

# Violence Against Women

<http://vaw.sagepub.com/>

---

## **Victimization in Off-Street Sex Industry Work**

Tamara O'Doherty

*Violence Against Women* published online 10 June 2011

DOI: 10.1177/1077801211412917

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://vaw.sagepub.com/content/early/2011/06/03/1077801211412917>

---

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

**Additional services and information for *Violence Against Women* can be found at:**

**Email Alerts:** <http://vaw.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

**Subscriptions:** <http://vaw.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

**Reprints:** <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

**Permissions:** <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

# Victimization in Off-Street Sex Industry Work

Violence Against Women

XX(X) 1–20

© The Author(s) 2011

Reprints and permission: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

DOI: 10.1177/1077801211412917

<http://vaw.sagepub.com>



Tamara O'Doherty<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

The victimization experienced by street-based sex workers has led many observers to argue that prostitution is inherently dangerous. However, street-based workers form the minority of sex workers in Canada. Can their experiences validly be generalized to other types of prostitution? The research presented in this article examines whether female off-street sex workers face the same degree of victimization as female street-based sex workers in Vancouver, British Columbia. The results of a victimization survey examining interpersonal violence and other forms of victimization indicate that although violence and exploitation do occur in the off-street industry, some women sell sex without experiencing violence.

## Keywords

off-street, prostitution, sex work, victimization, violence

Research reveals that up to 98% of women who work on the streets of Vancouver's poorest region, the Downtown East side, experience violence from clients, pimps, and other sex workers (Cler-Cunningham & Christensen, 2001; Currie, Laliberte, Bird, Rosa, & Sprung, 1995; Lowman & Fraser, 1996). The high levels of violence reported by street workers are not unique to Canada; researchers from other countries, including the United States, England, The Netherlands, and Sweden, have similarly concluded that street-based sex workers are exposed to inordinately high levels of violence (e.g., Brewis & Linstead, 2000; Kinnell, 2001; Kuo, 2002; Sanders, 2005; Working Group on the Legal Regulation of the Purchase of Sexual Services, 2004).

Although the victimization experienced by street-based sex workers around the world has led some researchers to argue that prostitution is inherently dangerous (e.g., Dworkin, 1993; Farley, 2004; Raphael & Shapiro, 2004; Raymond, 2003), others assert that prostitution is not

---

<sup>1</sup>Simon Fraser University, Langley, British Columbia, Canada

## Corresponding Author:

Tamara O'Doherty, Simon Fraser University, No. 51-7179 201 Street, Langley, BC, Canada V2Y 2Y9

Email: [tco@sfu.ca](mailto:tco@sfu.ca)

always violent and that criminalization produces working conditions that facilitate violence against sex workers (e.g., Betteridge, 2005; Bindman & Doezema, 1997; Kempadoo & Doezeman, 1998; Lewis, Maticka-Tyndale, Shaver, & Gillies, 2005; Lowman, 2005; Network of Sex Work Projects, n.d.; Pivot Legal Society, 2003; Rekart, 2005).

The criminal law and its enforcement encourage violence against sex workers, contribute to the continued low income of sex workers who have few options but to work on the street because of their poverty and other issues such as addictions, and increase those sex workers' risk of being exposed to HIV. (Betteridge, 2005, p. 44)

Many people and organizations around the world have called for the decriminalization of the sex industry to ameliorate working conditions and improve safety for all sex workers.<sup>1</sup> Two Canadian legal organizations have recently undertaken in-depth analyses of the effects of prostitution laws on the health and safety of sex workers (Betteridge, 2005; Pivot Legal Society, 2003, 2006). Both concluded that decriminalization is necessary to reduce the violence experienced by sex workers.

In opposition to decriminalization, some prohibitionist feminists argue that the act of prostitution itself constitutes violence against women and should be abolished. To this end, they seek to criminalize the sale of sex on the grounds that "prostituted women" are victims and they support criminally prohibiting both procuring and the purchase of sexual services (Dworkin, 1993; Farley, 2004; Raymond, 2003). The claim that prostitution is violence against women is partly political in that prohibitionist feminists deny that women ever "consent" to prostitute and partly empirical in that they assert that all prostitutes are victims of violence. It is this latter claim that my research set out to investigate.

Given that researchers consistently report high violence rates in street-based prostitution, the act of selling sex via Vancouver's streets is clearly dangerous. However, are rates of violence in other parts of the industry the same?

In order to assess the validity of the feminist argument that prostitution is dangerous, we must establish the extent to which these hazards exist and the extent to which they are linked to the commoditization of sex. Only then can we assess whether or not they can be used to justify the position that prostitution should be eliminated and prostitutes rehabilitated for their own good. (Shaver, 1988, p. 84)

We do not have a comprehensive understanding of sex work in the off-street sex industry. Approximately, 80% of the sex industry in British Columbia occurs *off-street* (Benoit & Millar, 2001; Lowman, 2005, Pivot Legal Society, 2006). In his thoroughgoing critique of prohibition feminist research, Weitzer (2000) cautions that "when it comes to prostitution, the most serious blunder is that of equating all prostitution with street prostitution, ignoring entirely the indoor side of the market" (p. 4). Data from research conducted with street-based sex workers may not be generalizable across the industry. We need to determine whether women who work off-street experience the same degree of victimization as

street-based workers and whether in-call and out-call off-street workers experience the same risk of victimization. Only then will we be able to ascertain whether the experience of prostitution is always an experience of violence. If women can sell sex without experiencing violence, we need to know how and under what conditions they are able to work safely.

## **Existing Knowledge About Off-Street Sex Work and Victimization**

Although there are numerous academic studies of the sex industry, the off-street sector has only recently been the specific target of research. Historically, in Canada and elsewhere, prostitution research has focused on the experiences of street-based sex workers.<sup>2</sup> In recent years, researchers have begun to explore off-street sex work.<sup>3</sup> In Canada, Lowman and Fraser (1996) conducted a project in which street-based workers were asked about their experiences working in off-street venues of prostitution in Vancouver, British Columbia. Lowman and Fraser found that their respondents faced lower levels of violence, and less serious violence, while working in the off-street sector compared with work on the streets of Vancouver.

Benoit and Millar (2001) conducted a study of 200 British Columbia sex workers, examining unsafe working conditions in a variety of venues in Victoria and surrounding municipalities. They found that off-street workers involved with a third party (typically an agency) reported financial exploitation in the form of systems of fines (for such things as lateness), the requirement to pay between 40% and 60% of earnings to the agency, and the need to “tip” management, phone operators, and drivers. The participants reported varying levels of control over whether they would accept a client and over what type of service they would provide. People who worked indoors for an agency reported lower rates of control over the number of clients seen in a shift than did those who worked independently, whether via the street or in any other venue. Benoit and Millar did not report specific rates of violence but noted that “almost all those interviewed for this study said that they had been exposed to dangerous working conditions on at least one occasion” (p. 50). The participants reported feeling much safer when working in off-street venues. Benoit and Millar found that clients were the most likely source of violence against sex workers and that sex workers were not likely to report violence to the police; “virtually all those interviewed expressed alienation from the protective services of the police and expressed a reluctance to report violent incidences or turn to the police for help” (p. 54).

In 2006, Pivot Legal Society released a report echoing the findings from the Benoit and Millar (2001) project. Pivot included the experiences of both street-based and off-street sex workers from Vancouver in the analysis and highlighted the specific concerns of workers in different venues. Violence was the greatest concern for street-based workers. Pivot found that the fear of violence was one of the biggest reasons that people turned to agencies for work; they felt better protected working for an agency than when working alone. However, escorts reported that attending a client at an unknown location, as they often do,

was a safety issue. For this reason, some individuals chose to work in massage parlors. Massage parlor workers, however, were shown to have a lower degree of control over their clients and the services performed.

Bruckert, Parent, and Robitaille (2003) conducted interviews with 14 women working in in-call (massage or brothel-type environments) venues in Toronto and Montreal. Their respondents indicated that they had chosen in-call work due to its relative safety compared with out-call (escort) work, the privacy and anonymity it granted, and, for some respondents, the ability to provide services that did not involve sexual intercourse with clients. Like most other researchers, Bruckert et al. reported that their participants were generally misinformed about the laws relating to prostitution and that this misinformation contributes to their reluctance to use the services of the local police. Physical safety was one of the participants' main concerns, and the women reported being hypervigilant about condom use to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases (STD). The participants reported using several personal safety strategies, such as ensuring they do not take alcohol or drugs while working, using their intuition, and relying on the presence of others to protect them.

Lewis, Maticka-Tyndale, Shaver & Schramm (2005 Lewis, Maticka-Tyndale, Shaver & Schramm) used a purposive sampling method to create a diverse sample of male and female sex workers from a variety of venues within the Canadian sex industry. Based on interviews with 61 participants, they found that off-street work was less risky than street-based work, that in-call work for an agency was safer than out-call work, and that the degree of independence of the sex worker influences her ability to mitigate risk. Lewis et al. conclude that "independent off-street workers had the freedom to develop their own descriptions and parameters for their work and to establish their own ways of dealing with safety and risk" (p. 154).

Lowman, Atchison, and Fraser (1997) completed an Internet-based study of 130 clients. Their research is unique in Canada as it focused on the perspectives of clients rather than sex providers. Clients reported perpetrating low rates of violence against sex workers. The self-reported rates included 3% robbery, 6% assault, 3% sexual assault, and 8% forcible confinement of a sex worker. Less than 11% of respondents stated that they had verbally abused sex workers. In comparing the sex buyers with those who were not purchasers of sexual services, Lowman et al. found that those who bought sex had more positive views of sex workers. They concluded that the majority of sex buyers do not commit violence against sex workers and that a minority of clients commits most of the violence.

The conclusions reached by Canadian researchers are echoed in the research emerging from other jurisdictions. For example, Sanders and Campbell (2007) published data on the off-street working situation for women in England. Sanders interviewed 55 women who worked in a variety of off-street venues in Birmingham, and Campbell surveyed 90 indoor workers from Sefton and Liverpool. The two projects reported very similar levels of violence in off-street sex work: 76% (Sanders) and 79% (Campbell) of the participants reported that they had never experienced violence.

Jeal and Salisbury (2007) compared the health needs of women working in massage parlors with those of street-based sex workers in Bristol, the United Kingdom. They found

strikingly different rates of drug use and violence between the two groups. Indoor workers were more likely to be educated, more likely to report stable social lives, and more likely to engage in preventive health care activities. Indeed, the researchers suggest that “it is not selling sex alone that is responsible for the very poor health seen in street sex workers but the combination of outcomes of risk-taking seen in all areas of their lives including sex work, drug dependency, health neglect and poor service use” (p. 880).

The aforementioned research indicates that sex workers face higher levels of violence in street-based sex work than in off-street sex work; however, where research is undertaken from a framework that views prostitution as violence against women, researchers report little difference between the sectors. For example, Farley (2004), after reviewing five research projects and her own work, concluded that “sexual violence and physical assault are the norm for women in all types of prostitution” (p. 1094). Similarly, Raphael and Shapiro (2004) explored the experiences of more than 200 sex workers in Chicago and concluded that “women indoors were frequent victims of violence, and in some instances, the type of violence was more serious and the levels higher than those experienced outdoors” (p. 136). Raphael and Shapiro, however, identify the bias of working within the “prostitution as violence” framework as a potential limitation that likely impacted both the construction of the survey instrument and the administration of the research (p. 132).

The emerging portrait of off-street sex industry work confirms that there is a diverse range of experiences for sex workers; this diversity of experience is one of the few generalizations that can be made. Off-street sex workers are not immune from exploitation or violence; however, the levels of victimization appear to vary greatly in different venues, by individual working conditions and by the political ideology of the researcher.<sup>4</sup>

## Surveying Victimization

This article reports the data produced from a victimization survey examining the experiences of women working in massage parlors, escort agencies, or independently out of their own homes in Vancouver, British Columbia. The project was concerned only with the exchange of sexual services for remuneration by consenting adults. I focus on *victimization* rather than the more restrictive term, *violence*, because *victimization* includes activities that are not traditionally brought into discussions of violence, such as theft, condom refusal, and disagreements over prices.

As with all of the aforementioned research projects related to victimization in sex industry work, the methodology does not feature random sampling techniques. Therefore, the data cannot be taken as representative of the off-street sex-worker population in Vancouver. The methodology was purposive to the extent that I selectively chose escort agencies, massage parlors, and independent escort directories that were known as “high-end” establishments or individuals. This represents an attempt to find women with very little, if any, experience working on the street and the fact that I wanted to focus on women who worked in the relatively more exclusive end of the sex industry. To create an appropriately worded, respectful, concise, and relevant instrument, I sought out four women who had worked in the sex industry in different venues to be members of a research design team.

Over the course of 7 months (December 2005–June 2006), I distributed paper copies of the survey and business cards with the website information to two establishments in Vancouver. Then, I emailed escorts who advertised their services on a few online escort directories and included the website address in the text of the email. All of the participants were invited to participate in interviews; 10 individuals ultimately shared their experiences this way. Three workers elected to participate solely by interview; the other seven interviewees participated in both components of the research. The interviews provided rich contextual information about sex industry work in Vancouver; however, this article focuses on the survey responses specifically addressing victimization.<sup>5</sup>

The data reflect only the particular experiences of the women involved in the project and the data set is small. Nevertheless, the 39 survey responses obtained are sufficient to provide insight into the world of this particular group of off-street sex workers. Their experiences do not match those of street-based sex workers.

## Ethical Considerations

In developing this project, I was keenly aware of the fact that I would be asking women to share information about ostensibly illegal activities.<sup>6</sup> Because of the potential harm to research participants that a violation of confidentiality could create, I did not place any limitations on the guarantee of confidentiality given to potential research participants. I did not ask participants to sign consent forms; instead, I read through a consent form with each interview participant and structured the online survey so that participants were required to navigate through the consent form before they could enter the survey. To help maintain confidentiality, I requested that each participant remain anonymous. In the case of those women with whom I had a prior relationship, I am the only person who knows their identities; I guaranteed them confidentiality as far as professional ethics allow, that is, strict confidentiality.<sup>7</sup> The anonymity built into the structure of the online survey proved to be key to the project's success.

## Off-street Sex Work in Vancouver, British Columbia

In the first section of the survey, respondents were asked to separate their experiences working in each of the three venues: massage parlors, escort agencies, and independent businesses. The venues were evenly represented with 64% ( $n = 25$ ) of respondents indicating that they had worked in a massage parlor, 67% ( $n = 26$ ) having worked as an escort, and 72% ( $n = 28$ ) having worked independently out of their own homes. Of the total 39 responses, 14 respondents (38%) had experience working in all three venues.

Respondents were asked to identify how concerned they were about safety while working in a specific venue. Massage parlors were perceived to be the safest environments. Whereas the majority of masseuses were *not at all* concerned about safety when working in a massage parlor, approximately half of both the escorts and independent workers responded that they were *very concerned* about safety. Every one of the escorts was at least *a little* concerned about safety. The results suggest that these perceptions accurately reflect

the women's experiences; escorts report experiencing more violence than individuals working in massage or independent venues.

### *Rates of Victimization*

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they experienced eight forms of victimization: uttering threats, threatening with a weapon, physical assault, sexual assault, kidnapping/confinement, theft, client refusal to pay for services, and client refusal to use condoms. In the case of the first six options, respondents were asked to classify the offender. The masseuses and the escorts were given five options: clients, police, significant others, bosses/managers, and coworkers. The independents were given three options: clients, police, and significant others.

Respondents were asked how many times they had experienced each of the types of victimization; the options were never, once, twice, 3 times, 4 times, or 5 times or more. In general, little victimization was reported. Indeed, the rates were so low that I collapsed the categories to report if respondents had *ever* experienced any form of victimization from each of the perpetrator groups, rather than its frequency.<sup>8</sup>

**Threats.** The definition given for "uttering threats" was "threatening to cause you physical harm if you don't do what is asked." Threatening was the most commonly experienced form of interpersonal violence against the sex workers who participated in this project: 13 of the 39 respondents had experienced this offense at least once (33%). For the masseuses, coworkers were the most frequent perpetrators of threats. Clients were the most frequent perpetrators for escorts. Independent sex workers were less likely to experience threatening, with only four respondents indicating that they had ever been threatened by a client.

**Threatening with a weapon.** I distinguished between "uttering threats" and "threatening with a weapon" to capture the more aggravated nature of the latter offense. Threatening with a weapon was less likely to occur than threatening: only 6 of the 39 respondents indicated that they had been threatened with a weapon (16%). Clients were the most likely source of weapons threats for escorts. However, significant others were the most likely perpetrators for masseuses. The two independent workers who reported that they had been threatened with a weapon had been victimized by both clients and police officers.

**Physical assault.** To define "physical assault," I provided the examples of being hit, kicked, or pushed down. Nine of the respondents reported that they had been physically assaulted at least once (24%). Clients were again the most likely perpetrators of such violence. Significant others and police officers were also identified as perpetrators of some of the violence. Escorts experienced twice as much physical assault than masseuses or independent workers, and they indicated that bosses can also be responsible for physical assault.

**Sexual assault.** Sexual assault (being physically forced to do something sexually that you were not prepared to do) was one of the least likely forms of violence that participants had experienced. Seven respondents (18%) indicated that they had been sexually assaulted. This was the one category for which the violence was evenly distributed across venues.

**Kidnapping.** I defined kidnapping as being physically restrained and not allowed to leave when you wanted to. Escorts were more than twice as likely to experience kidnapping than

either independents or masseuses; 21% of the escorts reported that a client had held them against their will at least once.

*Theft.* Theft, or having money, jewelry, or other items stolen from you, occurred at least once to 13 of the 39 respondents (33%). Masseuses were the most likely to experience theft, and their coworkers were the most likely perpetrators. Six of the 24 escorts reported that a client had stolen from them on at least one occasion (25%).

*Client refusal to wear a condom.* Respondents were asked whether they had ever had a client refuse to wear a condom. Thirteen respondents (33%) indicated that they had been in a situation where a client had refused to use a condom. However, the survey did not ask the participants about their action in response to a refusal. Many of the participants wrote in comments indicating that although they had faced the aforementioned situation, that did not necessarily mean that they had engaged in unsafe sexual acts with the client. Women indicated they would refuse to service clients who refused to wear condoms.

*Client refusal to pay predetermined amount.* Negotiating the specific monetary amount to be exchanged for the services proved to be one of the most frequent conflicts for all participants in this survey. Fourteen respondents indicated that they had experienced a conflict with a client over the price of the exchange. Again, the survey did not ask respondents to share their responses to clients in these situations. Some of the women indicated that they would offer different services if price was an issue for the client.

*Workers' grounds for refusing to provide services.* I posed an open-ended question asking respondents to identify their grounds for refusing to service a client. Nearly all of the participants provided detailed grounds including health concerns, such as visible STDs; drugs or alcohol use; insufficient funds; disrespectful behavior or attitude; no condom; safety or comfort concerns; aggression; hygiene concerns; or a discomfort with the act requested.

*Other forms of victimization.* There were two open-ended questions relating directly to experiences of victimization. First, respondents were asked if they had experienced any form of violence that was not included in my questions. Four women entered additional responses, such as "cattiness from other workers," the emotional impact of sex work, harassment by neighbors, and having clothing or items damaged by clients.

The second open-ended question relating to experiences of victimization asked women to describe briefly the most serious incident of violence that they experienced while working in the sex industry. One woman expressed her frustration with the assumption that the sex industry is rife with violence:

I have not experienced *any* incidences of violence, serious or otherwise, while working in the sex industry, and I believe that this question should be reworded to exclude the assumption that a sex-trade worker *must* have experienced violence at some point. (Participant No. 9)

Another woman explained that the only victimization to which she had ever been exposed was perpetrated by coworkers. Five women indicated that their most serious

incident was a verbal disagreement or a nonserious incident. Two of the five women reported that men had tried to have sex without condoms. The other three women dismissed their most serious incidents as “not serious” and explained that clients had given them a hickey, pushed them down, or “got a bit rough.”

One client, who seemed particularly “excited,” pushed me up into a corner. I’m not sure if he was being “violent” or just “enthusiastic.” In any event, it made me a bit uncomfortable so I just pushed him away. End of story. (Participant No. 16)

Nine women (29%) described other incidents of violence, which ranged from being threatened to being held against their will, to being physically and sexually assaulted. Eleven respondents did not answer this question. One woman wrote, “I can’t . . . I mostly try not to think about it” (Participant No. 1).

Clients were the main perpetrators of the victimization described in this question; they were mentioned in 12 of the 16 descriptions of victimization. Three women reported that their worst experiences were at the hands of coworkers, and one woman said that her pimp was the source of the most serious industry-related violence she had experienced. All of the altercations described between workers and clients in this question were related either to condom use or rates for services provided.

*Financial exploitation.* The respondents reported that women often face high levels of financial exploitation in certain segments of the off-street sex industry. They attribute much of the exploitation to the quasicriminal status of prostitution in Canada, which enables agencies, landlords, and advertisers to operate in a mostly unregulated way. Respondents allege that landlords and advertisers charge high rates for adult entertainment ads because escort agencies are reluctant to draw attention to themselves by complaining to the authorities. The cost of paying for ads is passed on to workers who are often required to pay the agency up to 60% of their hourly earnings.

*Perceptions of dangerousness.* To conclude this section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate in which off-street venue they felt that women risked the most violence. Seventy-two percent of the respondents ( $n = 32$ ) indicated that they felt women who worked independently faced the most violence; 19% perceived escorting to be the most dangerous venue. Concern about women working alone was the most frequent reason given to explain why respondents felt that independents were the most likely to face violence. One woman offered the following insight:

Well, I think when you do out calls to private homes, as an independent or working for an escort agency, you are very vulnerable to any and all forms of violence. You don’t know what is waiting for you there, and you cannot control the environment or situation as well as you can in your own place despite having someone [the Agency] knowing where you are going and a driver waiting outside. . . . I think it’s not a case so much of whether you are independent or not, it’s where you go to see a client. (Participant No. 8)

The self-reported victimization data from the survey do not support the perception of independent work as the most risky form of off-street sex work; among survey respondents, independent workers reported the least victimization.

### *Reporting Practices*

This section of the survey was designed to find out how often women reported incidents of violence to a third party, to whom they reported it, and whether they were satisfied with the response to their report. Only 18% of the participants reported incidents of violence to a third party. The respondents who indicated that they had not reported incidents of violence explained variously that they believed it was not serious enough, they did not believe anyone cared, they were afraid to lose their jobs, or that they were embarrassed.

Of the seven women who reported incidents of violence, four had reported one or two incidents, whereas the other three indicated that they had reported violence more than twice. Friends were the most likely people to whom respondents would turn. Three women, one from each type of venue, indicated that they had reported violence to the police.

The respondents who reported incidents to their managers were generally satisfied with the managers' responses. There was much less satisfaction with police responses. Two of the three women were very unsatisfied, whereas one of the respondents had mixed responses to her reports to police. On one occasion, she was completely unsatisfied with the response from police. However, the second time she reported violence, she received full support from the officers involved. She was much more satisfied with the response from police when she was working off-street as an escort than when she worked from the street.

Women who had never experienced violence said that they would turn to the police without hesitation. There appears to be a significant difference between hypothetically contacting police in the event of victimization and the consequences of self-identification as a sex provider if a woman does actually contact the police.

### *Violence Prevention*

Respondents were asked a combination of open and precoded questions in this section of the survey. First, I posed a broad, open-ended question asking participants what strategies they used to ensure their own safety while working; 74% of respondents reported using specific safety strategies. The most frequent safety strategies were (a) screening clients, (b) using intuition, and (c) planning ahead (ensuring that an emergency plan was in place with an agency or a friend). In addition to these, I identified several other strategies, including using public locations, employing specific security measures, direct communication, references, advertising and rates, control and professionalism, and interpersonal communication skills.

**Screening.** Screening is a conscious and proactive strategy employed prior to meeting clients. It is a strategy employed by some agencies and many independent workers.

I generally screen my clients quite well. I do not see anybody without having a verifiable name, address and phone number prior to meeting. The majority of my clients are business travelers staying in upscale hotels, which means they would be easy to track down if anything did happen [a big deterrent]. If I have any sort of odd feeling prior to an appointment, I contact a fellow escort and tell her exactly where I'm going and when I will "check in" with her for safety. (Participant No. 3)

Screening techniques include verifying names and addresses of clients. Participants reported using online directories to confirm the contact information for a potential client or verifying the client's employment. One woman reported asking for identification on meeting new clients. Several women mentioned that they did not accept calls from unlisted phone numbers.

*Intuition.* Use of intuition, the ability to be able to assess clients throughout the date, was identified by nine survey respondents as a key violence prevention strategy.

I am very careful to note the tone and attitude of anyone who emails or calls me. If something bothers me, even if I don't know exactly what it is, I will not book with them. (Participant No. 6)

Four of the interviewees spoke directly about intuition, or "trusting your gut." In two situations, women denied employing violence prevention strategies. However, they asserted that although they used their intuition to screen out unwanted dates, they did not think of this as a prevention of violence strategy until I identified it as such. Interview participants reported using intuition to continuously monitor the situation to avoid potentially dangerous encounters.

*Planning ahead.* Some women meet clients at upscale hotels because they can easily confirm the client's hotel reservation. Clients from upscale hotels would be "easy to track down" should a problem arise. Many of the women prefer public meetings with clients, meeting them in bars, coffee shops, or other public venues.

Participants often reported structuring their work to avoid isolation. For some, this includes working in a place, such as an apartment, where an usher or security guard is employed. Other women choose to work in brothels or massage parlors. Drivers are often employed by escorts to serve multiple functions, including transport and security.

My fiancé is my driver, and he waits outside for me at all my jobs. I do outcalls to either a client's home or hotel room, and my fiancé drives me there, waits outside, and has the client's information written down with him. I have a cell phone, and so does he. When I am done an appointment, the arrangement is for me to call him within 15 minutes of the time the appointment is supposed to be done. I'll then tell him I'm done and leaving the client. Usually I phone him within 5 minutes, but we agree on 15, and if he hasn't heard from me after 15 minutes, his instructions are to phone the police. Also, we have a code word that sounds perfectly normal, that

I could say in front of a client, and if I ever say that word on the cell phone to him, he will call the police, and attempt to come get me. We follow this procedure every single time, even with regulars. (Participant No. 4)

This system of “checking in” by phone is the standard practice of many escort agencies. Independent women reported using similar systems of ensuring that a friend knows how long they will be and whom to call in the event that they do not contact the friend in the prearranged time.

## Demographics<sup>9</sup>

This self-report victimization survey indicates that it is important to ensure that different groups of sex workers, not just street-based sex workers, are included in research prior to engaging in law reform as these results show a very different picture of victimization than the one usually associated with prostitution. The average age of the respondents in this project was 30 years. The youngest respondent was 20 and the oldest was 45. Only two respondents started working prior to the age of 18. The majority of the respondents (57%,  $n = 17$ ) started between the ages of 19 and 24, whereas 17% ( $n = 5$ ) started working in the industry at age 30 or older. In terms of the type of venue in which they first worked, 42% ( $n = 13$ ) of the respondents began in massage parlors; only five respondents indicated that they started on the street (21%).

This self-selected sample differs drastically from the reported self-selected samples in other Canadian studies—most of which focus on the street sex worker population—in terms of the respondents’ income, race, and education. Over half the respondents reported earning more than Can\$5,000 per month and more than Can\$60,000 annually. Those working as independents were most likely to earn more than Can\$10,000 monthly (21% of independent workers).

Of the 23 women who reported their “race,” the majority were White (79%). The majority of the respondents were Canadian (72%), most of whom were born in British Columbia. Ten percent of the sample identified as South East Asian. Aboriginal women were unrepresented in this study.

Regarding levels of education, this sample of sex workers had much higher levels of educational attainment than that reported by other study samples: 90% ( $n = 31$ ) indicated that they had some postsecondary training, whereas 36% had completed either a bachelor’s degree ( $n = 4$ ), master’s degree ( $n = 2$ ), or PhD ( $n = 5$ ).

In sum, my self-selected sample comprised mainly well-educated, financially comfortable, local, White women near the age of 30. They appear to be distinguishable from the general population of women only by their higher-than-average earnings. These are some of the women who work in the high-end, off-street sex work industry in Greater Vancouver.

## Discussion

In contrast to street-based sex workers (Cler-Cunningham & Christensen, 2001; Currie et al., 1995; Lowman & Fraser, 1996), the majority (63%) of the women who participated

**Table 1.** Comparison by Venue

Type of victimization Venue	O'Doherty (2007), <i>N</i> = 39			Cler-Cunningham and Christensen (2001), <i>N</i> = 183
	Massage	Escort	Independent	Street
Threats	20%	29%	15%	71%
Threats with weapons	13%	17%	8%	45%
Physical assault	17%	25%	15%	51%
Sexual assault	13%	12%	12%	46%
Kidnapping/confinement	8%	21%	8%	41%
Refuse condom	28%	37%	26%	83%

in this project had not experienced *any* victimization while working in the sex industry, a finding that contradicts the prohibitionist assertion that violence is inherent to prostitution. If they were victimized, my respondents were most likely to experience theft by coworkers or clients refusing to use condoms or pay for services. These findings do not suggest that no violence occurs in the off-street sector of the industry; however, the findings challenge the view that violence is a necessary part of sex work. Although certain sectors of street-based sex industry work are dangerous, other prostitution venues are very different.

Table 1 compares the victimization rates produced in this study with the Cler-Cunningham and Christensen (2001) study on street-based prostitution. The Cler-Cunningham and Christensen report used very similar language for the types of victimization, so it is easily comparable. The rates are reported in percentages to make the comparisons more directly. The table demonstrates that the participants in my study reported one half to a one third of the victimization than the participants in the Cler-Cunningham and Christensen sample reported.

Jeal and Salisbury's (2007) comparison between women working in massage parlors and street-based sex workers in the United Kingdom yielded similar results to my research. Specifically, they found that only 4/71 massage workers experienced violence, whereas 15/71 street-based sex workers had experienced violence.

Victimization occurs at different rates for off-street workers and street-based sex workers. Within off-street sex work, the type of venue, structure of work, a sex worker's degree of independence, and control over the services she provides all influence her susceptibility to violence. However, these data demonstrate that it is entirely possible for women to work in the sex industry without ever experiencing violence.

It is difficult to generalize about violence in the sex industry because of methodological differences between projects, such as different sampling methods, differing definitions or language used to describe forms of violence, and differences related to geographic regions. Furthermore, methodologies are often grounded in particular theoretical frameworks; the political ideology of the researcher will influence the language of the study, the access point for sampling, and the interpretation of data.<sup>10</sup> I have tried to mitigate bias by using empirically sound methods and by ensuring that I do not overgeneralize the results of this study. Nevertheless, I have identified two clear trends that are emerging in recent related

research. First, the overall rates of violence in studies involving off-street workers are remarkably consistent in certain respects. Specifically, 67% (O'Doherty), 60% (Lowman & Fraser), 76% (Sanders), 79% (Campbell), and 79% (Jeal & Salisbury) of the respective participants had *never* experienced *violence* while working in off-street sex work. The similarity in the statistics is striking considering the differences in sampling practices, geographic differences, and definitional differences. These five studies question the assertion that selling sex necessarily involves violence.

Second, my finding that independent sex workers may face the least amount of violence and escorts may face the most replicates the findings of Benoit and Millar (2001), Lewis et al. (2005b), and Kuo (2002). The assertion that women must work for an agency to stay safe in sex work is not supported by the relatively limited data at our disposal. Women may be safer when they are able to structure their working environments and deal directly with potential clients.

### *The Negative Impact of Canada's Prostitution Laws*

Researchers and sex workers have been publishing data on the impact of Canada's prostitution laws on the safety and health of sex workers for decades.<sup>11</sup> One conclusion of this work is that sex workers must contravene the Criminal Code to stay safe while working. For example, the provisions relating to "bawdy houses" criminalize one of the safest venues for sex workers (Lewis et al., 2005b; Lowman, 2005). Lewis et al. (2005b) argue that specific strategies that serve to increase safety for sex workers, such as the use of drivers or working with a partner, are prohibited by the "living on the avails" law. Furthermore, many reports have concluded that criminalizing "communication" per § 213 of the Criminal Code (Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General, 1990) has contributed to violence against street sex workers as the workers cannot openly negotiate the terms of an exchange with potential clients prior to entering vehicles (Betteridge, 2005; Lewis et al., 2005b; Lowman, 2005; Pivot Legal Society, 2003).

The criminalization of prostitution has contributed to exploitative working conditions in the off-street sex industry, too. Workers are unclear about which specific activities are illegal and which are allowed (Benoit & Millar, 2001; Pivot Legal Society, 2006). Many workers believe that they will face criminal consequences for their work in the sex industry, so they remain silent in the event violence does occur. Similarly, workers accept unsafe working conditions due to their lack of knowledge about their legal rights (Bruckert et al., 2003).

Disagreements between sex workers and clients arise due to miscommunication about prices and services. This finding is corroborated by Pivot Legal Society (2006), which found that prices and services to be performed (including the use of condoms) were the main sources of disagreements between sex workers and clients across venues (street based, escort, massage parlor, and independent). Respondents report that some agencies mislead clients about the activities that a sex worker is willing to provide. Similarly, clients may be led to believe that the initial agency fee includes sexual activities when it is only an "introduction" fee. In these situations, sex workers are left in the vulnerable position of having to correct the misinformation about the prices and services offered. Sex workers

may be forced to walk a precarious line urging the client to purchase additional services and agree to “tip” the sex worker in addition to paying the agency fee. If women and agencies could communicate the details of a transaction prior to the meeting, both the sex worker and the client would have a clear understanding of the services to be provided and the rate to be paid. In this regard, the safety of sex workers is directly compromised by criminal laws that prevent women from openly communicating their boundaries and expectations prior to an exchange of sex for money.

### *Limitations*

The purpose of this study was to examine victimization of women who work in the off-street sex industry. The sample is self-selected and purposive; it was specifically geared to high-end workers and included 39 survey respondents and 10 interview participants. There will undoubtedly be an element of volunteer bias as those who feel strongly about such things as decriminalization or dispelling myths would have been more likely to participate.

The survey was self-administered and the data are self-reported. Self-report data rely on individual memories and can be inaccurate. The primary limitation of this project is that I use a nonprobabilistic sampling method; we have no idea how representative the data are of the general population of sex workers in Canada. However, for the purpose of showing that sex work is not a homogenous experience, these limitations do not detract from the main findings of the survey.

### **Conclusions**

In this research, I sought to find out how much violence and other kinds of victimization occur in various kinds of off-street sex work. The findings indicate that although violence does occur in the off-street sector, it is possible for women to work safely in the sex industry. If women are able to sell sex off-street without experiencing violence, then we must look to conditions unique to the street to determine why street-based sex workers face such high levels of violence. Perhaps, as Lowman (2005b) suggests in his discussion of the “discourse of disposal,” society’s treatment of street-based sex workers as disposable nuisances has contributed to the high rates of violence.

The act of selling sex does not in itself cause sex workers to experience violence, in which case public policy should not be based on the assumption that prostitution is inherently violent. Generalizations about victimization in the industry misrepresent the diversity of the industry and only serve to mask the seriousness of individual experiences of violence. Violence against women, whether in the context of a commercial sex exchange or any other context, is a serious issue that warrants more careful attention than blanket assertions allow. This article has provided further evidence of the diversity of experiences for female sex workers; ultimately, much more research is required (particularly research that includes male and transgendered workers) to ensure that all workers have an opportunity to voice their experiences prior to public policy reform.

**Appendix.** Victimization Rates by Venue

	Masseuses (n = 23)	Escorts (n = 24)	Independents (n = 26)
<b>Threats</b>			
Clients	5 (20)	7 (29)	4 (15)
Police officers	4 (16)	1 (4)	3 (12)
Significant others	4 (17)	2 (8)	1 (4)
Bosses	2 (8)	4 (17)	NA
Coworkers	7 (28)	3 (12)	NA
<b>Threats with weapons</b>			
Clients	1 (4)	4 (17)	2 (8)
Police officers	0	1 (4)	2 (8)
Significant others	3 (13)	1 (4)	0
Bosses	0	2 (8)	NA
Coworkers	1 (4)	2 (8)	NA
<b>Physical assault</b>			
Clients	4 (17)	6 (25)	3 (12)
Police officers	1 (4)	2 (8)	4 (15)
Significant others	3 (13)	4 (16)	1 (4)
Bosses	0	(12)	NA
Coworkers	1 (4)	0	NA
<b>Sexual assault</b>			
Clients	2 (9)	3 (12)	3 (12)
Police officers	1 (4)	1 (4)	2 (8)
Significant others	3 (13)	1 (4)	0
Bosses	1 (4)	2 (8)	NA
Coworkers	0	1 (4)	NA
<b>Kidnapping</b>			
Clients	1 (4)	5 (21)	2 (8)
Police officers	2 (8)	2 (8)	2 (8)
Significant others	2 (8)	3 (12)	1 (4)
Bosses	0	3 (12)	NA
Coworkers	1 (4)	0	NA
<b>Theft</b>			
Clients	8 (35)	6 (25)	3 (12)
Police officers	3 (13)	1 (4)	3 (12)
Significant others	3 (13)	2 (8)	1 (4)
Bosses	1 (4)	1 (4)	NA
Coworkers	13 (54)	2 (8)	NA
<b>Refusal to wear condom</b>			
Client	7 (28)	9 (37)	7 (26)
<b>Refusal to pay predetermined amount</b>			
Client	6 (24)	8 (33)	6 (22)

Note: NA = not applicable for independent respondents. Percentages are reported in brackets. Some respondents experienced victimization while working in different venues, so the percentages do not add up to 100%.

## Acknowledgments

I am indebted to John Lowman, Chris Atchison, and Michael Goodyear for their ongoing assistance and support in my work. To the women who generously shared their experiences over the course of this research: I continue to be honored by your involvement in my life.

## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## Notes

1. International organizations that have indicated support for decriminalization include the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labor Organization (ILO), Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Anti-Slavery International, and the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW).
2. See Cler-Cunningham and Christensen (2001), Currie, Laliberte, Bird, Rosa, and Sprung (1995), and Lowman and Fraser (1996).
3. See Albert (2001), Boyle et al. (1997), Brock (1998), Chapkis (2000), Harcourt, Egger, and Donovan (2005), Jeffrey and MacDonald (2006), Kuo (2002), Lever and Dolnick (2000), Potter, Martin, and Romans (1999), Sanders (2005), Weitzer (2000), Whittaker and Hart (1996), Working Group on the Legal Regulation of the Purchase of Sexual Services (2004).
4. For more discussion on the impact of ideology on prostitution-related research, see Weitzer (2005).
5. The original thesis reports both the survey results and the interview results. See O'Doherty (2007) for more information.
6. The project received approval from Simon Fraser University's Research Ethics Board in July of 2005.
7. I am adhering to the ethics code of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences available at [http://www.acjs.org/pubs/167\\_671\\_2922.cfm](http://www.acjs.org/pubs/167_671_2922.cfm)
8. See the appendix for a detailed table of statistical data.
9. I have chosen to place the demographics section at the end of the findings because sex industry workers are too often discussed as a set of demographic characteristics. It is my intention to highlight their experiences in this article.
10. See the 2005 debate between Weitzer, Farley, and Raphael and Shapiro (Farley, 2005; Raphael & Shapiro, 2005; Weitzer, 2005).
11. Federal government-funded reports include *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women* (Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970); *Pornography and Prostitution in Canada* (Fraser Committee, 1985); *The Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General* (Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General, 1990); *Dealing with prostitution in Canada: A consultation paper*

(Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on Prostitution, 1995); and *Report 6: The Challenge of Change: A Study of Canada's Criminal Prostitution Laws* (Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, 2006).

## References

- Albert, A. (2001). *Brothel: Mustang Ranch and its women*. New York: Random House.
- Benoit, C., & Millar, A. (2001). *Dispelling myths and understanding realities: Working conditions, health status and exiting experiences of sex workers*. Retrieved from <http://www.hawaii.edu/hivandaids/Working%20Conditions,%20Health%20Status%20and%20Exiting%20Experience%20of%20Sex%20Workers.pdf>
- Betteridge, G. (2005). *Sex, work, rights: Reforming Canadian criminal laws on prostitution*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. Retrieved from [http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session4/CA/CANHIVAIDS\\_LN\\_CAN\\_UPR\\_S4\\_2009\\_anx3\\_SexWorkRights.pdf](http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session4/CA/CANHIVAIDS_LN_CAN_UPR_S4_2009_anx3_SexWorkRights.pdf)
- Bindman, J., & Doezema, J. (1997). *Redefining prostitution as sex work on the international agenda*. Edinburgh, UK: Network of Sex Work Projects. Retrieved from <http://www.walnet.org/csis/papers/redefining.html>
- Boyle, F., Glennon, S., Najman, J., Turrell, G., Western, J., & Wood, C. (1997). *The sex industry: A survey of sex workers in Queensland, Australia*. England, UK: Ashgate.
- Brewis, J., & Linstead, S. (2000). *Sex, work and sex work: Eroticizing organization*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Brock, D. (1998). *Making work, making trouble: Prostitution as a social problem*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- Bruckert, C., Parent, C., & Robitaille, P. (2003). *Erotic service/erotic dance establishments: Two types of marginalized labor* (Funded by the Law Commission of Canada, University of Ottawa, and Status of Women Canada). Retrieved from [http://dalspace.library.dal.ca/bitstream/handle/10222/10302/Bruckert\\_Parent\\_Robitaille%20Research%20Erotic%20Dance%20EN.pdf?sequence=1](http://dalspace.library.dal.ca/bitstream/handle/10222/10302/Bruckert_Parent_Robitaille%20Research%20Erotic%20Dance%20EN.pdf?sequence=1)
- Chapkis, W. (2000). Power and control in the commercial sex trade. In R. Weitzer (Ed.), *Sex for sale: Prostitution, pornography and the sex industry* (pp. 181-201). New York: Routledge.
- Cler-Cunningham, L., & Christensen, C. (2001). *Violence against women in Vancouver's street-level sex trade and the police response*. Retrieved from <http://www.pace-society.ca>
- Currie, S., Laliberte, N., Bird, S., Rosa, N., & Sprung, S. (1995). *Assessing the violence against street-involved women in the downtown eastside/Strathcona community*. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society and Watari Research Society, Ministry of Women's Equality.
- Department of Justice Canada. (n.d.). *Criminal code* (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46). Retrieved from <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-46/index.html>
- Dworkin, A. (1993, October). *Prostitution and male supremacy*. Presentation "Prostitution: From Academia to Activism," sponsored by the *Michigan Journal of Gender and Law* delivered at the University of Michigan Law School, Ann Arbor, MI. Retrieved from <http://www.nostatusquo.com/ACLU/dworkin/MichLawJourI.html>
- Farley, M. (2004). Bad for the body, bad for the heart: Prostitution harms women even if legalized or decriminalized. *Violence Against Women, 10*, 1087-1125.

- Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on Prostitution. (1995). *Dealing with prostitution in Canada: A consultation paper*. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Department of Justice.
- Harcourt, C., Egger, S., & Donovan, B. (2005). Sex work and the law. *Sexual Health*, 2, 121-128.
- Jeal, N., & Salisbury, C. (2007). Health needs and service use of parlour-based prostitutes compared with street-based prostitutes: A cross-sectional survey. *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, 114, 875-881.
- Jeffrey, L., & MacDonald, G. (2006). "It's the money, Honey": The economy of sex work in the Maritimes. *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 43, 313-328.
- Kempadoo, K., & Doezeman, J. (Eds.). (1998). *Global sex workers: Rights, resistance and redefinitions*. New York: Routledge.
- Kinnell, H. (2001). Murderous clients and indifferent justice: Violence against sex workers in the UK. *Research for Sex Work*, 4, 22-24.
- Kuo, L. (2002). *Prostitution policy: Revolutionized practice through a gendered perspective*. New York: New York University Press.
- Lever, J., & Dolnick, D. (2000). Clients and call girls: Seeking sex and intimacy. In R. Weitzer (Ed.), *Sex for sale: Prostitution, pornography and the sex industry* (pp. 85-100). New York: Routledge.
- Lewis, J., Maticka-Tyndale, E., Shaver, F., & Gillies, K. (2005a). *Health, security and sex work policy*. Presentation to the House of Commons Subcommittee on Solicitation Laws (SSLR), Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Retrieved from [http://web2.uwindsor.ca/courses/sociology/maticka/star/presentation\\_list.html](http://web2.uwindsor.ca/courses/sociology/maticka/star/presentation_list.html)
- Lewis, J., Maticka-Tyndale, E., Shaver, F., & Schramm, H. (2005b). Managing risk and safety on the job: The experience of Canadian sex workers. *Journal of Psychology and Human Sexuality*, 17, 147-167.
- Lowman, J. (2000). Violence and the Outlaw Status of (Street) Prostitution. *Violence Against Women*, 6(9), 987-1011.
- Lowman, J. (2005). *Submission to the Subcommittee on Solicitation Laws of the Standing Committee on Justice, Human Rights, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness*. Retrieved from <http://mypage.uniserve.ca/~lowman/>
- Lowman, J., Atchison, C., & Fraser, L. (1997). *Men who buy sex, Phase 2: The client survey, preliminary findings*. Victoria, British Columbia, Canada: Ministry of Attorney General. Retrieved from <http://mypage.uniserve.ca/~lowman/>
- Lowman, J., & Fraser, L. (1996). *Violence against persons who prostitute: The British Columbia experience* (Technical Report No. TR1996-14e). Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Department of Justice Canada. Retrieved from <http://mypage.uniserve.ca/~lowman/>
- Network of Sex Work Projects. (n.d.). *Introduction to the issues regarding sex work*. Retrieved from [www.nswp.org](http://www.nswp.org)
- O'Doherty, T. (2007). *Off-street commercial sex: An exploratory study* (Unpublished master's thesis). School of Criminology, Simon Fraser University, Langley, British Columbia, Canada.
- Pivot Legal Society. (2003). *Voices for dignity: A call to end the harms caused by Canada's sex trade laws*. Retrieved from <http://www.pivotlegal.org/sites/default/files/voicesfordignity.pdf>
- Pivot Legal Society. (2006). *Beyond decriminalization: Sex work, human rights and a new framework for law reform*. Retrieved from <http://www.pivotlegal.org/sites/default/files/BeyondDecrimLongReport.pdf>

- Potter, K., Martin, J., & Romans, S. (1999). Early developmental experiences of female sex workers: A comparative study. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 3, 3935-3940.
- Raphael, J., & Shapiro, D. (2004). Violence in indoor and outdoor prostitution venues. *Violence Against Women*, 10, 126-139.
- Raphael, J., & Shapiro, D. (2005). Reply to Weitzer. *Violence Against Women*, 11, 965-970.
- Raymond, J. (2003). *10 reasons for not legalizing prostitution*. New York: Coalition Against Trafficking in Women International. Retrieved from <http://www.educatingvoices.ca/pdf/raymond.pdf>
- Rekart, M. (2005). Sex work harm reduction. *Lancet*, 366, 2123-2134.
- Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. (1970). *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women*. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Information Canada.
- Sanders, T. (2005). *Sex work: A risky business*. England, UK: Willan.
- Sanders, T., & Campbell, R. (2007). Designing out vulnerability, building in respect: Violence, safety and sex work policy. *British Journal of Sociology*, 58, 1-19
- Shaver, F. (1988). A critique of the feminist charges against prostitution. *Atlantis*, 4(1), 82-89.
- Fraser Committee. (1985). *Pornography and prostitution in Canada*. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Department of Supply and Services, Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution.
- Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. (2006). *Report 6: The challenge of change: A study of Canada's criminal prostitution laws*. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Department of Justice. Retrieved from <http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/hoc/Committee/391/JUST/Reports/RP2599932/justrp06/sslrp06-e.pdf>
- Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General. (1990). *The fourth report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General (Section 213 of the Criminal Code [Prostitution-Soliciting])*. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: House of Commons.
- Weitzer, R. (Ed.). (2000). *Sex for sale: Prostitution, pornography and the sex industry*. New York: Routledge.
- Weitzer, R. (2005). Flawed theory and method in studies of prostitution. *Violence Against Women*, 11, 934-949.
- Whittaker, D., & Hart, G. (1996). Managing risks: The social organization of indoor sex work. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 18, 399-414.
- Working Group on the Legal Regulation of the Purchase of Sexual Services. (2004). *Purchasing sexual services in Sweden and the Netherlands: Legal regulation and experiences*. Retrieved from [http://www.worldaidscampaign.org/en/content/download/82564/820569/file/Purchasing\\_sex\\_in\\_sweden\\_and\\_the\\_netherlands.pdf](http://www.worldaidscampaign.org/en/content/download/82564/820569/file/Purchasing_sex_in_sweden_and_the_netherlands.pdf)

## Bios

**Tamara O'Doherty** (MA, LLB) is a PhD student at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada. She is a sessional instructor in the criminology departments at Simon Fraser University and the University of the Fraser Valley. She has been involved with nonprofit sex industry workers' organizations in Vancouver for the past 10 years; she is currently chairperson for an action group addressing safety in the sex industry. Her advocacy interests include ensuring that experiential workers play leading roles in all aspects of law reform related to their work. Her current research examines the impact of the Canadian criminal laws on marginalized groups in society.