and interpreting the results. It is possible that the reports of violence would have been different with another representation of respondents.

2.1.6 Methodological challenges
Using a survey always carries the risk of the question being misunderstood. Respondents may interpret the questions differently, which may result in answers that are not quite what was intended. To avoid major misunderstandings, the report used questions with alternatives to reduce the chance that the respondents misunderstood what we wanted answered. This increases the risk that the respondents will not answer questions where their experiences are not reflected by the pre-chosen answers/alternatives. For that reason we chose to always have an open-ended option among the pre-chosen answers, called “other”. Nonetheless, there are no guaranties that there were no misunderstandings.

When conducting a survey there is always the risk that some respondents may over-report or under-report their experiences. As with the 2007/08 survey, we experienced different interpretations of the term violence from the participants. This means some may have answered the survey based on their own interpretation of what violence is, and not based on the listed alternatives. This may have led to under-reporting.

Another factor that may have contributed to under-reporting is when people may have suppressed or forgotten traumatic experiences. In the 2007/08 survey, we had some people answering “no experiences of violence” when we knew they had such experiences (Bjømdahl and Norli 2008). This was also an issue in this survey. As with the first survey, we chose not to remind people of any incidents that we were aware of. We did not want to lead their responses or remind them of incidents they had forgotten or wanted to forget.

When it comes to over-reporting, we experienced some reported experiences with violence that took place prior to 1 January 2009. All participants were asked if they had sold sexual services after the purchasing of sex was criminalized as of 1 January 2009. However, we experienced that some respondents who we were reasonably sure had quit prostitution answered “yes” to this question. It was difficult for us to deny these people the right to participate, as it was possible they had sold sexual services without our being aware of this. However, it is possible they had not sold sexual services since 1 January 2009, but wanted to participate so they could get the complementary gift. We cannot exclude the possibility that some people may have contributed to an over-reporting of violence, participated on false premises or responded “no” to being the victim of violence after 1 January 2009.
2.1.7 Analysing the findings

When presenting the findings, we chose to divide the population into two separate categories to discuss differences in their experiences. We present the results in groups according to nationalities and the arena they are working in. For the arena, we divided the participants into three categories\(^4\) according to where they sell sex:

- Indoor market
- Street market
- Both indoor and street market

The respondents are divided into four groups based on nationality:

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

The report contains a number of tables with the figures in percentages. In all tables referring to being a victim of violence the percentage will be calculated according to the 73 persons responding they have been the victim of violence, not the 123 participants in the survey. In other words, the tables will present figures from those who are victims of violence. This does not include Tables 1 and 2, which examine how many of the 123 participants have been the victim of violence.

When analysing violence, the figures from the 2012 survey will be compared to the 2007/08 survey.\(^6\) The figures differ in the sense that in the first survey we asked about experiences from the respondents’ entire prostitution career, while in the latest survey we asked about experiences from the last three years. However, comparing the figures can still indicate if changes have occurred with respect to being the victim of violence.

In the 2007/08 report, nationality groups were divided somewhat differently than in the 2012 report. In 2007/08, people from South America were included in the “category” Thailand, while the current report only has people from Thailand in that specific category.

In the 2007/08 report, one of the nationality groups was called “Eastern Europe” and consisted of people from Latvia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Romania, Russia, Lithuania, Albania and Poland. In the 2012 report, this is replaced by the category “other countries” and consists of people from Bulgaria, the Dominican Republic, Romania, Estonia, Ecuador, Russia, Sweden, Poland, Morocco, France, Spain, Albania and Lithuania. The current report has a category consisting of Norwegians only, while the first report had Norwegians and Danes grouped together.

\(^4\) There is also a category of five persons who did not state which arena they work in. Since there are so few persons in this category it will not be used when comparing different arena groups in tables, however, it will occasionally be referred to under the table.

\(^5\) These nationalities are combined in a group called “other countries” as there are so few people from each of these 13 countries.

\(^6\) Not every figure from 2012 can be compared to the 2007/08 report since some answers published in the 2012 report were not published in 2007/08.
2.1.8 The use of the term violence

We wanted to survey our users’ experience of violence, threats and harassment. People interpret these terms very differently. For that reason we chose to specify what we meant by violence, threats and harassment in the 2007/08 report. This was done by listing a range of specific actions (Bjørndahl and Norli 2008). We chose to do the same in this survey, using the same list of actions as the last time plus the addition of a few more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threatened/forced</th>
<th>Held down</th>
<th>Pushed</th>
<th>Locked up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punched</td>
<td>Pinched</td>
<td>Thrown out of car</td>
<td>Kicked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slapped</td>
<td>Hair pulled</td>
<td>Bitten</td>
<td>Scratched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burned</td>
<td>Strangled/choked</td>
<td>Raped</td>
<td>Spat on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbed/attempted robbed</td>
<td>Threatened with a weapon</td>
<td>Sexually assaulted</td>
<td>Called names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened/forced to have sex not agreed upon</td>
<td>Having objects thrown at them</td>
<td>Murder attempt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents could also list other forms of violence, threats and harassment they had suffered. This gave them the opportunity to include more acts when defining violence. Participants listed extortion, being shot, drugged, forced to kiss, shaved, tied up, harassed, not getting paid, coerced into having sex without a condom, and forced to have an abortion.

2.1.9 Ethical considerations

Pro Sentret regularly conducts different types of surveys among our users, both for internal use and for publishing purposes. In addition to this we receive weekly inquiries from students, researchers and journalists wishing to interview our users. The main focus of Pro Sentret is the users’ needs, not the rest of the world’s needs or our need to document the Norwegian prostitution market. For that reason we are restrictive when it comes to letting others conduct surveys, or interview our users. Meanwhile, it is important to our users to have their situation and changes in the prostitution market documented regularly. This can contribute to adjusting the social services to the reported changes in the prostitution market. Society and decision makers also need to be informed about the users’ situation. It is challenging to find the balance between documenting changes and the need to protect the users’ from being “questioned”. The Norwegian prostitution market has been through major changes over the last few years, both when it comes to the countries of origin of the sex workers and the criminalization of the purchasing of sexual services. This has led to many requests for information from the users. Some have indicated they get frequent requests to share their experiences and information without getting anything specific in return.

Before this survey was conducted we discussed how to show appreciation for the time the participants used to share their experiences with us. We therefore decided to give all participants a gift for taking part in the survey. Compensating the informants by giving money or gifts is a common practice when conducting market research, however, it has both ethical and methodological challenges. Since the survey was

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7 The methodological challenges due to giving a gift are discussed in 2.1.6
about a serious and sensitive topic, we decided to give just a small token of appreciation. We wanted them to share their experiences, we did not want to “trick” them into participating by offering a gift. For that reason we first asked them to participate, then we informed them about the gift after they had given their consent.

Conducting a survey about violence, threats and harassment means you need to ask about difficult and uncomfortable experiences. For that reason, it is important to find a balance between documenting experiences you want to catalogue, while protecting participants from re-living difficult incidents (Bjørndahl and Norli 2008:22). When carrying out the last survey on violence, we used questionnaires where respondents could tick responses to avoid giving long and detailed descriptions of isolated incidents. The 2012 survey had only close-ended answers to tick. We respected people declining to participate by not asking them again. We underscored there was no need to respond to questions they did not want to answer, and all respondents were give the offer to talk about difficult experiences after answering the survey. Time was set aside to talk with anyone who requested it. We were not left with the impression that anyone felt they could not ask for someone to talk to about their experiences because they were given a gift for participating, but of course we cannot rule out that someone found it difficult to ask for something more after having received a gift.

All in all, our experience of the survey we conducted with the provision of a small gift was positive. We received more answers than we expected. In our last survey, we had 95 responses over the course of three months, while we received 123 responses over the course of two months this time. The reasons for the increase in responses can be the fact that the questionnaire was considerably shorter this time compared to 2007/08 and that the participants received a gift. Several respondents expressed that it was important that we were putting this issue on the agenda, therefore they wanted to participate. Many appeared to appreciate receiving the gift as recognition for spending their time on something they did not have to do. Several pointed out that they would have answered the survey anyhow and the gift was only a positive supplement. We received very little negative feedback from the people participating in the survey. Among those who declined to participate, feedback was a little more negative. In particular, the Nigerian users felt that Pro Sentret could do nothing to protect them from violence, therefore, they did not want to share their experiences with us, or participate in this type of survey.
2.2 Experiences of violence after the introduction of the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services

2.2.1 How many have experienced violence after 1 January 2009?
Among all participants in the survey, 59% responded yes to being a victim of violence after the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services was introduced on 1 January 2009, while 41% responded no.

In the 2007/08 “experiences of violence” questionnaire, we asked how many had experienced violence in their career as prostitutes and how many had experienced violence during the last year. The responses were: 52% had experienced violence during their career as prostitutes.

The figures from 2007/08 cannot be directly compared to the 2012 survey since it asks about experiences of violence over the last three years, however, the trend is that more prostitutes respond that they have been a victim of violence in this survey than in the previous survey.

When examining experiences of violence according to the arena in which they sell sex, there are great variations in how many have experienced violence. Among those working in the indoor market, less than half (43%) have experienced violence, while 76% working the street, and a total of 83% working both arenas respond yes to having experienced violence after 1 January 2009. Among those not reporting which arena they were working in, five in eight people (63%) responded yes to the question.

These figures show a clear trend; the women selling sex on the streets are more frequently victimized than those working both the streets and indoor market, or indoor market alone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arena of prostitution</th>
<th>Experiences of violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indoors</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streets</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both streets and indoors</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Experiences of violence, according to arena.

Compared to the 2007/08 survey, there is an increase in all three arenas. In the most recent survey, 33% of those working indoors said they had experienced violence in their career as prostitutes. The figures were 58% for those working the streets and 68% of those working both arenas. Both surveys show the same trend, there is less violence for those working in the indoor arena.

Not only are there variations with respect to violence and where the women work, there are also great variations among the different nationality groups. Among the Nigerian participants, as many as 83% respond yes to being the victim of violence since 1 January 2009, while 40% Thai, 55% Norwegian and 75% of the remaining nationalities respond yes to the question. A possible explanation for the great variations between the different nationality groups can be explained by where they work. Sex workers from Thailand almost always work indoors, while Nigerians mainly work the streets. Another possible explanation for the great variations might be that
people of Thai origin frequently have a permanent residence permit in Norway. They are well established in the Norwegian prostitution market compared to the sex workers from Nigeria and the other countries. It might be that the people from Thailand and Norway have knowledge about the Norwegian market that enables them to avoid risky situations in prostitution and take other precautions with clients than those with less familiarity with the market. Those with rights in Norway typically will have fewer threats from a third party, and they might have other options than the Nigerians and the people placed in the category “other countries”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Experiences of violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other countries</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Experiences of violence after 1/1/09, according to nationality.

When comparing these figures to the figures from 2007/08, the distribution among the nationality groups has radically changed. In the previous survey, only 33% of the Nigerian participants responded yes to being victims of violence in their career as sex workers, while as many as 83% now respond that they have been victims of violence over the last three years. The Nigerian group has thus experienced a dramatic increase. Participants from Thailand have seen an increase from 21% in 2007/08 to 40% in the most recent survey and there has been a small increase from 67% to 75% among participants from other countries. The only group with a decline is the group consisting of Norwegians. In the 2007/08 survey, 72% reported being victims of violence in their career as sex workers, while 55% now reported that they had experiences of violence over the last three years.

2.2.2 Frequency of violence
When asked how many experiences of violence they have experienced since 1 January 2009, 47% report from one to three violent episodes. This translates into about half of the participants having few experiences of violence, while the remaining participants have experienced violence more frequently. A total of 22% report four to six episodes, while only four per cent report from seven to ten episodes and seven per cent report more than ten. A total of 16% report not recalling how many violent episodes they have had over the course of the last three years. It is reasonable to assume that this group might have a higher number of experiences of violence as they probably would have remembered only a few violent encounters.

The figures confirm that most participants do not experience violence on a daily basis. Violence is the exception, not the rule. This is the same trend as we saw in the last survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of incidents</th>
<th>Do not recall</th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>4-6</th>
<th>7-10</th>
<th>More than 10</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyone</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Number of incidents of violence since 1/1/09 among those with experiences of violence.
Compared to 2007/08, fewer respondents report one to three incidents (47%) and fewer report more than ten incidents (7%). In 2007/08, 54% reported one to three incidents while 14% experienced more than ten.

A total of 59% of those working the streets report one to three incidents, which means they are the ones reporting a high level of violence, the percentage for the indoor market is 41% and those working both arenas report 37%.

Those working both arenas report the most frequent experiences of violence with 37% having four to six experiences of violence, 5% reporting seven to ten, and 11% reporting more than ten.

A total of 26% of those working indoors and 18% working the streets report that they cannot recall how many experiences of violence they have had, something that indicates a higher frequency of violence in these groups than the table reflects.

Among those not answering where they sell sexual services, three persons report one to three incidents, 1 report four to six, and 1 reports having more than ten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arena</th>
<th>Do not recall</th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>4-6</th>
<th>7-10</th>
<th>More than 10</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Street</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoors</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both street and indoors</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Number of incidents of violence after 1/1/09, according to arenas.

When comparing the figures from the previous survey with the current one, fewer people working the indoor market report having fewer incidents of violence. In the 2007/08 survey, about 70% of the women working the indoor market reported one to three incidents, while only 41% gave the same response in the most recent survey. This indicates an increased frequency of incidents of violence for those who are victims of violence and working the indoor market after 1 January 2009.

Figures from both surveys are about the same for those working the streets and both arenas when it comes to having one to three experiences of violence, while the number is somewhat lower for those with more than ten incidents.

The fact that fewer people had more than ten incidents of violence during the last three years than in the survey “examining” their entire prostitution career is not surprising, as the question was not time restricted in the first survey.

When it comes to nationalities, 55% of Nigerians and 66.5% from “other countries” report most frequently having had one to three experiences of violence. These are the (two) groups where more people report experiences of violence, however, it appears these are also the groups where violence is the least recurring.

Many have experienced violence in these groups but have not experienced frequent violence. The frequency among the Norwegians is much higher. Only eight per cent
have one to three experiences, while 58% have four to six, 17% have more than ten, and 17% do not recall the number of experiences of violence.

Among respondents from Thailand, as many as 30% respond that they did not recall the number of incidents of violence during the last three years, while 40% respond one to three incidents. No one in this group states that they have more than ten incidents, but we must assume the frequency is somewhat higher in this group due to the high number of those who do not recall the number of incidents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Do not recall</th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>4-6</th>
<th>7-10</th>
<th>More than 10</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other countries</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Number of incidents of violence, according to nationality groups.

In the 2007/08 survey, the number of incidents of violence among different nationality groups was not published. For that reason we are unable to compare the figures with the previous survey.

2.2.3 Who is the perpetrator?

Eighty-six per cent of the survey respondents say the perpetrator was male, ten per cent say both male and female perpetrator while three per cent report a female perpetrator. The perpetrator was definitively most often male.

When it comes to the victims of violence from females, all nine respondents are foreign nationals, and six are from Nigeria.

In addition to a majority reporting a male perpetrator, as many as 67% report being victims of violence from a random client, while 22% report that the perpetrator was a random pass-by. In other words, most of the perpetrators are unknown males.

Among those responding “other”, the following were listed: drunks, pimp who is also a boyfriend, friend, father, not sure who it was and unknown drug addict.

We see some variations between the nationality groups. All report random clients as the most frequent perpetrator. Eighty per cent of the respondents from Thailand answer random client, few have ticked any of the other options. The respondents from the nationality group “other countries” have a greater variety when it comes to type of perpetrator in their responses. Among the Norwegians, as many as 83% say they were the victim of violence from a random client, 42% have experienced violence from an unknown person in a car, and 33% from a random pass-by. Respondents from Nigeria are the group with the most women who have been victims of violence from a random pass-by. Forty per cent of Nigerians have experienced violence from a random pass-by, which is almost twice the frequency compared to the population of the survey, where 22% responded random pass-by violence. A possible explanation might be that the Nigerian women move to other parts of public spaces when offering their sexual services, compared to other street
workers. They are also more visible due to their skin colour, and are often described in the public debate as unwanted, pushy and disturbing.

This might be a plausible explanation for the high frequency of violence from a random passer-by that these women experience when it comes to violence, threats and harassment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perpetrator</th>
<th>Everybody</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Nigeria</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
<th>Other countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Random client</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random passer-by</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger in a car</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular client</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug addict known to the woman</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boss/Pimp</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sex-worker</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Perpetrator, total population and nationalities.

When comparing these figures, they correspond with the figures from the 2007/08 survey, where 69% responded that they had been a victim of violence from a random client, and 22% responded being victimized by an unknown person and a random passer-by. Something that has changed from the first to the second survey is the number of respondents who have been a victim of violence from a stranger in a car. There has been a decrease from 27% to 11%. A possible explanation might be fewer perform the sexual service in cars after the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services came into effect. Sexual services might be performed elsewhere at a more discreet location, or fewer clients are visiting the streets in a car. It is also possible that fewer people are visiting the streets in a car to harass prostitutes due to the risk of being stopped by the police and being mistaken for a client.

There is also a decrease in violence from regular clients, from 20% to seven per cent, and from 14% to seven per cent from pimp/boss. We will not speculate as to why these figures have decreased, but it might be due to the fact that the 2007/08 survey asked the respondents about violence from their entire prostitution career, while the most recent survey asked about experiences of violence from the last three years.

The random client is the most frequent perpetrator in all three arenas. A total of 77% of street workers report violence from a random client, and 27% had experienced violence from a random passer-by. Most often the perpetrator on the street is an unknown person who approaches the women by foot and/or as clients. Among those working the indoor market, 67% respond that the perpetrator is a random client. Fifteen per cent did not answer who the perpetrator was in this group. This is also the group with the most reports of violence from a pimp (11%). Even though only a few report violence from a pimp, it would appear as if the women working in the indoor market are more exposed to this source of violence.
When examining the group selling sex both on the streets and the indoor market there is a greater diversity when it comes to who the perpetrator is, even though the trend points to unknown clients, a passer-by or someone in a car. This is the only group reporting violence from an unknown perpetrator in a car, at 42%. Why only this group experiences violence from “unknown in a car” is not clear, however, it is possible that they thought of unknown clients in cars when selecting this alternative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perpetrator</th>
<th>Streets</th>
<th>Indoors</th>
<th>Both street and indoors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Random client</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random passer-by</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown in car</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular client</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug addict known to the woman</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boss/pimp</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sex-worker</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Perpetrator and arena.
2.2.4 Where does the violence towards women take place?

The survey asked the participants in which country they experienced violence. Seventy per cent responded only in Norway, while 12% had experienced violence both in Norway and another country. Eight per cent did not answer the question. Ten per cent responded “only in another country”. When it came to which country that they had experienced violence in, in addition to Norway, five responded Italy, two Romania, two Belgium, two Spain, two Thailand, one Nigeria, one Singapore and one Germany. Many Nigerians selling sex in Norway have worked in Italy, so the number from Italy is not surprising. Twenty per cent of the Nigerian group report having experienced violence both in Norway and another country, while 15% report having experienced violence only in another country. This is the nationality group with the most reports of having experienced violence from another country than Norway.

Responses vary when the participants are asked what arena in which the violence took place. The four most common arenas are the street (36%), car (30%), own flat (29%) and the perpetrator’s flat (23%). Only one person responded that the violence took place in another arena than the alternatives in the survey. She responded that the violence took place at the client’s cabin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arena</th>
<th>Everybody</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Nigeria</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
<th>Other countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the streets</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own flat</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator’s flat</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working flat</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massage parlour</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Place where violence took place, total population and nationality groups.

With respect to nationality groups, responses are similar for the Norwegians and Nigerians, while the Thais stand out. The differences in responses have as much to do with the arena for selling sex as nationality. Fifty per cent of the Thais responded that the violence took place in their own flat, while the figures are significantly lower in responses from other groups. Thai respondents are the only group saying they have been a victim of violence at massage parlours (30%). This group operates mainly in the indoor market and the “natural” location for violence for this group is in their own flat and massage parlours. Other nationality groups have a greater proportion selling sexual services on the streets, and more often get into a car with the client or go home with him.

It therefore makes sense that more women report being the victim of violence at the client’s place, in a car or on the streets.

When examining the responses focusing on the arena, we see a correlation with the assumptions made above. In the indoor market, the majority responds that they have experienced violence in their own flat and in massage parlours, while those working the streets, or both streets and indoors, state that the streets, car and the perpetrator’s flat are the locations of violence.
The place where the violence took place was not published in the 2007/08 survey. For that reason, no comparable figures are available.

2.2.5 What type of violence are the women victims of?
The survey asked what type of violence the women had been a victim of during the last three years as sex workers. Twenty-three different types of violence were listed as alternatives. In addition, there was the category “other”, where the women could fill in other forms of violence they had been a victim of. Ten per cent ticked this option, and the types of violence they listed were extortion, being shot, drugged, forced to kiss, shaved, tied, bullied, not being paid, forced to have unprotected sex and forced to have an abortion.

Seven per cent did not answer the question on the type of violence they had been the victim of.

Table 10 show threats and harassment as the most frequently reported types of violence. The three most common types of violence among the respondents are unwanted touching of private parts (48%), name calling (48%) and threats/coercion (38%). Furthermore, many report having experienced severe violence. As many as 33% (24 people) report being the victim of violence that involved being threatened with a gun during the last three years, while 23% (17 people) have been robbed/attempted robbed and as many as 15% (11 people) have survived attempted murder.

We chose to ask about rape in two ways: raped and threatened/coerced to have sex not agreed upon. We know many women define rape differently: being forced to perform sexual acts that were not agreed upon with the client. Legally this is rape, but many women associate rape with assault and would not define coercion by a client as rape. This is clearly shown in Table 10. As many as 27% report being threatened/forced to have sex that was not agreed upon, while 15% respond that they have been raped. We looked at how many ticked both options, and interpreted
that as the women defining the two categories in the same way. Only six people did this, something that confirms our assumption that many women do not categorize actual rapes as rape. This means the frequency of rape among victims of violence is considerably higher than shown in Table 10. When combining the number of participants that ticked these two alternatives, and subtracting those who ticked both, we find that as many as 34% (25 people) of the victims of violence over the last three years have been raped/coerced to have sex that was not agreed upon.

The figures in Table 10 can only be interpreted as women selling sex in Oslo comprising a group where many have been victims of severe violence during the last three years. Such a high frequency of severe violence in such a small group is rare in Norway.

Table 10 shows there are variations among the different nationality groups when it comes to how many in a group are victims of violence, different forms of violence, and which forms of violence are the most frequent in each of the groups. Among the Norwegians, the three most common forms for violence are harassment: 75% have been called names, 67% have experienced unwanted touching of private parts and 58% have experienced coercion/threats. Many also report severe forms of violence: 50% have been threatened with a gun, 33% have survived attempted murder, 25% have been raped and 42% have been choked. It is difficult to give a comprehensive answer as to why this group has experienced this much severe violence. It might be related to the fact that many of the Norwegian women are addicted to drugs. Due to the ir addiction, some women might have gone with clients that women not addicted to drugs would have avoided because the need for money and drugs has been acute.

In the Nigerian group, we find that the three most frequent types of violence are harassment: 65% report being called names, 50% have experienced unwanted touching of private parts and 40% have been spat on. Among the Nigerians, a considerably higher number report two specific types of violence compared to the other groups. As many as 50% (34% of the sample) have been pushed, and 40% (19% of the sample) have been spat on. A possible explanation could be this group is frequently victim of violence from passers-by, (Chapter 2.2.3). As mentioned above, these women are often in public spaces where their presence is unwanted and inappropriate. It could be that passers-by might spit, push, touch and call these women names as a response to their unwanted presence and behaviour.

It is important to emphasize that this group has also been victim of severe forms of violence. Thirty per cent report being threatened with a gun, 35% say they have been thrown out of a car and 25% say they have been robbed/attempted robbed.

The three most commonly reported types of violence by respondents from Thailand are: unwanted touching of private parts (55%), threatened/coerced to have sex that was not agreed upon (45%) and threatened with a gun and called names (40%). This group has the highest frequency of people reporting being forced/coerced to have sex that was not agreed upon. While 27% of our population responds that they have been the victim of this type of violence, 45% respond to having experienced it. In addition, 20% of this group states that they have been raped.
The number of people in this group that has been subjected to sexualized violence is a matter of concern. A possible explanation might be that these women first sell massages, and then during/after the massage they agree to perform sexual services. Women might be vulnerable in such a situation. The client might dispute the agreement and force them to perform services beyond the agreed upon arrangement. Another explanation might be that women are often alone with the client in their own flat. We saw in Chapter 2.2.4 that as many as 50% of victims of violence in this group had experienced this in their own flat. When alone with a client, the women are obviously very vulnerable when it comes to being forced to do unwanted things without anyone finding out and without being able to ask for help. This group also has a high frequency of being robbed (30%) and threatened with guns (40%).

When looking at the figures from the category “other nationalities”, there are no specific types of violence that stand out as more frequent in the same way as they do in the other groups. This group has an even distribution of the different types of violence, and they differ from the Norwegians and Nigerians by not having a higher frequency of “harassment” than “severe violence”. The most frequent forms are (32%) threats/coercion, punched with fist, kicked, pulled hair and unwanted touching of private parts. It is not clear why this group stands out from the other groups with a more even distribution of types of violence. It might be that this group is more diverse and consists of many different nationalities that sell sex in different arenas and under different premises than the other more homogeneous groups.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Violence/Threats</th>
<th>Everybody</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Nigeria</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
<th>Other countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted touching of private parts</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Called names</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats/force</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushed</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened with gun</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulled hair</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened/coerced to have sex not agreed upon</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held down</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbed/attempted robbed</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choked</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slapped</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spat at</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punched with fist</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locked up</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted murder</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raped</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitten</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects thrown at them</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicked</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrown out of a car</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinched</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scratched</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burned</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Types of violence, threats and harassment that women in prostitution have experienced, distributed according to all who have been victim of violence and nationality groups.

Table 11 shows the distribution of different types of violence in the different arenas. Similar to how Table 10 displayed a variety in type of violence and how many had experienced it in the different nationality groups, there are also differences between the various arenas.

Among those selling sex on the streets, the three most frequently reported types of violence are different types of harassment: 59% report being called names, while 50% have experienced unwanted touching of private parts and 41% have been pushed. For the group selling sex in the indoor market, 44% have been victims of threats/coercion, while 37% report unwanted touching of private parts, being threatened/forced to have sex that was not agreed upon and being pushed.

With respect to those working both on the streets and indoors, 68% respond unwanted touching of private parts, 63% have been called names, and 47% have experienced threats/coercion.

The trend is clear, those working the streets and those working both the streets and indoors has a higher frequency of harassment than those only working indoors. There are considerably fewer reports from women working indoors who report being
called names, unwanted touching of private parts and being spat on than women working the streets.

When it comes to being threatened/forced to have sex that was not agreed upon and being robbed/attempted robbed, the number is considerably higher for those working indoors and in both arenas than for women working the streets. Simultaneously, we see those working the streets entirely or to some extent are victims of other forms of violence, such as being punched with a fist or slapped, being bitten and kicked. The only types of violence found with the same frequency in all arenas are being pushed and being threatened with a weapon.

Women on the streets are very vulnerable to threats and harassment from passers-by and the general public, while those in the indoor market are frequently alone with the perpetrator without the presence of anyone else and thereby more vulnerable to more severe forms of violence, such as being forced to have sex that was not agreed upon or robbery.

Women working both arenas are the ones who consistently report a relatively high frequency of almost all types of violence, while the figures for different types of violence differ to a much larger extent for those selling sex either on the streets or indoors. This can probably be explained by being vulnerable to different types of violence in the streets and indoor market, while those working both arenas are victims of both types of violence.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Streets</th>
<th>Indoors</th>
<th>Both streets and indoors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted touching of private parts</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Called names</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats/coercion</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushed</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened with a gun</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair pulled</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened/forced to have sex not agreed upon</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held down</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbed/attempted robbed</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choked</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slapped</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spat at</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punched with fist</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locked up</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder attempt</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raped</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitten</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects thrown at</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicked</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrown out of a car</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinched</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scratched</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnt</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Types of violence, threats and harassment women in prostitution have experienced in different arenas.

The survey also asked the participants if they had been the victim of more than one type of violence at the same time. Forty per cent responded yes and 45% no, while 15% did not respond. With respect to nationality, 50% of the Norwegians, 40% of the Nigerians, 40% of the Thais and 33% of the remaining nationalities responded yes. Distributed according to arena, 36% from the street market, 37% from the indoor market and 47% from both arenas responded yes.

Among those who were the victim of more than one type of violence at the same time, 38% responded that they were the victim of one to three types of violence simultaneously, while 17% responded four to six types and three per cent more than
ten types. Thirty-five per cent did not respond about how many incidents were involved.

Table 12 compares the occurrence of various forms of violence from the 2012 survey that asked about experiences of violence from the last three years with figures from the 2007/08 survey, which asked about experiences of violence from the entire prostitution career of the respondents.

The arrows under the percentages from the 2012 survey show an increase or decrease from 2007/08 to 2012. The figures have increased in 11 of the categories (unwanted touching of private parts, called names, threats/coercion, pushed, threatened with a gun, hair pulled, choked, bitten, kicked, scratched), while they have decreased in nine categories (threatened/forced to have sex that was not agreed upon, held down, robbed/attempted robbed, slapped, punched with fist, locked up, raped, thrown out of car, pinched). The figures are the same in the category “other”. “Murder attempt” and “thrown objects at” were not included in the 2007/08 questions, therefore, the figures from 2012 cannot be compared in these categories.

Even if this table can give an indication of some of the trends, the time perspectives inquired about in the two surveys were very different. The figures from 2007/08 represent experiences of violence from their entire prostitution career, which can be anything from one day to 50 years, while the figures from 2012 reflect experiences of violence as sex workers for a longer or shorter period of time since 1 January 2009, and what they have experienced after that date.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted touching of private parts</td>
<td>48% ↑</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>18% ↓</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Called names</td>
<td>48% ↑</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>18% ↓</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats/coercion</td>
<td>38% ↑</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushed</td>
<td>34% ↑</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>15% ↓</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened with a gun</td>
<td>33% ↑</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15% ↑</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair pulled</td>
<td>32% ↑</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened/forced to have sex not agreed upon</td>
<td>27% ↓</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>15% ↑</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held down</td>
<td>25% ↓</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>14% ↓</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbed/attempted robbed</td>
<td>23% ↓</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choked</td>
<td>19% ↑</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>4% ↓</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slapped</td>
<td>19% ↓</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>4% ↑</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spat at</td>
<td>19% ↑</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3% ↓</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Types of violence, threats and harassment women in prostitution have experienced during the last three years, from the 2012 survey, and which types of violence, threats and harassment women in prostitution have experienced during their career as prostitutes, from the 2007/08 survey.

8 Not asked in 2007/08.
9 Not asked in 2007/08.
2.2.6 Use of weapons

The survey asked if any objects/weapons had been used to injure the women when they were abused. Thirty-six per cent responded yes to this question, while 51% responded no. Fourteen per cent did not respond.

No alternative answers were listed; the respondents had to name the type of weapon/object which had been used to injure them. Fifty-two per cent responded knife, while 24% responded gun. Other types of weapons were baseball bat, broken bottle, stun gun, fire-hose, rock, plastic object, hammer and a pen. Fourteen per cent did not respond as to which type of weapon had been used.

The fact that almost 4 of 10 women who had experienced violence had been injured by a weapon reflects that this is widespread. This correlates with the high frequency of being threatened with a gun (33%) and robbed/attempted robbed (23%), as seen in Chapter 2.2.5.

It is important to note that the wording of the question was if they had been injured by a weapon, not if they had been threatened by one. This might indicate that several of the acts of violence reported in Chapter 2.2.5 could involve use of a weapon rather than threats with a weapon and robbery, such as rape, objects thrown at them and/or murder attempts.

With respect to nationality, Table 13 shows Nigerians are the nationality group reporting being injured by weapons most frequently, however, this is rather common in all groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Everyone</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Nigeria</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
<th>Other countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: Use of weapons against the respondents: all groups and nationalities.

Table 14 shows that more people working the streets report being the victim of violence where weapons are involved. Quite a few of those working indoors and streets and indoors have not responded to this question. We cannot be certain whether or not the streets are the arena where perpetrators use weapons the most.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Street</th>
<th>Indoors</th>
<th>Both street and indoors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: Use of weapon and arena.

The 2007/08 survey did not publish figures for weapons and for that reason we have not compared the two surveys on this point.
2.2.7 Effects of violence

Table 15 shows which physical and psychological reactions were reported by the women. Psychological problems are the most frequently reported problem, 63% report being scared, and 41% had anxiety/psychological problems. The violence affects the participants’ psychological wellbeing and condition. The survey does not indicate if the reactions to violence have short-term or long-term effects.

More women report having psychological reactions than physical reactions. This could be due to the fact that the most frequently reported types of violence are threats/harassment and not physical violence. Even if the figures are lower for physical reactions, a relatively high number report serious consequences. As many as 16% report violence involving death threats, while 25% reported visible injury, 23% reported short-term pain, 15% long-lasting pain and 12% responded “nothing”.

Ten per cent responded “other” for the consequences of violence. Among the answers were anger, problems sleeping, problems breathing, feeling humiliated, headaches and not being able to work due to the injuries.

The Norwegian group reports that they have more consequences in all categories with the exception of being “scared”, where they have reported the lowest figures. As many as 83% of the Norwegian respondents stated that they had experienced anxiety and psychological problems due to the violence they had experienced. This is considerably lower for other groups, 50% for the Thais, 35% for the Nigerians, and 29% for the remaining countries.

As many as 50% of the Norwegians report that the violence seriously threatened their life, while 15% of the Nigerians and 20% of the Thais gave the same response. No one from the category “other countries” responded that the violence had been seriously life threatening. The figures in Table 15 might indicate Norwegians are more affected, physically and psychologically, when it comes to being the victim of violence than other nationality groups. As seen in Chapter 2.2.5, many of the women had been the victim of severe violence in this group. The differences in reported violence from Norwegian and foreign national respondents might be cultural differences when it comes to how physical and psychological pain is defined. Pro Sentret has found that some foreign national women express physical and psychological problems differently than Norwegian women. It is possible some did not recognize their own expressions among the pre-chosen answers in the survey.
Table 15: Types of consequences women in prostitution had due to the experience of violence, distributed according to nationality groups.

Table 16 shows distribution among different arenas. More women report psychological problems than physical problems in all the arenas. Those selling sex in both arenas are the ones with the highest reported number of consequences in all categories, with the exception of "scared". Many report long-term effects, such as anxiety/psychological problems (63%), serious death threats (37%), visible physical injury (32%) and prolonged pain (26%).

Among those working the streets, being scared is the most frequently reported "consequence". Seventy-seven per cent in this group report being scared, while 36% suffered from anxiety/psychological problems and 32% had visible injuries. This is also the group with the most responses saying violence did not lead to any consequences (18%) and the least reports about serious threats to life.

In the indoor market 56% report being scared and 44% had anxiety/psychological problems as a consequence of being victimized. There are fewer reports about visible injuries (15%), short-term pain (19%) and prolonged pain (7%) compared to the other arenas. Nineteen per cent did not answer this question, which might "conceal" some of the consequences that otherwise would have been reported.

Compared to the 2007/08 survey, the number of sex workers reporting being scared is about the same, while the number of women reporting anxiety/psychological
problems has decreased by about ten per cent from 2007/08 to 2012. Regarding visible damage, the number has decreased from one third to one quarter of the sample.

When examining the arenas, we find the same trend in both surveys. Fewer from the indoor market report that they have had consequences from violence in some categories than those working in other arenas. Nonetheless, we find that fewer women report “violence leads to no consequences” than in 2007/08 (33%). In other words, more women working in the indoor market are now experiencing violence that leads to consequences.

2.2.8 Are women receiving help after being victimized?
Table 17 shows who helped the participants in the survey after they had been the victim of violence. Thirty-eight say they received help from a friend. As many as 21% say they did not receive help from anyone. Only seven per cent say they did not need help.

Seeing how few received help from the public services or welfare service providers is alarming. When it comes to receiving help from the public services, only 16% reported receiving assistance from the police, ten per cent from a hospital and three per cent from an emergency ward. The figures are also low in terms of receiving help from one of the services for sex workers, 15% received help from Pro Sentret, five per cent from Natthjemmet, and three per cent from Nadheim. (Nadheim, run by the Church City Mission in Oslo, is a place where Norwegian and foreign national women who have worked as prostitutes can meet.)

Ten per cent of the participants ticked the category “other”. The most frequent answer here was unknown passer-by. Some answered: friend of perpetrator, therapist, God and Caritas in Italy.

One person reported receiving help from the police, but the police then made sure she was evicted from the flat where she sold sex after she had contacted them for help.

When looking at the different nationality groups, 45% of Thai respondents, 50% of Nigerians, and 42% of Norwegians say they received most of the help from friends, while 24% from the category “remaining countries” received help from friends. In other words, only half as many received help from friends in the category “remaining countries” compared to other nationalities.

Among those replying no one helped them after experiencing violence, 42% were Norwegian and 29% were from “remaining countries”. The figures are considerably lower among the respondents from Nigeria (15%) and Thailand (10%).

With the exception of the Norwegians, where 33% received help from Natthjemmet and 25% from Pro Sentret, relatively few have received help from any of the services for sex workers. There are also distinct differences between the different nationality groups when it comes to receiving help from the police. Thirty-three per cent of the Norwegian and 25% of the Nigerian women have received help from the police, while
only five per cent from Thailand and ten per cent from the remaining countries were helped by the police.

Why so few from Thailand and “remaining countries” contact the police is a result of “Operation Homeless” over the last few years. Under this operation, women selling sex have their leases cancelled when prostitution is discovered in the flats they rent. For that reason many hesitate to contact the police when they have been victimized.10

Fifteen per cent of Thai respondents and ten per cent from remaining countries responded that they did not need help, while no one from Nigeria or Norway responded that they did not need help.

As many as 30% of Thai respondents did not answer to the question, but more or less everyone in the other nationality groups did. The table does not give a comprehensive picture of who helped the Thai respondents compared to the other groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Everybody</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Nigeria</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
<th>Remaining countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Sentret</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not need help</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natthjemmet</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis centre - krisesenter</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency ward</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadheim</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17: Who helped the women after being victimized, distributed according to everyone being victimized and nationality groups.

Friends are the ones who are most asked to assist, regardless of arena in which the women are selling sex. Only seven per cent of those working indoors state that they did not receive help, while the figure is 27% for those working the streets, and 37% for those working in both arenas. This correlates with 15% from the indoor market responding that they did not need help, while few from the other arenas responded the same. However, 22% of those working the indoor market did not answer who helped them after being victimized, which could mean the situation is not reflected accurately in the table.

10 More about Operation Homeless and its consequences can be found in Pro Sentret’s annual report for 2008-2011, and Chapter 3 of this report.
There are distinct differences when it comes to the help women from the different arenas received from the public/volunteer services. The highest frequency of receiving help from the police is found among those working both the streets and indoors (21%), while those from the indoor market report the highest frequency of receiving help from Pro Sentret (22%).

Compared to the other arenas, those working both the street and indoors have the highest frequency of receiving help from Nathjémmet (21%), clients (11%) and partner (16%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Street</th>
<th>Indoors</th>
<th>Both street and indoors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Sentret</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not need help</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathjémmet</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency centre</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency ward</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadheim</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18: Who helped the women after they were victimized, distributed according to arena.

The figures are discouraging when comparing the 2012 survey to the 2007/08 survey with respect to how many received help from various sources. Unfortunately the figures have fallen.

The figures have dropped in eleven of the fifteen categories (friends, police, Pro Sentret, other, Nathjémmet, emergency centre, did not need help, emergency ward, Nadheim, partner and family). The figures for “hospital” are identical. The number of respondents who did not answer was not provided in the last survey and cannot be compared. There has been a one per cent increase in receiving help from clients. When examining the figure for “did not get any help”, there has unfortunately been a slight increase from 18% in 2007/08 to 21% in 2012, while the number “did not need help” has decreased from 12% in 2007/08 to 7% in 2012.

When examining help received from the police, emergency ward, Pro Sentret and Nadheim, the number is just about halved from the 2012 survey to the 2007/08 survey. The figures indicate that fewer receive help after the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services came into effect in 2009. The figures cannot be directly compared as the 2007/08 survey asked who had assisted them during their entire career as prostitutes, while the 2012 survey asked about the last three years.
The fact nonetheless remains, few women from the survey receive help after being a victim of severe violence. Whether this is due to the fact that few know where to turn for help, or if they put little to no trust in the service providers, is not clear. The figures are nevertheless discouraging.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Everybody 2012</th>
<th>Everybody 2007/08</th>
<th>Everybody 2012</th>
<th>Everybody 2007/08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
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<td>45%</td>
<td>5% ↑</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one</td>
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<td>18%</td>
<td>5% ↓</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
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<td>27%</td>
<td>4% ↓</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Sentret</td>
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<td>33%</td>
<td>3% ↓</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
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<td>10%</td>
<td>3% ↓</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>No response</td>
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<td>1% ↓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not need help</td>
<td>7% ↓</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19: Who helped the women after being victimized in the 2007/08 and 2012 surveys. Arrows indicate if the figure has risen or dropped.

11 Not stated in the last survey and therefore cannot be compared.
2.3 Main findings

- A total of 59% of the participants in the survey answer that they have been a victim of violence in prostitution after the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services came into effect.
- More report experiencing violence from among those working the streets and those working both the streets and indoors than those working indoors only.
- Among the different nationalities, Nigerians have the highest reported frequency of violence (83%), while the lowest frequency is among Thai workers (43%).
- About half report one to three experiences of violence, only seven per cent report more than ten.
- The perpetrator is most often an unknown, male client. Almost 70% of those being victimized report that the perpetrator was a random client. A total of 97% of the women in prostitution have been victims of violence from men.
- The most frequent places women experience violence is in the streets, a car, own flat and perpetrator’s flat.
- Many women report being a victim of severe violence during the last three years. Among the 123 participants in the survey, 25 state that they have been raped/forced to have sex that was not agreed upon, 24 have been threatened with gun, 17 have been robbed/attempted robbed and 11 report a murder attempt.
- The figures in the survey lead to only one interpretation: many of the women selling sex in Oslo have frequently been victims of severe violence during the last three years. Such a high frequency of violence is rare in Oslo for such a small group.
- Four of ten of the victims of violence have experienced multiple types of violence at the same time.
- Slightly less than four in ten of those who have been victimized report use of a weapon/objects used to harm them at the time they were violated.
- Four in ten report having anxiety/psychological problems after being violated.
- Few ask for help after being violated.
- Considerably fewer report receiving help from police and/or services for sex workers in 2012 than in 2007/08.

3.1 Background for the surveying

When Pro Sentret conducted the survey on experiences of violence among women in prostitution in 2007/08, it was decided that the purchasing of sexual services would be criminalized in Norway. Many feared that criminalizing prostitution would make female sex workers more vulnerable to violence. Bearing this in mind, we asked everyone participating in the survey the following question: “Do you think the risk of violence will change for women in prostitution when the purchasing of sex becomes a crime?”

A total of 74% of the respondents answered they thought the risk level would change. Of those, 90% thought they would be more at risk after criminalization. The women argued that prostitution would be more hidden, the market would increasingly be organized by criminal groups with pimps and human traffickers, police would lose an overview of the situation, women would not dare to report violence, the public services would be undermined, “good” clients would disappear and “bad” ones would remain.

Seven per cent of those answering that the risk level would change thought there would be less violence practised on women in prostitution when the purchasing of sex became a crime, however, few elaborated on their answer. One wrote she believed more men would refrain from purchasing sex due to the fear of being prosecuted, while another answered that women would be less victimized from traffickers, as they would lose the control they previously had on the streets.

Among the women in the survey, 12% answered that they did not think the risk of violence would change after criminalization. They argued prostitution and violence would exist regardless of the laws (Bjørndahl and Norli 2008: 45–47).

Since both women in prostitution and others were concerned that criminalization would lead to increased vulnerability to violence, Pro Sentret decided to survey the experiences gained by various public services and NGOs in Oslo with respect to the risk of violence and the safety and vulnerability of women in prostitution after the criminalization of the purchasing of sexual services.

From October 2010 to March 2011, we conducted a series of interviews with various agencies that could come into contact with women selling sexual services in Oslo so we could learn about their experiences. We worked with the criminology student Marie Steen at the University of Oslo who intended to write a Bachelor’s degree thesis on the consequences of the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services.¹²

¹² The student participated in some of the interviews and completed her thesis: “Prostitution – a changing market. The introduction of the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services and its consequences,” spring 2011.
3.2 Who did we talk to?
We contacted the various services for sex workers in Oslo, Emergency Medical Care and the STOP group at the Oslo police authority, attorney Trine Rjukan and a number of agencies working with female substance abusers.

The welfare service providers for female substance abusers were valuable informants since Pro Sentret has had fewer users from this group over the last few years. We meet few of these women in our outreach work in the street prostitution area in Oslo, which is why our knowledge of this segment of the market is not as comprehensive as it was ten years ago.

Not all the welfare service providers responded to our inquiry. We conducted 15 interviews with different services; the STOP group at the Oslo police authority, Natthjemmet, Nadheim, PION – The Prostitutes Interest Organisation in Norway, attorney Trine Rjukan, The Salvation Army, The Emergency Medical Care in Oslo, The Needle Exchange at the Agency for Welfare in Oslo, some of their shelters for women, and some other agencies dealing with women in prostitution.

3.3 Which types of experience were reported by the welfare services?
Below we provide a summary of the trends reported by the informants, and Pro Sentret’s own experiences. The various welfare services differ with respect to type of contact and type of services provided, which is why they have different experiences.

Which welfare service reported which trend is not explained, but this will be clear in the report from the police as they have a different approach than the welfare services.

It is important that the answers are read as trends reported at the time of the surveying (October 2010 to November 2011) and not as common opinion on what the prostitution market appears to be like.

Not all trends can be traced to the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services, as some can also be related to other major changes in the prostitution market, such as police enforcement of statutory authority, society’s approach to prostitution and the composition of the group of sex workers in the prostitution market.

3.3.1 Fewer customers, buyer’s market
One of the reported trends from both the welfare services and the police is a change in the customer base. The number of customers in the streets and the indoor market has decreased slightly. When examining supply and demand, the trend is a greater supply than demand. This means it is a buyer’s market. This in turn changes the power structure between those selling sex, and those purchasing sex. There is also greater competition between sellers and the remaining customers. This means the customers can to a greater extent set the agenda for which sexual services they want to buy, price, place for performing the sex act and use of condom. This results in greater vulnerability for sex workers.

Another trend is the change of customer base with fewer “good” clients than before. “Good” clients are described as men approaching women to buy sexual services, and
who then pay the agreed price and stick to the agreement. These are often “average men”. A common assumption is that fewer men from this category will purchase sexual services now that prostitution has been criminalized since this type of customer is law-abiding. They will refrain from purchasing sex due to the new Act. These customers are described as the easiest to serve.

There is no reduction in the number of “bad” clients reported by the police or welfare services. The designation “bad” clients is used about clients who do not stick to the agreement, try to negotiate the price, do not want to use a condom, have a lack of respect for the women by being derogatory, are violent/threatening, mentally unstable/sick or approach women not only buy sexual services but because they want to abuse them.

The consequence of a reduction of clients, and fewer “good” clients, while the number of “bad” clients remains the same, is that the “bad” clients have become a greater part of the customer base than before. Sex workers have become more dependent on “bad” clients even though they have not increased in number, as the earnings base from “good” clients has decreased.

3.3.2 Increased judicialization and (more) control
There is a consensus among the police and various welfare service providers that there has been an increase in judicialization. This means there is a greater focus on the different laws to regulate and reduce the prostitution market.

The purchasing of sexual services has gone from not being regulated in the penal code to being criminalized. This is a clear sign of increased judicialization in this field. In addition to criminalizing the clients, the use of other penal codes has changed as well; the police have stepped up the control of foreign national sex workers’ identity papers and legal residence. The police have at times been very active in enforcing penal codes that involve disturbing the peace, lewd behaviour in public spaces and solicitation to take part in criminal behaviour. The police have simultaneously focused on finding human traffickers and prosecuting the people who profit from someone else selling sexual services.

With respect to the indoor market, the police control the massage parlours by focusing on their complying with the regulations for running a business. Over a period of five to six years, the police conducted “Operation Homeless” in the indoor market. “Operation Homeless” means the police inform the owner of a flat/premises/hotel where prostitution activities have been discovered that they will be charged with pimping unless the lease/rental agreement is terminated.

“Operation Homeless” resulted in many sex workers being evicted from their premises/flat/hotel rooms where sex was sold. In some cases the landlord immediately evicted them and they lost their deposit. Some had to close their massage parlour permanently or for a period of time as a result of increased inspection of commercial premises.

Another consequence of “Operation Homeless” is increased difficulties for sex workers in the rental market – both in terms of renting a flat to live in and running a massage parlour. The welfare services for sex workers report that according to the women, it has at times been difficult to find a place from which they can run a
massage parlour as landlords do not want to rent flats/premises to people from nationality groups associated with prostitution. This in turn means some women need help from a Norwegian to rent the premises/flat in their name, and the women then pay rent to this third person. These “helpers” will in some cases demand some money under the table for having the flat/premises in their name, which in turn can lead to higher rent for the women.

Consequences of the increased judicialization are considerably more control of those selling sex, both directly and indirectly. Sex workers are increasingly questioned and given status as witnesses in cases where the police charge traffickers and clients. There is also more monitoring of prostitution by the police to uncover criminal behaviour.

The increased control of foreign nationals has led to more policing in parts of the foreign national prostitution market and more are being deported from Norway. Another effect of the use of various other regulations is that more sex workers are fined and expelled from central parts of the city for various periods of time.

The increased control of the market has led more sex workers to feel they have been criminalized even though the laws have not been changed for the people selling sexual services. This is reported both by the police and welfare services.

Several of the welfare services report women do not perceive the police as an ally they can turn to when they are the victim of a crime, as they fear being controlled for other conditions/matters.

The police claim they have received more inquiries regarding criminal offences. This applies especially to Baltic and Russian women working the indoor market.
3.3.3 Changed premises for the seller – prostitution is more individualized and vulnerability has increased

The premises for selling sex have changed considerably over the last few years. There are many reasons for this.

Welfare service providers report that the increase in judicialization has dramatically affected how many of the women organize their work. The changes depend on which control mechanisms the police use in the arena the women are working in, their residential status in Norway and where they are selling sex.

One of the frequently reported trends is that prostitution has become more individualized for some of the women. Fear of being discovered by the police has led several of those working in massage parlours to quit selling sex in such establishments. Instead they agree to sell sex when giving a massage at the parlour and then meet the client later on in their own flat. This means the service is performed where the seller and buyer are alone, which increases the level of vulnerability.

The general view among welfare service providers is that over the last ten years women addicted to drugs have “disappeared” from the streets. This is partly because of competition from foreign national women. Furthermore, it is more difficult to obtain clients off the streets after the purchasing of sex was criminalized. Another explanation why fewer drug addicts sell sex on the streets is that many of them have been given medical assistance and help. They are no longer as dependent on selling sex to finance their drug addiction as they once were. Many of the women who are drug addicts have changed their method of contacting clients. Most of the welfare services have seen women establish a more long-term relationship to the men, and they are referred to as “friends”, “boyfriends”, “uncles”, or acquaintances. These are men they stay in touch with over the phone and men they stay with for longer periods of time, which may be hours, days or weeks. They have sex with these men in exchange for the men supplying them with drugs, money or other necessities. Many of the welfare service providers say they find these women very vulnerable when they are in such a relationship as they become very dependent on the few clients they have. It becomes very difficult to exclude clients when conflicts/problems arise as their options are limited. It is also harder for the women to define what they are willing to do sexually, or not do, compared to sporadic clients. The agreement and negotiation of sexual services becomes more blurry with regular clients. Many of the women are also very loyal to these clients, as they know them well, and there is a higher threshold to stop seeing them and/or report violence or humiliation.

Another consequence of the increased individualization in prostitution is the decline in the feeling of community amongst women selling sex in some of the arenas. Prostitution no longer means selling sex from the same corner/flat/parlour with others, but has now become an isolated and personal project. When meeting places (including using low threshold services for sex workers) disappear, the safety that comes from knowing others are looking out for you, including the openness about prostitution and sharing experiences, disappears. This increases the vulnerability in relation to clients, but the lack of community and lack of openness also lead to prostitution becoming a taboo topic so that few talk about it, and those who are open about it are subject to even more stigmatization. A smaller number of drug addicts
openly talk about selling sex, and many are condescending in how they refer to those selling sex.

The police agree about the trend towards an individualization of prostitution. They also agree that the disruption and break-up of these arenas and environments is caused by police actions, which makes it harder for several parties to organize. However, the police are of the opinion this makes women less vulnerable to traffickers as it is more difficult for traffickers to organize prostitution. Nevertheless, the police are of the opinion that women are more vulnerable in relation to other parties, like clients, because women are more often alone with them.

Welfare service providers report that in street prostitution the time pressure to make an arrangement with a client has increased considerably after the criminalization of the purchasing of sex. Clients are more stressed because they fear the police will discover them, which means contact made on the streets must be quicker and you must get away from the area quickly. This is very challenging for many of the women as it becomes more difficult to make a deal with a client when it comes to agreeing on a price, sexual services, local for the sex and use of condoms before they have to get away from the area with the client. Agreements must be made after getting to a “safer” place for the client, like a hotel room, a car or at one of the parties’ flats. This increases the vulnerability level for the women as they often are alone with the client when the final agreement is made, because conflict can more easily arise about what has been agreed upon when getting to the place where the sale/purchase of sex will take place and because the women do not get enough time to “judge” the client.

Since the customer base has been somewhat reduced in parts of the prostitution market, several of the welfare services report that women have had to lower their client standards. Many women have had clear demands about which clients they serve; examples of selection criteria are nationality, use of drugs, mental health/client appearance. Women also had other standards that were clearly defined; which sexual service they sold/did not sell, where sales took place, number of clients they take on at the same time, price and use of condoms. Several of the welfare service providers are of the opinion women have had to lower their original demands to acquire clients and make the amount of money they need. It is difficult for the welfare service providers to analyse if this has led to increased violence and increased levels of sexually transferred diseases. However, there appears to be an agreement among them that women feel more vulnerable, more at risk and are in less control over the relation to the client now than before because they have had to lower their standards.

Several welfare service providers report women’s relations to clients are now characterized by having to “protect” the clients from the police to help them avoid being fined by the police. This means the clients that used to be a “business partner” have become an ally, while the police that used to be an ally, from whom women could get assistance/protection, are now a force the clients need to be protected from. Several welfare service providers feel these relations and role changes are stressful for the women.
3.3.4 Limited transparency about violence
Many of the welfare service providers report there is little talk about women’s experiences of violence. This can be explained in part by the fact that prostitution has become more individualized and in part due to the fact that some prostitution arenas have had a disruption/break-up in the “community” of sex workers. This has led to less openness about prostitution and the sex workers’ experiences in general.

Several welfare service providers say women at times mention experiences of violence in passing and after the fact, but they seldom approach the services directly after being victimized. The welfare services for sex workers now find that women mainly ask for help after being victims of severe violence or life-threatening violence, but few ask for help after less serious incidents.

Pro Sentret has seen a significant decrease in the number of women posting warning notes to other women about violent clients on the “alert bulletin board”. Many women used to post monthly warnings, but from 1 January 2011 to 1 June 2012 only six warnings have been posted.

When it comes to incidents reported to the police and help from the emergency ward, most of the welfare service providers say women rarely seek help from these organizations. This is frequently due to the women wanting to put the incident behind them. It can also be due to a lack of trust. Few women working the indoor market contact the police about violence at the establishment/parlour or flat where they work as they fear the effects of “Operation Homeless”. Attorney Trine Rjukan has seen that most of the women in prostitution that report violence have rights and are legal residents of Norway.

3.3.5 Increased harassment from the general public
Several of the welfare services and especially services for sex workers report a change in attitude about prostitutes on the part of the general public. This trend can be traced back to 2006/07 when Nigerian women began selling sex on the Norwegian streets. The arena was new, highly visible and in public spaces. The discussion was often centred around the view that these women had inappropriate and immoral behaviour. Women in prostitution became more visible and were increasingly described as disruptive and unwanted, rather than the general public seeing them as people facing difficulties. This focus was also found in the debate leading up to the criminalizing of the purchasing of sex.

The welfare services report the debate about prostitution prior to and after the Act was changed has greatly influenced how the average person viewed women selling sex, meaning more women have experienced an increase in harassment from strangers in public spaces.

In recent years the services for sex workers have regularly received reports about people frequenting the streets in Oslo to harass these women. There have been reports of name calling, objects being thrown at them and impolite behaviour, especially after unfavourable media reports involving these women.
In addition to changes in how women in prostitution are described in the public debate, there is also a tendency to point to a greater proportion of the population perceiving sex workers as criminals, even though they have not been criminalized.

In recent years the services for sex workers have seen an increase in the discrimination of women in prostitution in the housing market. This refers to homes, commercial spaces and hotel rooms. Women report about difficulties renting a hotel room or flats/commercial spaces because their ethnicity is associated with prostitution. There have also been reports about hotels and short-term rental flats and suite hotels blacklisting women in prostitution and putting them in black books, which enables these establishments to ban them from staying at their hotels.

The Church City Mission's service for sex workers, called Albertine, contacted the Data Protection Authority in 2010. A number of women contacted Albertine after being refused rooms in hotels because they were blacklisted. They wanted an assessment of the legality of this practice. The Data Protection Authority ruled this was in contravention of Norwegian law. Nonetheless, the welfare services for sex workers regularly receive reports from women that they are being rejected as guests at hotels due to the suspicion that they are selling sexual services, without women bringing clients to the hotel or planning on doing so.

Some women inform the welfare services that they have been denied access to bars and clubs in Oslo because they are suspected of and associated with prostitution; the bars and clubs do not want those kinds of people on their premises. Shortly after the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services came into effect, the police contacted establishments such as bars and clubs asking them to be on the lookout for the sale of sexual services. The police feared prostitution would relocate to those types of businesses. This might have contributed to more women being denied access when going out.

3.3.6 Taking advantage of women's vulnerability
Several of the welfare services have seen women victimized by violence, crime or exploitation/blackmail by people who take advantage of their very difficult situation. The market is under pressure, prostitution has become more individualized and the enforcement of various laws and regulations has been stepped up.

This can be exemplified by clients being able to pressure women to do things they do not want to do because they desperately need the money. This includes giving into pressure to not use protection, relocating to unsafe locations to perform the sexual service, accepting a lower price and performing sexual services they do not want to do. Clients being abusive have in some cases threatened to contact the authorities to report violation of immigration laws or prostitution at massage parlours if women report the violence.

Criminal groups have visited flats and massage parlours impersonating the police to gain access to the premises. When they gain entrance, they rob, rape and abuse the women. These gangs calculate that the women are obligated to let the police in, and they will easily gain access, while they know few women will contact the police after their “visit”, as women fear they will be victims of “Operation Homeless”.

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3.4 Main findings
The reported changes cannot only be seen as the result of the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services. The prostitution market has undergone radical changes during the last few years, for example which countries women selling sex come from, the police enforcing a new set of laws and regulations, and a changed attitude on prostitution in our society.

Pro Sentret's survey reported the following changes in the Norwegian prostitution market in recent years:

- Prostitution is a buyer's market
- The client base changed when the “good” clients disappeared
- The market is undergoing increasing judicialization, meaning sex workers are being more controlled by the authorities and the women have a greater sense of being (increasingly) criminalized
- The premises for selling sex have changed for a large proportion of the women selling sexual services
- Prostitution has become more individualized and the sense of “community” is being lost
- Several welfare services express a concern that sex workers are more vulnerable in their relation to clients
- Women do not talk much about their experiences of violence and few seek help after being victimized
- Harassment and discrimination by society at large of women in prostitution has increased
- Some people/criminals are aware that women in prostitution are selling sexual services under a new set of parameters and are exploiting the sex workers’ vulnerability
4 Findings from the 2007/08 survey

4.1 Funding from the Ministry of Justice and Public Security
After the publication of “Fair Game”, Pro Sentret applied to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security for funding so they could examine more closely some of the findings from the 2007/08 “Experiences regarding violence” questionnaire that had not been published in “Fair Game”. Pro Sentret was granted some of the funding applied for.

4.2 Which results have been examined?
A summary is presented of the responses given by the women participating in the survey as to which defence strategies women use to protect themselves against violence, which measures Pro Sentret could initiate to better protect women from violence, what politicians and other welfare service providers could do to increase safety for women in prostitution and what women could do to better protect themselves.

4.3 Which defence strategies do women use?
A total of 84% of the respondents answered the question that asked what they did to protect themselves from violence/threats and harassment.

Answers reflect a range of defence strategies, however, many of the women use the same strategies. We identified five main categories. Some of the strategies coincide, and could be used simultaneously, while others were somewhat contradictory. This shows there is no easy solution for women in prostitution to defend themselves. For some it was important to follow some clearly defined rules and take precautions, while others consider defence strategies when they find themselves in a dangerous or threatening situation. The following strategies were listed:

4.3.1 “I carefully choose clients” – following certain rules regarding with whom, what, where and when
A majority of women give answers that fit in this category. Answers revolve around where they work, which sexual services they sell, where they go with clients, when they sell sex and which types of clients they sell sex to.

Many women answered they had strict rules about where they worked. Among women working the indoor market, almost all stated working at a massage parlour with others was their strategy to defend themselves from violence. Women working the streets were mainly concerned about working in lit areas where “co-workers” could see them, or went elsewhere with clients. Regardless of the arena, they were careful to let someone (preferably a colleague or friend) always know where they were and possibly with whom.

It is interesting to note that the women working the streets felt it was safer than the indoor market, while the women working indoors claimed the opposite.

Many women stated they had different ways of “filtering” clients. They would decide to avoid clients who were violent, drugged, mentally ill, tried negotiating the price
and/or use of a condom, or gave a “bad impression”. Some women also said they did not sell sex to foreign nationals.

Several pointed out they were good at judging character and were able to separate good from bad clients by talking to them while negotiating, either face to face or on the phone, and by asking questions. If they got a bad gut feeling or thought the client did not seem genuine, or seemed unstable or threatening, they would withdraw from the negotiation.

Some women reported a concern about avoiding risky situations and had clearly defined boundaries when they were with clients. Risky situations involved taking more than one client, selling sexual services they were not comfortable performing, not using protection, going with a client to his home/unknown place, and working at night on the weekends. They wanted to have more control by avoiding situations like these so they would be less at risk of experiencing violent episodes.

Some also mentioned they only sold “soft sex”, and not sexual services involving violent elements such as bondage. They wanted to avoid situations where the distinction between sex and violence would be blurry.

4.3.2 “I always act and am the one they want me to be” - adapting to the client
Some women answered their strategy to avoid violence was to always adapt to the client, his needs and wishes. Their approach was based on the belief that satisfied clients who got what they came for and were treated well rarely became agitated, angry or violent. For some of the women this adaption was about reading the mood of the client and what the client wanted to achieve from purchasing sex, then to do what they could to provide the service and experience he wanted. In these cases women would take on different “personalities”, depending on the clients’ wishes, and could sell everything from “a love experience” to rougher sex. Different effects were also used to fulfil the clients’ wishes, such as role-play, wigs, makeup, different types of behaviour and sex toys.

Some of the women emphasized that they always tried their best not to agitate the client by always being nice, talking friendly, remaining calm and not arguing with the client about his wishes or other topics. Several considered themselves good at manipulating clients. A few women said they accepted all clients and let them set the premises to avoid clients getting angry and thus violent because they felt rejected.

4.3.3 “I call the police” – seeking help
Some women responded that they sought different types of help to protect themselves from violence. This was a defence strategy used in potentially dangerous situations, not a strategy to prevent dangerous or threatening situations from happening. Their argument for asking for/receiving help from others in threatening
situations was that the perpetrator would lose the upper hand when women were together.

Most of the women responding that they sought help for protection from violence called the police or threatened to call the police when they found themselves in dangerous or threatening situations. This would often scare off clients, or others who were threatening violent behaviour.

Many respondents said that they asked for help from various welfare service providers, friends/acquaintances, people they worked with in the streets or massage parlour/flat or random passers-by. Two women reported asking God for protection.

4.3.4 “Tough behaviour” - being tough, threatening and using of a weapon
Some women responded that the best defence mechanism against violence and threats was being tough and strict with clients who were threatening, and responding with violence to violent attacks.

Among the women using this strategy, some answered it was important to demand respectful treatment from clients, to exude confidence and to have a “bad-ass attitude” during negotiations. That would signal that clients better not mess with or argue with these women, and that they would then treat them respectfully. If a threatening situation should arise, it was important to be equally threatening to avoid giving the client the upper hand.

Some women responded that they always carried some type of weapon for self-defence so they could inflict harm on potential perpetrators. Weapons could be pepper spray, a knife or an umbrella. Several women responded that they would physically attack the perpetrator by hitting, kicking, biting, pulling hair and pinching the abuser.

4.3.5 “Nothing really, I’ll deal with it if it happens” - being pragmatic and intuitive
Some women answered it was difficult to make strategies for defence against violence in prostitution because by its very nature prostitution means never knowing what could happen. The women who gave this response often said they were very aware of what was going on around them, even though they did not have strategies to avoid being victimized. They would do what they could to protect themselves. Even though they did not have a defined strategy, their responses reflected some form of strategy by always evaluating the situation and the client when they were in a dangerous situation, and then weighing what would be the smartest move. Choosing to deal with such a situation if it arises is also a type of strategy. Many of these women said they were good at judging character and trusted their instinct and gut feeling, which enabled them to defend themselves in potentially dangerous situations.
4.4 What can be done to better protect women from violence?

4.4.1 Initiatives taken by Pro Sentret

We asked the following question in the survey: “Which protection measures can Pro Sentret initiate for you so you can better protect yourself from violence/threats/harassment?” Ninety per cent of the women in the survey answered this question.

Frequent responses included: be more present in the various prostitution arenas, be more present in the prostitution districts, continue the outreach programme, hand out alarms and pepper spray and inform/warn about violent clients. Some also expressed the wish that Pro Sentret form conversation groups focusing on preventing violence, setting limits and training in self-defence.

Many said Pro Sentret already did this well, and it was important to continue to give warnings, run the outreach program, hand out alarms, offer a free health service and give the police anonymous tips about violent men. Some said they wanted to learn Norwegian and learn more about the laws and rights related to being victims of violence in Norway. Some also said that Pro Sentret could not do anything to protect them from violence.

Several women felt it was important that Pro Sentret used the media to inform potential clients not to victimize women in prostitution and that we had to educate society about the frequency of violence that women were subjected to. Some also responded that Pro Sentret had to ask the politicians not to criminalize the clients, and we had to influence the politicians to give more foreign national women residence permits so they could quit prostitution and find other work. Others felt that Pro Sentret should cooperate more with the crisis centres and the police so that women could get help from these institutions when they needed it.

Among women working the indoor market, many responded that Pro Sentret had to ensure it was legal to sell sexual services at massage parlours. The police were very active with “Operation Homeless” when the survey was conducted, which meant many could not work in the company of others at massage parlours any longer. These women were of the opinion they would be increasingly victimized if they no longer could work together with others at these establishments.

4.4.2 Measures politicians and welfare service providers can implement

In addition to asking what Pro Sentret could do to improve protection of women from violence, we also asked the following question: “What can politicians and other welfare service providers do to increase safety for women in prostitution?” Eighty-three per cent of the participants in the survey answered the question.

With respect to politicians, many responses focused on existing laws and women wishing for change. Many responded it should be legal to sell sex in flats or at massage parlours since they considered it the safest way to sell sexual services. Some wished prostitution would be legalized and many responded that the planned criminalization of clients should not be implemented.
Others argued that foreign national women had to be given more rights in Norway so they could seek employment and become legal residents. Furthermore, many expressed the wish that perpetrators who victimized women in prostitution should receive more severe punishment and that resources could be invested in prosecuting traffickers, pimps and violent clients.

Some women said the laws should be changed to allow people to sell sex, and to allow them to carry weapons and pepper spray.

Furthermore, some women argued politicians should be better educated about the situation of sex workers, and should keep their promises to take better care of them and protect people selling sex. Several answered that Pro Sentret, and various welfare service providers that could assist them should be granted more funds, and money should be granted for free psychological counselling after being victimized. Some stated the police should be granted more money so they could use more resources and so they could be more present and investigate reported violence. Some also wished politicians would spend more on street lighting in the prostitution district.

When asked what other welfare service providers could do to improve women’s security, their point was that the welfare service providers had to be more available, had to show women respect and acknowledge their need for help, and be supportive when contacted. Several expressed they felt they had not been taken seriously when calling to request help (they did not inform who they had called), and wanted an acknowledgement from the social services that prostitution was risky and employees had to believe what they were told.

4.4.3 Can women do anything themselves to improve their own security?
Eighty-seven per cent of the participants in the survey answered the question about what they thought could be done to better protect themselves from violence/threats and harassment.

Many of the responses correlated with answers we received regarding what they did to protect themselves from being victimized. Answers included: working together, using weapons like pepper spray, a knife, tear gas, not working at night, showing some attitude and having strict limits for clients’ behaviour, having contact with the police and being careful who they sold sex to.

Quite a few women answered there was little they could do to protect themselves from violence on the grounds that they were already doing what they could. Prostitution was so risky it was impossible to be fully protected. Some of the women who stated little could be done also answered the only thing they possibly could do would simply be to quit prostitution.

Some women responded they had to change in different ways to improve their own security. They mentioned loving themselves more, taking better care of themselves, getting mentally stronger, getting better at setting limits and not being naïve. Some also answered they should exercise more to get physically stronger and thus better able to protect themselves.
4.5 What relevance do responses from the 2007/08 survey have for the reported situation in 2012?

4.5.1 Have changes in the market affected defence strategies used by the women? Defence strategies reported by the women in the 2007/08 survey, and included in Chapter 4.3 of this survey correlate well with the findings Fafo had in 2008 when surveying the extent of prostitution in Norway, its contents and organization. In the Fafo report, women emphasized they had different limits/rules depending on where they sold sex, whom it was sold to and which sexual services they sold (Tveit and Skilbrei 2008:108-110).

In Chapter 3 of this report we saw that various welfare services in contact with prostitution reported significant changes in the market over the last few years. Reported changes were, for example, fewer clients, it was a buyer’s market, increased judicialization and the premises of prostitution had changed to being more individualized.

How the prostitution market is organized and adapts to different changes will influence which strategies women in prostitution use to protect themselves from violence. In the Fafo report from 2008, researchers state that some of the defence mechanisms women use will remain the same regardless of changes in the market, while other strategies will be harder to maintain with a decreasing number of clients (Tveit and Skilbrei 2008:112-113). Our findings among the welfare service providers in 2010/11 indicate the same. Some of the strategies women probably have been able to maintain since the 2007/08 survey are: adapting to the client, being pragmatic and intuitive and being tough/threatening/using weapons for protection and defence. For some women, seeking help and having strict limits as to whom, where and when are harder strategies to maintain.

Looking at the most frequently reported strategy, women having “rules” for with whom, what and when they sold sex, it is likely some women had to compromise those demands after the survey because they were working in a buyer’s market, which gives clients an edge in negotiations over the who, what, where and when. “Good” clients have decreased in number, while no reduction in “bad” clients has been reported. This means that women who are dependent on making a certain amount of money are placed in a situation where they are “forced” to sell sex to clients they otherwise would have avoided through selection and demands. This increases the women’s vulnerability. As noted by Tveit and Skilbrei, violence is often seen in situations where women have been desperate to obtain drugs or money and taken chances they otherwise would not have taken (2008:113).

As prostitution has become more individualized and more women are working alone, they cannot ask co-workers for help, as they reported they would do in 2007/08. This is true for women working both the streets and the indoor market.

In the indoor market, more are working alone in their own flat. This is a consequence of the police campaign “Operation Homeless”, which makes it difficult for women to sell sex at massage parlours where several women work together, something many women pointed out was an important defence strategy in 2007/08.
In the 2012 survey, Chapter 2.2.4, we saw that as many as 41% of the women working in the indoor market who have been victimized experienced this in their own flat. The perpetrator was most often a client.

For some of the women working the streets, vulnerability has increased because they have less time to negotiate with the client who is afraid of being caught by the police for purchasing sex. This means they are less able to choose clients based on intuition and reading the “warning signals” when negotiating with the client. Since they often need to travel further away from co-workers to perform the sexual service, few women can take advantage of the strategy of having others nearby should problems arise.

When it comes to the defence strategy involving contacting the police and social services, the figures from 2012 (Chapter 2.2.8 in this report) show a decrease in the number of people contacting the police and social services when they have been victimized. This indicates that fewer sex workers have used this defence strategy in the years after the 2007/08 survey was conducted.

The Fafo report from 2008 mentions the possibility that criminalizing clients may have protected the women, as they can threaten to report clients who behave badly or try to renegotiate as sex buyers to the police (Tveit and Skilbrei 2008:113). Nothing in the survey we conducted indicates criminalizing the clients protects women from violence, on the contrary, the women protect their clients from the police.

4.5.2 Important knowledge
Even though the prostitution market has undergone major changes since the survey on violence from 2007/08, the results are still highly relevant when examining the current situation.

The findings presented in Chapter 4 of this report provide insight into which measures women take to improve their situation and safety, and what they think the welfare service providers and politicians can do to improve their safety. Moreover, the findings from 2007/08 can highlight which changes we see in the market and which challenges can be identified when it comes to maintaining safety and reducing violence against women in prostitution.

We will also use their input regarding what the welfare service providers, politicians and Pro Sentret can do to improve their safety in Chapter 5.5 of this report, where we suggest possible actions.
4.6 Main findings

- In the violence survey from 2007/08, participants report five different strategies to protect themselves from violence in prostitution.
- Some of the defence strategies women listed in 2007/08 are probably still used in 2012.
- Some of the defence strategies women identified in 2007/08 have been difficult to maintain due to major changes in the prostitution market, which are: increased judicialization, reduction in clients and changed conditions for selling sex.
- From the 2007/08 survey, it is evident that the women do not believe the increased focus by the government through the raised level of judicialization and application of legislation will lead to less violence and better protection of women in prostitution. However, many women still express a wish for increased judicialization, but in different forms than what is currently found. They ask for more police protection, better legal protection for women in prostitution, a system that takes them seriously and severe penalties for those who are violent towards people selling sex.
5. Closing comments

5.1 Women in prostitution – one of the most vulnerable groups that is prone to violence in our society
In the 2012 survey 59% of the participants answered they had been victims of violence in prostitution during the last three years. This breaks down to 73 people in a sample of 123 persons. It is rare to find such a high frequency of violence in a population as small as that represented by prostitutes in Oslo. This is discouraging and worrying.

The debate concerning rape and violence against women frequently focuses on the fact that these are acts that can affect women from all strata of society. While this is true, it is nevertheless important to keep in mind that there are groups which are particularly exposed and vulnerable. People selling sexual services belong to one of the most vulnerable and exposed groups in our society when it comes to violence. Why this group is so vulnerable is explained in the police “Report on Rape” when it defines vulnerability rape:

“Vulnerability rapes deal with interference against people living a life that involves being in highly vulnerable situations. These are victims who are alone and isolated when facing unstable and/or aggressive persons. The vulnerable women lack social networks and skills, and possess few or no forms of social capital to draw on to help them escape the situation. This applies particularly to people heavily involved with drugs, prostitution and/or in psychiatric institutions” (Sætre and Grytdal 2011:24).

Women in prostitution are in a highly vulnerable situation, this is partly due to the fact that their work involves little interaction with society. Their place of work does not contribute to integration or help them to form a social network, instead they are alone and isolated. The “prostitution community” is characterized by frequent turnover of people, which makes it even more difficult to form a stable social network.

The isolation and lack of a network is intensified by the fact that these women are in many ways unwanted by society because they are seen as temptresses and seducers, as addicted to drugs, as costing society large amounts of money, as (illegal) immigrants from other cultures or as people involved in criminal activities. They are a disturbing presence in public and they do not live according to our values. They are fully aware of being unwanted, and this leads to feelings of shame and stigmatization. This adds to the feeling of isolation and further withdrawal from society.

Moreover, the “community” attracts people who appear to have a wish to abuse the women. The majority of men who approach the women do so to have sex with them, not to be violent. However, this report concludes that the perpetrator is the client in most cases and the violence is frequently severe. This must imply that the women attract unstable and/or aggressive clients, perhaps because these clients know the women are vulnerable with a high threshold before asking for help, therefore the risk of being prosecuted is low.
Many women in prostitution lack competence. This could be a lack of competence in Norwegian laws and regulations, poor insight into the Norwegian society, poor knowledge about rights, poor language skills and/or poor integration in society.

Having little social capital can be seen in relation to their low status on the social ladder, with little education, poor physical/psychological health, lack of rights as a consequence of not holding a residence permit and lack of contact with the social services and judicial system.

5.2 Has criminalizing the purchasing of sex affected the victimization rate among women selling sex in Oslo?

In Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of this report we tried to highlight the question many asked before and after 1 January 2009 when the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services came into force. Has criminalizing the purchasing of sex led to more violence towards women in prostitution?

Chapter 2 of the report presents results from a survey Pro Sentret conducted in the spring of 2012, where we surveyed violence experienced by women in prostitution after 1 January 2009. The survey was part of Oslo local authority's Plan of Action 3a against prostitution. The plan specifies the intent is to evaluate if women are more exposed to violence after the introduction of the new Act.

In Chapter 3 of the report we have analysed interviews Pro Sentret conducted with various social services in the winter of 2010/11. The intent was to find out if criminalization had led to more violence and if it had affected safety and vulnerability for these women.

Our data material does not answer whether or not the high level of violence and vulnerability for women in prostitution is caused by the criminalizing of the purchasing of sex or other factors. However, we can say for certain there has not been a decrease of women in prostitution reporting violence after the introduction of the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services, and women in prostitution are still very vulnerable as a group.

We may never be able to ascertain whether the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services led to changes in the frequency of violence among sex workers in Norway.

The prostitution market in Norway is mobile and in constant change. The market constantly adapts to changes both in Norway and internationally and in the different arenas of prostitution. Changes in legislation, finances, politics, police activities and migration all affect the development in the market and how women organize prostitution. These factors also affect safety, vulnerability and the level of violence in this field.

The report calls attention to various changes the market has undergone in recent years and concludes that the number of respondents who are victimized in prostitution has not decreased. The figures point in the opposite direction. In the 2007/08 survey, 52% responded they had been victimized during their prostitution
career. In 2012, 59% responded they had been the victim of violence in prostitution over the last three years.

5.3 Reporting to social services – some figures
In Chapter 2.2.8 of this report we could read that many women report not receiving help from the welfare service providers after being the victim of violence. Below is a presentation of some of the last years’ incidents of violence as recorded by key participants in the field.

5.3.1 The police
In Chapter 2.2.8 we saw that 16% of the women who had been victimized in our 2012 survey had received help from the police. In the 2007/08 survey, 27% responded that they had received help from the police. The figures are not comparable since the 2012 survey asked about the last three years, while the 2007/08 survey asked about the respondents’ entire prostitution career. The figures may still indicate a decrease in the number of people requesting help from the police after being victimized. We cannot conclude whether or not this is an effect from criminalizing the clients.

When reading the police statistics of reported rapes in 2010, eight of 189 rape reports in Oslo came from women in prostitution. Among these, two came from Norway, two from Hungary, two from Lithuania, one from Russia and one from Romania (Sætre and Grytdal 2011:66).

Strategic staff at the Oslo police informed they had nine reports of rape from prostitutes in 2011. Six were from women, three from men. Two of the incidents happened when the victims were under-aged. The police informed that three were Norwegian, three were European, one was Asian and two were African. Figures from previous police reports of rape investigations were 13 in 2001, 13 in 2004 and 12 in 2007. The number of reported rapes has decreased slightly in recent years, but these numbers are too insignificant to be called a trend (Sætre and Grytdal 2011:66).

Eight prostitutes reported rape in 2010 and nine in 2011, which is “good” as it shows some victims who are raped in prostitution actually contact the police to have the perpetrator prosecuted. On the other hand, our research shows that the majority of respondents who say they have been the victim of violence in prostitution do not contact the police. There might be multiple reasons for this. One reason is the feeling of shame and guilt that many victims of violence may feel. Some women might fear condemnation by the police, judicial system and health-care providers. The double stigma that comes from being a victim of violence and a prostitute is debilitating. Other reasons for not reporting might be lack of knowledge about the police and how to report a rape in Norway, fearing the police will enforce other laws if they are contacted, lack of trust in the police and so on.
5.3.2 Pro Sentret
In Chapter 2.2.8 we saw that 15% of the participants in the 2012 survey had received help from Pro Sentret after being victimized. In the 2007/08 survey, 33% answered that they received help from Pro Sentret, a decrease of more than 50%, which is worrying.
As mentioned in Chapter 3.3.4, many of the welfare service providers report little openness about violence and Pro Sentret has also seen a decrease in the number of women posting warnings on the bulletin board about violent clients.

The survey does not answer why fewer women ask Pro Sentret for help after being victimized, nor does Pro Sentret know why so few ask us for help after being victims of violence. Many prostitutes in Oslo frequently visit Pro Sentret for other types of support and help; from our experience most women in the prostitution environment have trust in us as a welfare service provider.

When conducting the 2012 survey we saw that some users of Pro Sentret, especially Nigerians, did not want to answer these questions as Pro Sentret could not do much to protect them from violence. Even though it is true that Pro Sentret cannot physically protect women from violence, it is worrying they do not see the point in informing Pro Sentret that they have been victimized. Pro Sentret can inform them about rights, accompany them to a medical ward or rape and sexual abuse support centre, offer free medical examination and consultation, help them to contact a lawyer or the police, help them in applying to the office for compensation for victims of violent crime and support the women. In addition, Pro Sentret can offer advice and guidance about safety and precautions to avoid risky situations.

Since 2008, Pro Sentret has offered their users free legal counselling, funded by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. This means we have two lawyers with a broad knowledge of prostitution who both offer drop-in consultations once a week. Two of 27 consultations in 2008 were about violence in prostitution, three of 71 cases in 2009, four of 41 cases in 2010, and four of 52 cases in 2011. In other words, few consultations were about violence in prostitution.

Of the 40 cases the lawyers had between 1 January and 5 June, six concerned violence in prostitution. Four of the cases involved rape. This is the highest number we have had since the project started and the figures only represent the first five months of 2012.

The health department at Pro Sentret has also seen an increase in the number of people reporting violence. There were 14 registered cases of violence and/or rape in 2011. Between 1 January and 11 June 2012 there were 10 cases involving violence. Eight of them involved violence in prostitution – six were rape cases and one was attempted rape. Two of the eight women were stabbed.

The fact that more women have come to Pro Sentret and reported violence is positive in the sense that they are asking for and receiving help. However, it is worrying that the violence is so severe. Even though the trend is that more women came forward and sought help at Pro Sentret in 2012, the survey shows too few of our users actually do this, which indicates that Pro Sentret should improve even more at
placing violence on the agenda and informing what our contribution could be when they are victimized.

5.3.3 Other services
In Chapter 2.2.8 we saw 14% of the participants of the 2007/08 survey answered they had received help from the medical ward after being victimized. In 2012, the number was only three per cent. Oslo medical ward does not keep records of how many were involved in prostitution of those who received help from the emergency services in 2011. They had 424 emergency cases in 2011 and they estimate that eight to ten of the patients sold sexual services. In their experience few women in prostitution contact them after being victimized.

Our material does not explain why so few people contact these services, but some may not have heard of them, while others have little trust and unfavourable experiences with public health care and the medical ward. For women addicted to drugs, another reason might also be that they do not get the necessary medication (Methadone, Subutex and so forth) to be at the medical ward long enough to receive the necessary examinations and treatment. Some foreign national women may not contact them for financial reasons, or they might think they need to pay for treatment as they do not have a residence permit and lack rights.

Furthermore, we have obtained information from attorney Trine Rjukan. She is one of the lawyers associated with judicial “first aid” at Pro Sentret. Rjukan is a recognized lawyer assisting victims of violence and rape. She has had 18 cases since 2008 involving violence and rape in prostitution. Most cases were about severe violence and rape. Seventeen of the cases were reported to the police.

5.4 Government focus
The government has stated they want to reduce the prostitution market, and resources given and priorities assigned to the police have been focused on shrinking the market. Over the last few years official policies have focused on judicial means to reduce the prostitution market and other types of crime associated with prostitution. The central and local authorities have given the police guidelines for uncovering such criminal activities as pimping and human trafficking, and a substantial part of resources have been invested in combatting these activities. Furthermore, the government introduced the new Act that criminalizes the purchasing of sexual services on 1 January 2009.

The police enforce laws associated with pimping (exemplified by “Operation Homeless”), the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services, trafficking laws and immigration regulations. This has made it more difficult to purchase sex and profit from someone else’s prostitution. However, the greatest change is probably increased difficulties for sex workers.

Resources and guidelines given to the welfare service providers by politicians have mainly focused on getting women and men out of prostitution.

This report shows that violence and vulnerability among women has not been reduced over the same period of time. Women in prostitution are still very vulnerable,
they are frequently victimized, threatened and harassed, and the perpetrators are mainly their clients. The violence is frequently severe and at times life threatening.

Findings in this report show prostitution has become more individualized and fewer people contact the welfare service providers after being victimized. Moreover, some women feel they lack legal protection as parts of the legislation that was meant to protect women also lead women to not contact the police. They fear eviction and/or their earnings base. Some women also feel they must protect the client from being fined. This means the client goes from being a kind of “business associate” to becoming an ally, while the police go from being an ally who can offer protection, to becoming a force the client must be protected from.

It is of the utmost importance that the authorities monitor the frequency of violence, threats and harassment in these “communities”, and evaluate if the current means and priorities lead to the stated objectives, also if the current means lead to unintentional and/or unwanted ends.
5.5 What is ahead?
A report like this should make some proposals for improving the situation, preventing violence and reducing women’s vulnerability and victimization, which, as this report shows, is no easy task.

The report provides information about a complex group of marginalized women living under stressful conditions. The welfare service providers can improve some of these conditions, but changes must come from a more structured and political level if the women are to be less vulnerable.

We make the following proposals so that more women will seek help after being victimized:

- The emergency services in Oslo should be given funding to relocate their services based on the need to assist people who are particularly vulnerable to violence and abuse and hesitant to contact health care providers.
- Raise competence at all levels for all welfare service providers, the police and the judiciary, which can contribute to a change in attitudes about people in prostitution.
- Establish regular contact persons at the police who are working with cases of violence and rape of people from vulnerable groups.
- Establish crisis centres/low threshold services for people who are victimized that are open to everyone including drug addicts, and people without a residence permit for Norway.

In 2012, Pro Sentret applied to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security for funding for a project focusing on crime prevention work aimed at women in prostitution.

The project aimed to prevent violence against women in prostitution by increasing their awareness, training them in how to better handle threatening situations and offering them information about rights, social services and problems associated with violence. This will be undertaken by Pro Sentret:

- Arranging drop-in courses on violence in prostitution and in close relations with a focus on violence, practical advice on how to defend yourself in threatening situations and information about the social services. Courses will be arranged in collaboration with Oslo Crisis Centre and a third party offering self-defence courses.
- Publish and distribute information material about violence, rights and advice on how to ensure one’s own safety, adapted to Pro Sentret’s user groups.
We are:
Pro Sentret is the City of Oslo’s service provider for persons who sell sex, or who have sold sex in the past, and a national centre of expertise.

We believe:
Pro Sentret believes that all work in relation to prostitution must be based on human rights. Prostitution is an act, not a character trait of some human beings. We cooperate with individuals, respecting the choices that they make in the situations in which they find themselves. Female and male sex workers must be included as equal partners in the processes that relate to them and their lives.

Our goal:
Pro Sentret aims to support individuals by making them aware of their rights and responsibilities, and helping them to maintain their self-respect and good health so that they can take control of their own lives and realize their true potential.

We want to live in a society where no-one feels that prostitution is the only available option and that the society instead of stigmatizing those who sell sex, shows solidarity with them.