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# Under New Law, France Would No Longer Be Sexual Playground of Men Like Dominique Strauss-Kahn

Friday 10 February 2012

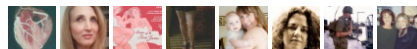
by: [Janice G. Raymond](#), Truthout | [News Analysis](#)

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Dominique Strauss-Kahn's (DSK) marauding sexual behavior has passed out of the news cycle. However, in the aftermath of DSK's alleged rape of a Guinean hotel maid in New York and subsequent accusations of his rapacious pattern of behavior in France, more information about his actions has emerged.

Several recent events have also challenged the French laissez-faire image of sexual exploitation so personified by DSK.



Dominique Strauss-Kahn. (Photo: Paul Taggart / The New York Times)

French women have made their voices heard, especially rejecting DSK's predatory behavior as simply the flirtatiousness of a man who defends his conduct with the feeble claim, "I love women, *et alors*." Most notably, Christine Lagarde, the woman who replaced DSK as the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), bluntly stated that **DSK's defenders were in denial when they named DSK the victim, "... while ignoring the real victim** and it led to unacceptable and disgusting comments by some of his friends. Male friends, of course."

Few news reports have detailed DSK's use of prostituted women and the pimping that made it possible. Police uncovered evidence that French businessmen paid for women who were delivered to DSK at clubs, restaurants and hotels in France, and elsewhere. According to Le Figaro, **David Roquet, head of a subsidiary of the large construction company Eiffage, billed his company for DSK's prostitution encounters.** Roquet, who has been charged with pimping, told investigators that he, Lille police chief Christophe Lagarde and DSK went to the luxury Murano hotel in Paris where they engaged in "paid-for sexual relations." Roquet also testified that he spent corporate funds to fly women to Washington, DC, and New York, who took part in sex parties at DSK's request. It was reported that DSK had also used prostituted women from the same agency as Eliot Spitzer, the fallen former governor of New York. Spitzer paid for women to be brought to him across state lines and, like DSK, was never prosecuted for purchasing sex or for trafficking.

In the midst of these sordid disclosures, a major political milestone took place in the French Parliament on December 6, 2011. All political parties in the National Assembly signed a resolution that "Reaffirms the abolitionist position of France, the objective of which is ultimately a society without prostitution."

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Significantly, this means that France does not recognize prostitution as "sex work," nor does it support legislation legalizing brothels and pimping. Legislators resolved that legal acceptance of prostitution is incompatible with French policies that promote gender equality and human rights. In supporting the resolution, legislators spoke about the failure of legalized prostitution systems in other European countries, which have become magnets for organized crime, and encourage violence against women.

The cross-party resolution was a follow-up to a yearlong French parliamentary information mission that heard testimony from various groups and individuals relating to prostitution law reform in France. Author and historian, Malka Marcovich, who testified at the hearings, remarked that the strong report of the committee "shows that the cultural stereotype of the French male's irrepressible sexual needs, enshrined in an archaic vision of French culture, can be opposed in the name of a revolutionary French vision of human dignity, equality and liberty."

The most far-reaching recommendation of the mission is a law proposal whereby prostitution users could face penalties of six months in jail and/or a fine of 3,000 euros. The proposed French legislation follows the model that is already in force in most of the Nordic countries, which is built on the public consensus that the system of prostitution promotes violence against women by normalizing sexual exploitation. Thus, in a society that aspires to advance women's equality, it is unacceptable for men to purchase women for sexual exploitation, whether rationalized as a sexual choice or as "sex work."

The Nordic model does not penalize the persons in prostitution, but makes resources available to them. Instead, it targets and exposes the anonymous perpetrators - the buyers, mostly men, who purchase mainly women and children for sexual services. The key to the law's effectiveness lies not so much in penalizing the men, but in removing the invisibility of the buyers and making their crimes public. Men fear being outed as prostitution users.

Criminalizing demand works. Police report that it becomes less profitable for pimps and traffickers to set up shop in countries where their customers fear the loss of their anonymity. Less profit means less prostitution and less violence against women.

If this law holding prostitution users accountable for their commercial sexual exploitation passes, France will be the first country on the Continent to penalize the demand for prostitution. Parliament has set the groundwork for a future vote on the proposal after the French elections.

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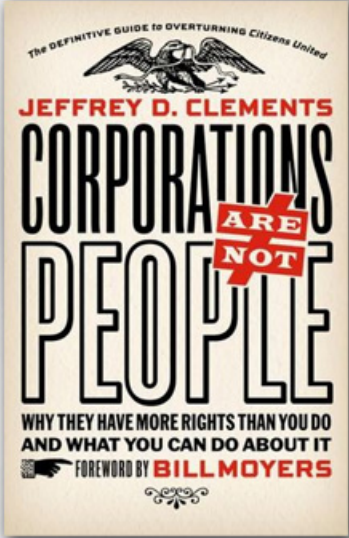
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Since the French parliamentary resolution, several sex clubs in Paris have been shuttered following allegations of pimping. The most prominent club closure was Les Chandelles. Regarded as the most exclusive of the 50 so-called Parisian "swingers" clubs - *club échangiste* in French - Les Chandelles appears to have been an upscale brothel with "highly organized" pimping and prostitution on the premises. Pimps recruit and provide women to the club's well-heeled men. After a long investigation, the police closed down the club on December 23, 2011.

The overall message on the club's web site is sexual seduction - DSK's favorite theme. In her now notorious words, Anne Sinclair, DSK's third wife, affirmed she was proud of her husband's sexual behavior because "It's important to seduce, for a politician." **The Independent UK reported that the club was frequented by DSK, "le Grand Séducteur."**

If Parliament passes the law penalizing the buyers, men like DSK will face legal accountability. In the meantime, France has already declared that as a country it does not support a legal system where prostitution flourishes as a normal business, where pimps are transformed into third-party business agents and where brothel owners are decriminalized as legitimate sex entrepreneurs. This France is definitely NOT the sexual playground of Dominique Strauss-Kahn.

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**JANICE G. RAYMOND**

Janice G. Raymond is a writer and the former co-director of the international Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW). She is currently writing a book on prostitution, sex trafficking and the global sex industry.

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Norma Jean Almodovar

Believing someone like Janice Raymond on the subject of prostitution is like believing George Rekers and the Family Research Council on the subject of homosexuality and abortion. Or believing the Klu Klux Klan regarding minorities. Ideologically biased individuals are not credible whatsoever. Listen to sex workers about our lives- not these bigoted persons who rake in the dough through the peddling of their 'tragedy porn' ("oh the poor prostitute- we MUST rescue her for her own good!!!!").

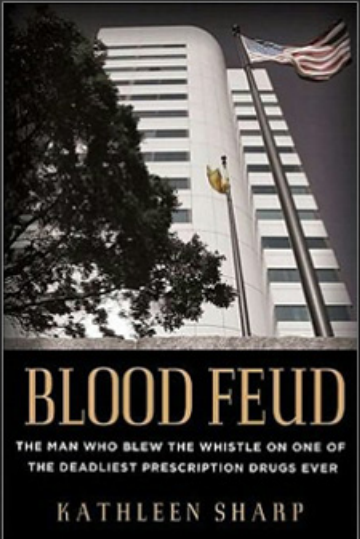
There are many sex worker rights organizations out there - including in France- where adult prostitutes are fighting for our human rights, only to be told by people like Ms. Raymond that we have no rights- we are victims. For all of you who believe that the majority of us don't 'choose' our profession, do you believe that those who work as domestic servants cleaning up after you at the hotels, motels, restaurants etc. are there by CHOICE? Would anyone WILLINGLY clean up the feces, urine and vomit of their fellow man if they had any other choice? And for minimum wage, no less! Get real! You may not approve of prostitution, but it has been around forever and will be as long as there are women like me who believe that we have a right to sell that which we can legally give away. You will push us further underground, putting us more at risk, corrupting more law enforcement agents who are willing to look the other way if we give them 'free samples' or money... The more repressive the legislation against us, the more we are at risk for our safety and our health.

We already have laws which should be used to stop real human trafficking which, by the way, occurs far more in domestic servitude and other labor than so called sex slavery- and there are laws against child sexual exploitation... which the US Government says 90% of the predators are someone whom the child knows and trusts- like preachers, teachers, priests, boy scout leaders and even cops... and 68% of predators are family members... like Keith Brown of the musical family The Five Browns... but no one seems to care about helping the MAJORITY of victims, like the victims of rape, domestic violence and abuse etc. Why is that, Janice?

12 minutes ago

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**Ivica Milkovic**

People are born from sex, people die from sex (STIs). If I get a powerful gift for Christmas, say a car, there are rules that keep me safe. I think it is the same with sexuality.

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence ... (Gal 5:1, 13-18)

Today, society considers the Catholic Church's views on sex "regressive, old fashioned and medieval". But "modern society" is more "regressive" than the Church. It is following Caligula in ancient Rome.

23 minutes ago

Like Reply

**Epeoples**

Why is there not a single word about rape in this article? DSK was no accused of seeing a prostitute in NY. He was accused of rape.

3 hours ago 1 Like

Like Reply

**Alessandra**

There is a lot of trafficking in Europe (from Eastern Europe and Africa), controlled by gangsters etc. Very sad to see so many young girls being systematically raped-- authorities apparently can care less about rescuing them (along with their male counterparts). I hope whatever measures are put into place, that they will improve conditions for at least a few of them. Most people in French society can also care less, and live under the notion that prostitution is quite all right -wink -wink, like adultery, promiscuity, homosexuality, etc.

18 hours ago

Like Reply

**tomdoff**

This is going to be a tremendous blow to the Catholic church in France. Unless the law exempts private or religiously affiliated houses of prostitution and sex clubs, all nunneries will have to close. And the costs of

continuously bailing-out priests and other members of the Catholic hierarchy on 'john' charges will render the church unprofitable.

23 hours ago

Like Reply



**Pbork1**

In a recent survey by The Georgia Straight , a Vancouver newspaper over 27% of the men responded positively to a question about paying for sex in the past. Should all these people now be turned into criminals and churned through our justice system? We all have laws around rape , which need to be used much more effectively. To talk about what consenting adults do amongst themselves and mix in sexual assault is disingenuous .

1 day ago 1 Like

Like Reply



**Tati Hare**

Not many prostitutes are fully consenting - having often a forced drug habit, poverty, single parenthood etc as circumstances that force them into such awful work. That's not to mention the illegal kidnapping and trafficking of thousands of women across borders, to be kept in brothels and prostituted illegally.

Yes, these men should be turned into criminals - by buying sex they degrade themselves and promote violence against women.

8 hours ago in reply to Pbork1 3 Likes Like Reply



**Norma Jean Almodovar**

How many do you suppose of those who work for minimum wage in domestic service cleaning up vomit, feces and urine are 'fully consenting'? Ought we to ban such work to protect those who are forced by financial circumstances to such menial labor?

How about before we turn the non violent, non abusive clients of prostitutes into criminals, we spend the resources to pursue, apprehend and punish the rapists of the between 400,000 to 500,000 victims whose

untested rape kits are languishing in police evidence lockers- where an actual victim WHO DID NOT CONSENT TO SEX went to the police, asked for help, underwent a traumatic procedure to obtain DNA evidence against the perpetrator and has waited FOR YEARS for someone to find the rapist and punish the perp? Every year, there are an additional 80,000 new rapes committed, of which about 20% of the rapists are caught... and there are more than 12 MILLION incidents of intimate partner violence and 1 MILLION incidents of intimate partner rape EVERY YEAR - how about we focus on the men and women who commit those acts of violence and not worry so much about whether or not us poor prostitutes have choices and if we really want to get paid hundreds of dollars for acts of sex we could legally have if we gave it away....

3 minutes ago in reply to Tati Hare

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