



REVOLVING DOOR

An Analysis of Street-Based Prostitution in New York City

The Urban Justice Center

Revolving Door

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URBAN JUSTICE CENTER

Sex Workers Project

This report was written by Juhu Thukral, Esq. and Melissa Ditmore, Ph.D., and reviewed by Berny Horowitz, Ph.D., for the Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center (SWP). The SWP’s overarching mission is to advocate for sex workers, former sex workers, and those who are profiled or at risk for engaging in sex work, including victims of human trafficking, within a context of harm reduction, human rights, and workers’ rights/economic justice.

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Executive Summary

"People need to understand, every hooker is not out there because they want to be, ... [there are] circumstances that keep people out there ... there are young kids out there . . . voices that need to be heard ... You can say, 'Get off my corner and move,' but you don't know if that person has any place to go to, you don't know if that person has just been beat up, or forced to be out there." - Charlotte

Introduction

Police and prostitutes¹ engage in a cat-and-mouse dynamic, in which the police seek to control the activities of prostitutes, and prostitutes respond by trying to avoid them. This report examines the impact of law enforcement approaches to street-based sex work in New York City and proposes a series of policy and practice recommendations for reform based on the researchers' analyses of the data collected.

This report also seeks to promote reasoned, fact-based, and informed debate regarding street-based prostitution in New York City. Public discussion of this issue usually occurs in flashy headlines that are meant to titillate rather than to explore the consequences of policy decisions in depth. This is a special effort to give voice to the problems faced by street-based sex workers, using their own words, since this is a voice that is almost always left out of policy debates. We propose recommendations based on programmatic possibilities that can create effective solutions for this population and the broader community.

The researchers focused on street-based prostitution primarily because these sex workers have the greatest contact with law enforcement and with the community at large, and thus receive the majority of police attention. Most are economically deprived and vulnerable. Current law enforcement approaches include arrest or giving a summons or desk-appearance ticket, often during the course of police sweeps (the practice of arresting all women or all people in a known prostitution area, temporarily removing prostitutes from the street.) However, this police strategy often results in women being falsely arrested or experiencing harassment. Moreover, as a result of these approaches, most prostitutes who have faced violence do not consider turning to the police for help. This problem is compounded by the fact that police do not always respond to the complaints of sex workers. In some instances, this has led to violence against prostitutes being ignored even when it is reported to police.

This report is entitled "Revolving Door" to reflect the phenomenon of frequent arrests that result in prostitutes repeatedly going in and out of the court system, spending nights at Rikers Island or in court pens at enormous expense, and coming back out only to face the same situation, with no lasting change or benefit to prostitutes or the surrounding community. This cycle is not merely ineffective, but it is tremendously expensive: people convicted of prostitution and prostitution-related offenses who are sentenced to jail serve their sentences in City jails at the cost of \$64,000 per year, \$175 per day.² To this must be added the costs of law enforcement and the operation of the criminal court system, plus the human cost - not measurable in monetary terms, but very great nonetheless - of criminalizing people who could instead be helped to become self-sufficient at far lower public expense. A change in official policy towards prostitutes including provision of long-term housing combined with provision of intensive and effective services are critical in order to end this cycle of arrests.

Key Findings

The sample consisted of 30 street-based prostitutes. Interview sites in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the Bronx were chosen with cooperating organizations that directed researchers to currently active prostitution areas. Although the sample size was small, the researchers were consistently told very similar things from subjects with very different demographic profiles. This supports a conclusion that the information presented was indicative of the general situation of street-based sex workers. Additionally, service providers and advocates were able to corroborate some of the information we received and attest to the general reliability of the respondents.

Problems faced by respondents included homelessness, substance dependency, and extreme poverty and desperation at levels that are far worse than in the general population. These problems are significant factors underlying the continued presence of this population on the streets. The majority of respondents also reported police abuses and

¹Sex work is a term used to refer to all aspects of the legal and illegal sex industry. In this report, however, the term sex worker and prostitute are used interchangeably because all subjects for this report were prostitutes.

²Correctional Association (2002). Basic Prison & Jail Fact Sheet http://www.correctionalassociation.org/prison_facts.htm (May 15, 2003).

disregard for violence directed towards street-based sex workers.

Demographics

- Out of the 30 sex workers interviewed, 11 were Latino, 5 were white, 10 were African-American, 3 were Asian and of mixed heritage, and 1 person declined to answer the question.
- 28 respondents were women, 3 of whom were transgender women. 2 male sex workers were interviewed.
- All subjects reported they were 19 or over, and ranged in age from 19 to 53 years old. Respondents entered the sex industry at extremely diverse ages, ranging from 13 to 50.

Housing

- 26 respondents (87 percent) among the street-based sex workers had unstable housing situations. Only 4 reported having stable housing. While most reported having a place where they could go, few street-based sex workers had homes of their own. They reported staying in single-room occupancy hotels (SROs), hotels, shelters or sharing a room with friends or associates (in SROs and hotels.) Some paid to sleep in crack houses, some stayed with friends as much as they could, while a few said that they tried not to sleep because it was dangerous to sleep without a place to go. These respondents worried about robbery, rape and other violence.

Substance Dependency

- Researchers asked respondents to state the first thing that they paid for with money earned from prostitution, using this response as a barometer of substance dependency. 25 respondents (83 percent) were affected by substance dependency, and 5 subjects were occasional users or did not use drugs at all.

Alternative Sentencing/Mandated Services

- 15 subjects (50 percent) had never been offered any services as a result of an arrest. 15 subjects (50 percent) had been offered some type of services or alternative sentencing as a result of an arrest, such as doing community service or going to a class for a few hours. However, only 1 of the subjects was offered in-depth or long-term services. For 14 of the 15 subjects (93 percent) who had been offered a mandated service, the service offered was a two-hour health class covering information on sexually-transmitted diseases, including HIV. One problem with mandated services was that subjects would often not appear for services and then a warrant was issued for their arrest. Once arrested for having failed to show up for mandated services, the subjects then served a much lengthier jail time than they would have originally served.

Family Situations

- 9 respondents had no children. 21 did have children. The children of the 13 interviewees with minor children almost universally lived with other family members. Many subjects recognized that they would need to stop using drugs in order to regain custody of their children.

Police Interactions

Run-Ins and Harassment

Researchers asked how often respondents had “run-ins” with police, meaning interactions that were not initiated by the respondent. Responses were placed on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 meant that the respondent had no non-initiated contacts with police, while 5 meant that the respondent had near-daily or daily non-initiated contacts with police.

- 21 street-based sex workers (70 percent) described near-daily police-initiated interactions with law enforcement, which were scored 5. Such interactions were not always related to criminal activity. Many of these respondents described being unable to accomplish non-criminal tasks like shopping for groceries and riding the subway without law-enforcement initiated interactions with police. These interactions included but were not limited to ticketing and arrest.

- Respondents interpreted high frequency of police-initiated interactions as harassment, especially where the respondent was engaging in no criminal activity at the time of such contact. Respondents experienced police harassment in different ways. For some, harassment was police-initiated contact including sexual situations, violence and threats of violence, whereas for others harassment was often reported as false arrests. Sexual situations included inappropriate touching, extortion of sex (sometimes in exchange for not making an arrest) and rape.

- In the Bronx, respondents reported that interactions were more common with off-duty officers and respondents reported far lower rates of arrest than in other areas. Respondents in the Bronx and in Bushwick, Brooklyn, described sexual and non-sexual harassment and reported that they were paid for some sexual interactions with police officers. Law enforcement crackdowns on prostitution are not uniform across New York City. In both sites in Brooklyn, respondents reported high numbers of arrests and ticketing related to prostitution and other activities, including nuisance charges such as traffic violations for pedestrians. On the other hand, respondents in the Bronx reported few prostitution-related arrests and few tickets, which tended to be given for offenses such as violating the open container law.

Police Violence and Sexual Harassment

- 9 respondents (30 percent) told researchers that they had been threatened with violence by police officers. 8 reported experiencing violence at the hands of police.

- 5 respondents (17 percent) described sexual harassment by police. 1 respondent reported being raped by a police officer. Another respondent described extreme incidents of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment included officers intimating that they would give arrested women cigarettes in exchange for sex. One woman reported stalking behavior by a police officer. Transgender women described similar issues with harassment, but also described specific differences relating to officers checking their genitals and making comments about their gender.

Arrests

- Many interactions with police led to arrests, for both prostitution-related offenses and others, including drug-related arrests. 28 respondents had been arrested in the twelve months prior to being interviewed. 2 others had more than 10 arrests, the most recent being in the 15 months prior to the interview. These two had changed their work habits in order to decrease their interactions with law enforcement officers. Numbers of arrests varied greatly, ranging from 1 to more than 50. A total of 9 respondents reported 10 or more arrests.

- Respondents' descriptions of arrest include experiences with violence, sexual situations of varying extremes, false arrest, and police sweeps

False Arrests

- 23 respondents (77 percent) reported having been subjected to false arrest at some point. A positive response to this question meant that the subject interpreted the charges leveled against them as not being an accurate description of what they were doing. This was commonly related to sweeps.

Attempts to Avoid Police Interaction

- Research subjects described practices they developed that they hoped would allow them to avoid police contact. These include changing or varying their locations, schedules and practices in attempts to decrease the possibility of interactions with law enforcement. They use these methods to avoid both arrest and harassment.

- Respondents reported using similar methods to avoid police, including frequently changing times and locations of their work, dressing conservatively, taking care to avoid engaging in obvious behavior while soliciting customers, and assessing whether a potential customer is an undercover police officer.

Good Police Interactions

- Not all prostitute-police interactions are arrest-oriented or negative. 7 subjects (23 percent) reported that they had positive experiences with police, most notably when they reported domestic violence situations.

- One respondent reported a good experience with the police following violence from a client. Experiences that

respondents viewed as positive included instances that other civilians would take for granted, such as police taking reports of violence and following up on these reports.

Violence From Customers

- Respondents most frequently cited violence and danger, including difficulties with the police, when asked what most makes sex work difficult. 24 out of 30 respondents (80 percent) experienced either violence or threats in the course of their work. 18 out of 30 respondents (60 percent) had experiences with male clients who became violent or tried to force them to do things they did not want to do. These problems include rape, assault and robbery.

Safety precautions

- All subjects employed safety precautions in their work. Respondents described a preference for obtaining as customers people previously known to them, relying on gut feelings and retreating from perceived danger in order to avoid violence, as well as self-defense tactics. Women in Bushwick and Coney Island, locations with a large amount of street commerce, described cooperating with other sex workers in order to enhance their own safety. Condom use was also mentioned as a safety precaution.

Reporting Violent Incidents To The Police

- Crimes against prostitutes usually go unpunished. There is a tacit acceptance of this form of violence, usually committed against women. The overwhelming majority of respondents did not go to the police after they experienced violent incidents. Street-based sex workers described enormous difficulties in their attempts to report prostitution-related violence to the police, many of them laughing and saying “no” or “of course not!” when researchers asked follow-up questions about customer violence with questions about whether they had gone to the police for help. Others who attempted to report violent crimes were told by the police that their complaints would not be accepted, that this is what they should expect, and that they deserve all that they get. When these women experienced further violence, they did not turn to the police.

- Prostitutes often encounter the popular belief that it is not possible for a prostitute to be raped. Sex workers have limits to what they are willing to do with clients, and all acts and money to be exchanged are negotiated beforehand. Rape is a violent encounter with painful consequences for prostitutes just as much as for anyone else. The tacit acceptance of such violence, represented by indifference to these crimes on the part of the police and society, only encourages such violence.

Working

Work Locations

- Subjects reported having sex in various venues including deserted areas and cars as well as hotels and apartments/ customers’ residences.

Working Indoors v. Outdoors

- 17 respondents reported that they would prefer to work indoors entirely. Explanations for their continued outdoor work included the lack of any private space in which to receive clients, the reluctance of indoor venues such as brothels or escort services to employ women with substance dependencies, difficulties in maintaining the fixed schedule of an indoor venue (particularly in the case of subjects with substance dependencies), and the difficulty of meeting or making contact with clients without being present on the street.

- A number of street-based sex workers described making arrangements with clients by telephone or setting up pre-arranged appointments in other ways. Although this was often complicated by factors such as the lack of a telephone, many subjects made the effort in order to avoid interactions with the police and with dangerous johns.

Other Street Personalities

- No respondents in this sample had “pimps” or were in stereotypical “pimping” situations, as elicited by researchers’

questions about sharing money from prostitution.

- 5 respondents described their interactions with men whom one respondent labeled “so-called pimps.” All five of these women were clear that they wanted no part of such a relationship. They were not approached again and were not intimidated by these encounters.

Work History

- All respondents were involved in commercial sex for financial reasons. The majority (22 of 30) of street-based sex workers named substance dependency as the reason they continued to work on the streets - they were able to support their drug habits in this way. People with substance dependency are frequently unable to meet the demands of regular employment. The street has no schedule constraints, unlike more structured environments such as brothels or legal work.

Entry to Prostitution and Difficulties Exiting

- Respondents gave numerous reasons for initially taking up prostitution. The most common answer among street-based sex workers was substance dependency. A lack of other employment opportunities was also a factor for sex workers who did not enter the sex industry in order to support drug use.
- Housing presents a specific difficulty for those who want to leave sex work. Homeless respondents and those with unstable or marginal housing, such as those living in SROs, described the difficulties of combating substance dependency when remaining amid people who also use drugs. Being offered drugs to share by neighbors presented nearly irresistible temptation, especially in a climate without peer support from non-drug users.
- Transgender women have additional reasons to remain in sex work and spoke of discrimination in trying to find other jobs.

Prior Employment

- 24 subjects had held more than one job in the past, while 6 had not. Respondents frequently cited unlivable wages in other work. Only 10 of these 24 respondents (42 percent) held jobs in the past which paid well enough for them to support themselves. Other occupations held by interviewees were usually low-paid, entry-level positions that did not provide enough money to live.
- Waitressing was the most common job previously held by respondents. A number of other food-service-related jobs were also cited, including bartending, working in fast-food restaurants or even managing a restaurant that was part of a large fast-food chain.
- Many of the low-paying jobs cited would not be deemed skilled labor, including working in a hotel; retail sales in department and clothing stores; odd jobs; security; secretarial and receptionist positions; nurse’s aide; school aide; and babysitting. Licensed or skilled labor that respondents reported did not provide them sufficient income for their needs included hair dressing and makeup; work in entertainment including singing, drag shows and dancing; positions in real estate; as a dental assistant; and as an emergency medical technician. Other respondents reported having worked in an amusement park and at a printing house.

Future Plans and Attaining Goals

- The number of respondents who wanted to do other work is high, but many of them continued to see clients for financial reasons. Some were unfamiliar with the process of looking for work, including resume preparation and accessing appropriate interview attire. Many people in the sex industry have gaps in their resumes. Having criminal convictions on their records can also be a deterrent in finding other employment. Subjects indicated that it would be an aid to their employment to find ways to describe the skills they have.

Legal and Other Needs

- Subjects expressed a need for a variety of legal services, addressing the following issues: criminal; child welfare; housing; domestic violence; and for transgender women, legal name-change and legal sex-change on identification cards. Subjects also reported that they needed housing and counseling/supportive services.

Key Conclusions

This research reveals that street-based sex workers in New York City experience problems of excessive police contact, violence at the hands of customers and sometimes from police themselves, and a lack of housing and intensive supportive services which can assist them in staying off the street. Without addressing these underlying problems it is not possible to find a long-term, viable, and humane solution to the problems that face street-based sex workers. Current policy and law enforcement efforts are not effective, as indicated by the cycle of arrests that prostitutes experience. Their only significant detectable effects are to temporarily remove people from the street and to generate headlines. Only targeted and substantial programs will accomplish the goals of making the streets safe for everyone.

Not everyone will agree that this population is a priority among those in greatest need, especially during the current citywide fiscal crisis. However, the City administration, police, and residents in some neighborhoods continue to make control of street-based sex workers a de facto priority by encouraging crackdowns on prostitution (either directly or through quality of life initiatives.) This approach to street-based prostitution creates a cycle of arrests and ticketing that consumes police, court, and other government resources, but fails to create any appropriate long-term solutions. Additionally, while such responses might temporarily address complaints of neighborhood residents, the immediate goal of getting sex workers off the streets must be balanced against the harm done by sweeps and the longer-term goal of assisting people who currently live on the margins of society to move towards self-sufficiency.

Street-based sex workers have limited job opportunities outside of sex work, and almost no access to employment that offers a living wage. The majority of subjects had held many different jobs in the past, and many of those respondents cited unlivable wages in this other work. Other occupations held by subjects were usually low-paid, entry-level positions that did not provide enough money to live. The choice of street-based sex work is an aspect of a broader issue of economic justice and the lack of real economic options for earning a living wage among people from economically-marginalized communities.

In order to address the problem of street-based prostitution, it is critical that the City explore policies which do not simply create a cycle of arrests. Promoting and expanding more humane policies can create an environment where street-based prostitutes are empowered to come forward when they experience violence, and where this marginalized population can have a sustained opportunity to move beyond an existence in which they are barely surviving.

Key Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on findings derived from this research, including the recommendations made by the subjects themselves, and by service providers and advocates. They address ways to achieve humane and realistic treatment of street-based sex workers in New York City, and to revamp “revolving door” justice. The recommendations initially address housing, then programs and services, and finally, a range of criminal justice practices. The researchers chose to present recommendations in this order because criminal justice policies and practices, as they relate to this population, may be shaped by the availability of services.

It is critical to create funding streams at the federal, state, and local government levels, and to re-direct money from incarceration in order to support the law enforcement and joint advocate/law enforcement initiatives that are recommended.

Public Discussion

- Based on these findings, which include the needs and concerns of women and men from the target population, this report recommends an informed and fact-based public discussion and further inquiry to erase the idea that prostitution is merely a criminal justice issue, and to find ways for police to be productive in ensuring the safety of sex workers.

Housing

- Create transitional shelters that are similar to domestic violence shelters, but which specifically serve street-based sex workers. Such specific shelters for prostitutes should be able to house residents for an extended period of time, with shelter staff assisting residents in finding and moving into permanent long-term housing.

- Create similar shelters which specifically serve transgender women.
- Explore a “housing first” model for street-based sex workers who receive SSI or cash assistance who can pay towards rent, and where such public assistance programs can act as representative payees for clients.
- It is critical to create federal, state, and local government funding streams and to redirect money from incarceration to support these housing programs, and service programs recommended below, for street-based sex workers.

Programs and Services

- Create and expand desperately-needed intensive case management and seamless services for street-based prostitutes. Necessary services include substance abuse treatment; mental health and counseling/support; job training; money management; and healthcare. It is critical to address all the issues in an integrated, intensive and long-term manner, combined with long-term and permanent housing.
- Services for street-based sex workers should be combined with street outreach programs, and the ability to offer an immediate place to stay.

Criminal Justice Policy

Police Interaction with Prostitutes

- Policy makers should carefully consider the extent to which they make prostitution a criminal justice priority, especially in a period of budgetary crisis. They should also consider the widespread police abuse of authority reflected in this research. Additionally, it is important to bear in mind that many in this population are barely surviving, and that intensive housing and service-based methods may be better suited for addressing street-based prostitution.
- Police must stop engaging in arrests or ticketing of street-based sex workers where no probable cause exists. These false arrests violate the human rights of all persons who are in the neighborhood, including those who are not engaging in illegal activity.
- Police should work with community-based organizations to utilize their contacts with prostitutes as an opportunity for needs assessment and referral to appropriate services.
- Arrest statistics are useful tools for government, community members, and advocates, as they inform all invested parties about significant problems and changes in street-related trends. Currently, arrest data that is disaggregated by age, race/ethnicity, gender and gender identity, and borough are not available. Furthermore, arrests are often reported as “prostitution-related offenses” and are not disaggregated by individual offense. NYPD should keep these records and make them available to the public, and report them to the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services.

Mandated Services

- It is not clear that mandating services, at least in their present form, is a useful policy. This report does not recommend mandating services at this time. There exists a shortage of appropriate and intensive services, and even current court-ordered programs are having their funding cut. Furthermore, street-based sex workers who are not ready for treatment but who are mandated to services often fail to appear, therefore creating harsher criminal sanctions for themselves.

Violence Against Prostitutes

- Whatever one’s feelings about sex work, no one should be willing to condone incidents of violence such as those described in this report. In no other occupation does society regularly blame the victims of violence for acts committed against them. It is imperative that police officers should be properly trained and should adopt best practices for dealing with violence against prostitutes. Prostitutes must be made to feel that they can step forward and seek justice on behalf of themselves.
- Complaints by sex workers should be met with the same respect and regard that would be given to any other

crime victim, and complaints must be addressed and investigated without penalty to these victims of violence, even when they were subjected to violence or attempted violence while committing prostitution or other illegal acts. It is critical that police assure prostitutes that they will not be investigated or arrested for illegal behavior if they come forward to report a crime of violence.

- Special attention must be given to police who commit violence or other crimes against prostitutes. These acts include sexual assault or abuse, sexual harassment, theft, and extortion of sexual services in exchange for not being arrested. Police leadership must make it known that they take such exploitation seriously. Police and the courts must aggressively investigate and punish police officers who engage in sexual harassment or violence of any kind against sex workers.

Interference With Public Health Outreach Efforts

- Police must create and enforce best practices toward public health outreach projects that distribute condoms, food, and other tools of harm reduction. Interference such as threats of arrest, false arrests, and harassment of project staff must stop.

Police and prostitutes³ engage in a cat-and-mouse dynamic, in which the police seek to control the activities of prostitutes, and prostitutes respond by trying to avoid them. This report examines the impact of law enforcement approaches to street-based sex work in New York City and proposes a series of policy and practice recommendations for reform based on the researchers' analyses of the data collected.

This report also seeks to promote reasoned, fact-based, and informed debate regarding street-based prostitution in New York City. Public discussion of this issue usually occurs in flashy headlines that are meant to titillate rather than to explore the consequences of policy decisions in-depth. This report seeks to give voice to the problems faced by street-based sex workers, in their own words, since this is a voice almost always left out of policy debates. We propose recommendations based on programmatic possibilities that can create effective solutions for this population and for the broader community.

The researchers focused on street-based prostitution primarily because these sex workers have the greatest contact with law enforcement and with the community at large, and thus receive the majority of police attention. Most are economically deprived and vulnerable. Current law enforcement approaches include arrest or issuing of a summons or desk-appearance ticket, often through the use of police sweeps (the practice of arresting all women or all people in a known prostitution area, temporarily removing prostitutes from the street.) However, this police strategy often results in women being falsely arrested or experiencing harassment. Moreover, such approaches discourage prostitutes who have been subjected to violence from seeing the police as a resource, depriving them of protections available to other citizens. This problem is compounded by the fact that police do not always respond to the complaints of sex workers, even in cases of violence.

Current law enforcement approaches also fail to accomplish the goal of finding a long-term, viable, and humane solution to the problems of these women and youths, most of whom live in poverty, are substance abusers, and have only marginal housing. It is this population that most often engages in sex work on the street. The primary result is a cycle of arrests and ticketing followed by a return to the precarious world of street-based sex work that consumes police, court, and other government resources but does nothing to create appropriate long-term, viable and humane solutions to the difficulties of these vulnerable women and men.

The title "Revolving Door" refers to the phenomenon of frequent arrests that result in the arrested prostitutes going in and out of the court system, spending nights at Rikers Island or in court pens at enormous expense, and coming back out only to face the same situation, with no lasting change or benefit to anyone, either the prostitutes or the surrounding community. The cost of this policy is enormous: those convicted of prostitution and prostitution-related offenses who are sentenced to jail serve their sentences in City jails at the cost of \$64,000 per year, \$175 per day (Correctional Association 2002). This monetary figure reflects only the cost of incarceration and does not include the costs involved in law enforcement and the operation of the criminal court system. This is in addition to the enormous human cost of criminalizing people who could instead be helped to become self-sufficient at far lower public expense. Provision of long-term housing and intensive and effective services are critical in order to end this cycle of arrests.

There may be other costs as well. HIV rates among street-based sex workers appear to be rising again in New York City after a decline lasting more than a decade. The very real possibility of a causal connection between this apparent rise and police actions including sweeps and other control tactics that affect both prostitutes and public health outreach and education projects is a matter of grave concern. Insofar as current police tactics hinder or restrict the access of sex workers to resources that can help them educate and protect themselves against AIDS and other health threats, it is imperative for law enforcement to develop alternative responses to prostitution.

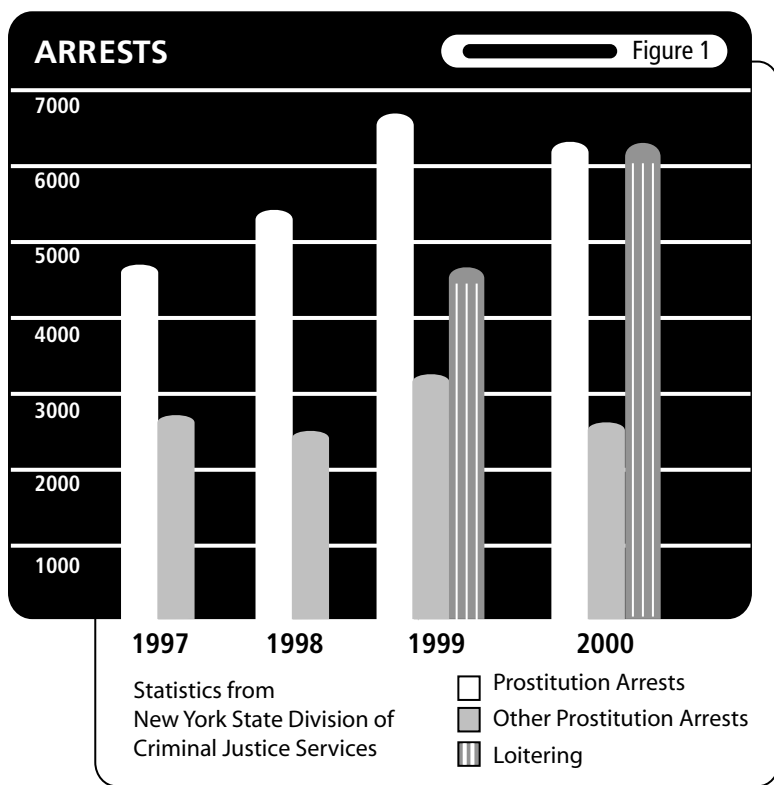
New York City Context

The sex industry is subject to great moral opprobrium, yet it persists. Recent anti-vice efforts have cited "quality of life" problems in New York City as a reason to engage in crackdowns on sex work, both legal and illegal. In the past decade, a zoning plan for adult-oriented businesses was conceived and implemented in New York City

³As stated in Footnote 1 on Page 1, sex work is a term used to refer to all aspects of the legal and illegal sex industry. In this report, however, the term sex worker and prostitute are used interchangeably because all subjects interviewed for the report were prostitutes.

under former mayor Rudolph Giuliani, after much study and many public hearings (Department of City Planning 1994, Task Force on the Regulation of Sex-Related Businesses 1994, Insight Associates 1994). These reports cited quality of life concerns about crime and real estate concerns including property values. The zoning plan exclusively addressed legal businesses. Regulations specify a maximum square footage permitted to adult-oriented businesses, the percentage of adult-oriented inventory used to determine whether a business is adult-oriented (40 percent), and prescribed distances from residential areas, schools and other adult-oriented businesses (Kleinfeld 1998, Rohde 1998b). As with all such regulations, creative efforts have been made by the business owners to remain within the law (Rohde1998a).

Current Mayor Michael Bloomberg has continued efforts against quality of life offenses (Marzulli 2002a; Celona, Messing & Haberman 2002), including prostitution. Marzulli (2002b) describes “Operation Clean Sweep,” announced in January 2002, as an effort to eradicate quality of life problems, including prostitution, with the use of undercover officers, summonses and warrants. Although prostitution was a major focus of this initiative, it appears to be of lesser concern to New Yorkers: in a listing of the “100 worst quality of life hot spots in New York City” (Marzulli 2002b), prostitution prompts fewer official complaints than homelessness, peddling, panhandling and drug- and alcohol-related problems.



Prostitution arrests increased by 17 percent from 1997 to 1998, and continued to increase by another 19 percent from 1998 to 1999. Numbers of actual prostitution arrests declined by 5 percent between 1999 and 2000 at the end of Mayor Giuliani’s term, but arrests for loitering for the purpose of prostitution increased by 35 percent, leading to an overall increase of 4 percent in all prostitution-related arrests even as “other prostitution” arrests (promoting prostitution and patronizing a prostitute) decreased by 20 percent. (Data on charges for loitering for prostitution is only available from 1999 to 2000). Aspects of Giuliani’s law-and-order approach to “quality of life” crimes appear to be continued by Mayor Bloomberg, as described above, but arrest statistics after 2000 were not yet available when this report was written.

“Operation Spotlight” is another City quality of life campaign. Like Operation Clean Sweep, it focuses on quality of life offenses, targeting repeat offenders with high numbers of arrests. When asked about the City’s approach to prostitution in July 2002, the Mayor’s Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator stated that “we

haven’t developed a city plan on prostitution” and that Operation Spotlight is a quality of life policy, which is not specific to prostitutes. While there is no official City policy on prostitutes, there is a New York Police Department (NYPD) policy on prostitution in the NYPD’s Patrol Guide, which describes arrest procedures. The Patrol Guide specifies that for prostitution-related arrests, the length of time of police observations is to be included in the police report, as well as “conversations with various men, women or known prostitutes,” clothing, and whether the arrested party is a known prostitute (Procedure Numbers 208-44 and 208-45). The term “known prostitute” is not defined.

Many street-based prostitutes are barely surviving, homeless or marginally housed, and have a need for substance abuse treatment and a host of other services. The City recognizes this and acknowledges this need by mandating some services as a form of alternative sentencing. However, the Mayor’s Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator has at least an informal position that street-based personalities who need services, particularly for substance abuse, do not seek such treatment voluntarily, but respond most strongly to “the hammer” - being forced into treatment under threat of facing jail time.⁴

⁴Interview with John Feinblatt, Criminal Justice Coordinator, July 16, 2002.

Sentiments about quality of life in New York City are not uniform. A New York Times article from May 2002 describes residents feeling secure and aware that media reports of crime inflate insecurity, sometimes needlessly (Murphy 2002). At the same time, public perceptions of insecurity are fuelled by New York's tabloids which report crime, including quality of life crimes, in sensational terms (Marzullo 2002a). Specific areas of the city have specific concerns: residents of the West Village residents, a neighborhood that has been historically identified with tolerance, are often vocal about quality of life issues, including prostitution and public sex (Murphy 2002).

Prostitution may be subject to more scrutiny with increased sweeps of known prostitution areas under quality of life operations. Operation Spotlight's stated focus on repeat offenders may lead to targeting of prostitutes (McPhee 2002), although statistics suggest that many people arrested for prostitution are in fact not repeat offenders. Of 1075 prostitution-related charges arraigned by the Midtown Community Court in 2001, 849 (79 percent) involved subjects who had no prior convictions.

Some subjects in this research have mentioned an increase in the use of warrants and long, ongoing investigations under the Bloomberg administration to crack down on illegal indoor operations such as brothels, reflecting a shift in attitude and a renewed dedication of resources to crackdown operations both indoors and on the city streets. However, this report focuses on street prostitutes because of their large numbers of interactions with law enforcement officers. Investigation of industrial neighborhoods exposed the vulnerability of the street people active there, including drug users and street prostitutes, many of whom are homeless or marginally housed. Street activity including prostitution is the subject of heated recent debates in which residents of some neighborhoods have become active, decrying what they consider offensive noise, traffic and litter in some areas with street prostitution (Worth 2002).

It is clear that New York City is not alone in pursuing a variety of strategies to combat prostitution. Other anti-prostitution law enforcement efforts nationwide include john schools (Vitzhum, Wagner, Maxim), posting photos of clients⁵ and/or prostitutes on the web and one televised announcement of HIV+ status of a man convicted for prostitution (Akron Beacon-Journal Online 1998).

Sviridoff, Rottman, Ostrom and Curtis (2000) focus on New York City's Midtown Community Court, which aims to combine community service with social services as an alternative to "revolving door" law enforcement of misdemeanor crimes like prostitution and street vending that neither satisfies the community nor addresses the root causes of these largely entrepreneurial offenses (86).

A number of things can be said in favor of the Midtown Community Court. Appearances before the judge happen more quickly than they do in other courts. Services available through the Department of Health at the Midtown Community Court include referrals to substance abuse treatment, health services and other assistance, on-site testing for HIV and other STIs as well as testing for tuberculosis, and court-based classes in English as a Second Language and the high school equivalency exam (76). Their "[a]udits of defendant participation ... reveal that between 15 and 20 percent of defendants sentenced to intermediate sanctions at the Court take advantage of some court-based service voluntarily." (76) The numbers of people taking advantage of the services provided demonstrate that there is some effective demand for these services, though the majority do not use them. However, frustration remains because not everyone and certainly not even the majority of the people in the criminal justice system are able or willing to resolve whatever problem has led to their arrest.

Representatives of Midtown Community Court state that they encourage everyone in their catchment area to voluntarily partake of services at the court. It is not necessary for services to be tied to an arrest or sentence. However, arrest is perceived "as a gateway to services" at the court "[w]ith their coercive power" (Sviridoff et al 2000: 64). Representatives of the court maintain that there is evidence that services are more effective when a mandate is attached.⁶ Sviridoff et al state that "classes and [Alcoholics Anonymous] groups are open to defendants and members of the community." (30) This opens the question of whether other services are provided for those who are not mandated to them, and it is difficult to determine exactly what the term "voluntary" connotes in this project. "Voluntary" services seems to indicate that some of those who had come through the court via arrest or ticketing were linked to long-term services like drug detoxification after completing short-term assignments or sentences within the court (ibid: 76-78.) Sviridoff et al record a falling-off of completion of community service assignments among prostitutes when the assignment lasts more than four days.

The Midtown Community Court has adopted a policy of sentencing people to community service immediately

⁵This is done in St. Paul, Minnesota as of January 25, 2003. (http://www.stpaul.gov/depts/police/prostitution_photos_current.html)

⁶Correspondence and conversation with Adam Mansky and Raul Sanchez of the Midtown Community Court/Center for Court Innovation

after their hearing, a measure which has led to fewer missed assignments. Sviridoff et al are enthusiastic about a reduction in street prostitution in midtown Manhattan which they attribute to community service assignments making prostitution there less desirable. Yet they also describe a situation where women are serving community service sentences by day and working on the street at night, rather than demonstrate that their project prevents prostitution (150). Sviridoff et al also describe displacement of prostitution to other, possibly more dangerous areas (151, 154, 155) and women undertaking other illegal activities such as shoplifting and involvement with drug dealing (152) to replace income that formerly came from prostitution. This reflects a change in type of illegal activity rather than a decrease in crime.

The beginning of the Midtown Community Court coincided with other new economic, social and law enforcement initiatives, making it difficult to attribute the decline of street prostitution in midtown in the mid- and late 1990s primarily to their efforts (61, 107, 208-209). However, one of the Community Court's strengths is the recognition that many street-based sex workers are residents of the community in their jurisdiction (64) and thus part of the community rather than outsiders. The needs of women arrested for prostitution were thus taken into account at the court, as demonstrated by the decision to offer medical services beyond drug testing and treatment, rather than simply punishing them (28, 42, 72-73).

Nonetheless, community courts are no panacea and may be harsher for some populations, including prostitutes (Sviridoff et al 2000: 124, 129, 174). Similar courts have been accused of coercing people to participate in programs as "alternatives to incarceration" even in cases in which the sentence would not include jail time (Barr 2003).

Other analyses addressing the needs of street prostitutes in New York City such as Weiner (1996) stress that normal venues of service delivery are not effective with this vulnerable and visible yet secretive population. Weiner (1996) and Ditmore (2002b) remind us that the key to greater utilization of services is to find out from the prostitutes themselves which services they want and find helpful; Sviridoff et al record that inquiries of this kind led to the realization that there was a significant need and desire for medical services. (72-73).

Prostitution has been widely studied, typically under the heading of deviant behavior. A large amount of literature covering interactions between police and prostitutes - the subject of this report - is available, but the majority of it comes from other countries. A number of detailed studies document police abuses and responses to such abuses of sex workers in Cambodia, Papua New Guinea and India, but similar unfortunate incidents have also been reported in less systematic reports from various parts of the US. Despite the very different locations and contexts, some of the issues relevant to sex workers in other countries are similar to those explored in this report, including law enforcement harassment and violence faced by sex workers. The Cambodian Women's Development Association (2002) report about police and sex work stated "100 percent of sex workers surveyed claimed that they require the assistance of the local authorities and the government to protect them from police human rights violations." The same study reported that "88 percent of respondents explained that they would not report a violation to other policemen, or the local authorities." Jenkins' (1997) thorough work on police and sex workers in Papua New Guinea described gang rapes by policemen and the actions taken to combat such behavior, including peer education. Jenkins (1997) also documents efforts to prosecute policemen for violent crimes including rape. Ditmore (2002a) describes grassroots efforts of a sex workers collective in Calcutta that has faced difficulties because local police are sometimes unaware of the laws they are committed to enforce, leading to excessive and inappropriate enforcement of an anti-trafficking law in ways that adversely affect sex workers.

Some American reports touch upon police and prostitutes, often revealing that prostitutes do not usually see the police as helpful, even when they have been victims of violence (Dalla 2000, Hay 1994). Poulcallec-Gordon (forthcoming) describes pervasive racism and its effects on sex workers in New York City, including reduced education and professional training leading to racial stratification with minorities in the street-based economy. Hay (1994) writes about routine illegal sexual interactions between police and the women they arrest in San Francisco. Fairstein (1993) writes about police disinterest in investigating even murders of prostitutes: "As recently as 1991, police in a southern California community closed all rape reports made by prostitutes and substance dependent people, placing them in a file stamped 'NHI.' The letters stand for the words 'No Human Involved.'"

Other relevant literature documents attempts by other U.S. cities to control prostitution. For example, O'Leary & Howard 2001:1 record that Chicago, with a total of 5,651 prostitution-related arrests in 1999 has about 40 percent of the prostitution-related arrest numbers of New York City, where there were 6,535 arrests for prostitution itself, 4,596 arrests for loitering for the purpose of prostitution and 3,258 other prostitution arrests in 1999.⁷ This is almost in proportion to Chicago's size, with just more than one-third the population of New York City. Chicago's Center for Impact Research (O'Leary & Howard 2001, Raphael & Shapiro 2002) and the Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center in New York City draw similar conclusions: that sex workers are often in marginal situations and that violence against sex workers is tacitly accepted. Norton-Hawk (2001) describes another large U.S. city, drawing attention to the high cost of incarcerating non-violent criminals, especially prostitutes, and confirming that incarceration itself is a predictor of recidivism - partly because of its constricting effects on a prostitute's ability to secure other employment.

Researchers are often asked to estimate the number of sex workers in a given area. Due to the covert nature of commercial sex, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine how many sex workers are currently working in New York City, and almost impossible to make a blanket statement as to their needs and working conditions. We remain skeptical of all statistics that claim to be representative or exhaustive, especially when such estimates may be influenced by political viewpoints. To illustrate this consider figures given for minors in the sex industry, with different organizations reporting widely varying estimates of the number of underage prostitutes in New York City. ECPAT-USA's⁸ rough estimate of 5,000 commercially sexually exploited youths in New York City is the highest estimate by far.⁹ At the other extreme, a December 6, 2002, New York City Council briefing about minors in the sex industry clearly underestimated numbers; Michael Brooke of the Vice Enforcement Division of the New York Police

⁷New York City prostitution-related arrest numbers provided by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. Other prostitution refers to pandering and patronizing a prostitute.

⁸ECPAT is an international organization that works to abolish the presence of minors in the sex industry.

⁹Correspondence and conversations with Mia Spangenberg, author of *Prostituted Youth in New York City: An Overview* (2001), indicated that this figure comes from a 1984 report (Schaffer and Caton) that estimates 20,000 homeless youth in New York City and from studies citing that at least one-third of homeless youths sell sex. Clatts et al. (1998, 1999) found that at least one third of their respondents were involved in sexual commerce - not all of which was formally recognized as overt sexual commerce - at some point in the twelve months prior to their interviews (Clatts and Davis 1999, Clatts, et al. 1998).

Department estimated that there were just 15 underaged prostitutes active in New York City (Cardwell 2002) and reported that 66 minors were arrested for prostitution during 2002. Another New York City Division has identified an additional 70 girls under 18. Such figures are hard to accept when outreach workers with the Sex Workers Project have observed approximately ten presumed minors engaged in street prostitution in a single area on one night alone. Other reports have documented similarly disparate estimates (Ives 2001: 8, 21). The most reliable estimates fall in between these two extremes and come from organizations that work directly with prostitutes. Priscilla Alexander, director of research and evaluation at From Our Streets with Dignity (FROSTD) argues that 1,000 would be a more realistic estimate (Cardwell 2002). Rachel Lloyd, director of a respected organization which conducts outreach to girls in prostitution, estimates that numbers are in the hundreds (Gaskell 2002).

A large body of more general literature about law enforcement includes information about police abuses and perceptions of the police by civilians. Some of these studies focused on New York City (Amnesty International 1996; Chevigny 1969; Chevigny 1996; Davis, J.R. 1990; Davis, R. 1997; Fyfe 1982; New York City Civil Liberties Union 1990, Poulcallec-Gordon forthcoming). In other American studies that do not focus exclusively on New York City, perception of police was strongly linked to race: African-Americans have a more negative perception of police, while whites have a more favorable perception of police (Benson 1981; Decker 1981; Garofolo 1977; Hadar and Snortum 1975; Huang and Vaughn 1996; Johnson 1993; Murty, Roebuck, and Smith 1990). British studies offer similar racially divided assessments (Jefferson and Walker 1993, Waddington and Braddovck 1991) demonstrating that this is not a uniquely American phenomenon. Latinos have mixed experiences, with Cubans having the most positive perceptions of the police (Alpert and Dunham 1988). Other Latinos tend to be less positive than whites about the police (Hadar and Snortum 1975; Huang and Vaughn 1996). In our research, we found that in some neighborhoods, Latinos reported more difficulties with police than either African-Americans or whites.

Perceptions of the police can also be analyzed with respect to the type of interaction. People who summon the police have more positive feelings toward the police than those whom the police approach of their own accord (Johnson 1993). This is substantiated by Friedman and Hott's (1995) interviews with youths who had been stopped by the police in Chicago. Others find that good interactions with the police, as experienced by victims of crime, promote a better assessment of the police (Brandl, Frank, Worden, & Bynum 1994.) Yet, having been a victim of crime also adversely affects perception of police (Cao, Frank, & Cullen 1996; Garofolo 1977) even as crime victims frequently have summoned the police to their aid. One factor discussed is police response time: longer response time is associated with a lower opinion of the police. Cao, Frank and Cullen (1996) conclude that race is not the determining variable of police perception but rather that neighborhood chaos and crime victimization are stronger determinants of police perception. Chaos and victimization are more likely to be the experience of civilians of low socio-economic status minority populations in many locations. Additionally, people whose family members have had police interactions have low perceptions of the police (Davis, 1990). This tends to confirm the intuitively-obvious truth that knowing of another person's unsatisfactory interaction with the police may form the basis of one's own opinion.

Some reports focus on systemic patterns such as toleration or lack of supervision and investigation of excessive use of force (Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department 1991). Lumb (1995) examine the context of interactions and argues that police are often ill-equipped and ill-trained to defuse situations and may rely excessively on force. This may also be aggravated by issues of race. Bhattacharjee (2001: 17) documents police violence in "quality of life policing" in New York City in the 1990s. She writes: "Such strategies focus on harassing, arresting, or incarcerating people who are poor, homeless, or simply hanging out on the street with the wrong skin color or the wrong clothes." (18) Bhattacharjee's (2001: 34-35) report is national in focus - quality of life policing is now replicated around the U.S. - but she cites three reports to New York City Police Watch and a New York City-based petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights that describe sexual harassment, abuse and false arrest of women. The reports cited deal with harassment and abuse of women in general, and do not address the additional harassment directed towards transgender women or female street prostitutes. Bhattacharjee (2001: 48-49) reports a number of abuses reported by sex workers specifically, including false arrest, rape and extortion of sex by police officers.

It is erroneous to assume that all experiences with the police documented were bad. In our own study, respondents also reported some good interactions, as will be discussed in the Findings section. However, the researchers found little literature about positive interactions between police and prostitutes.

On the subject of prostitution in general, there is a large body of work, including a recent spate of publications by sex workers themselves (Kempadoo and Doezema 1998, Kempadoo 1999, Nagle 1997). This new literature by sex workers would not be possible without a change in the mainstream view of sex work. Sex work is now seen as

something that can be overtly discussed, which is a sea change in itself. Most earlier academic work addressed sex work as deviance or as a social problem to be combated (Hoigard and Finstad (1986), Maher 1996, Maher and Daly 1996, Odzer 1994, Prus and Irini 1980, Sandford 1975, Winick 1971). However, sex work is now a bona fide area of inquiry, in which overt moralizing is much reduced, albeit not always entirely absent. Academic inquiries include those by sociologists such as Wendy Chapkis (1997), who examines the issues of sex work as emotional labor, and of academic sex workers writing about their work, such as Jo Doezema (2001) writing on the white slavery narratives; Carol Queen (1997) with her more general explorations of sexuality; and L.S. Sloan's typology of exotic dancers (1997). This is not to imply that sex workers have been uniformly welcomed into debate. Weldon (2001) reports that some schools of feminists addressing sex work typically do not want to hear from sex workers unless they tell tales of abuse and oppression, even going so far as to prevent sex workers who do not share their opinion from speaking. More general feminist inquiries into prostitution include feminist debates about sex work, reminiscent of the earlier "pornography wars" and featuring many of the same arguments for or against sexual material and sex work (Bell 1987). Pragmatic public health programs working with and for sex workers have also generated their own literature, often focusing on harm reduction for sex workers (i.e. AIDSLink and HealthLink published by the Global Health Council, an international association of health organizations). Empowerment figures strongly in these discussions (Wolffers 2000).

Those most affected by prostitution law are not necessarily informed about these different policies. At a public discussion in New York, prostitute-turned-writer Tracy Quan stated that

an astonishing number of sex workers don't know what the laws [around prostitution] are in the region or municipality where they work. They don't bother to find out what they are and sometimes they base it on hearsay. Of course for a sex worker it tends to be more important than for other kinds of workers. Probably most people in the bookstore don't know the zoning laws where they are, but for sex workers it is even more important, in a quasi-legal situation where police may come around asking questions. Even literate sex workers don't read the laws. (Ditmore 2002a: 20)

Quan's remarks highlight that the legal definition of prostitution varies by jurisdiction. Statutes in some jurisdictions specify exactly what physical contact is necessary, while others offer more vague definitions. In parts of the US, definitions of prostitution even vary county by county.

Prostitution legislation varies widely around the world, but there are three general ways to address prostitution. These are decriminalization, legalization and prohibition. Decriminalization refers to the removal of prostitution from the criminal codes, while legalization makes prostitution a legal activity but often is often accompanied by increased regulation, including mandatory health examinations, a lack of confidentiality of health records, and restricted mobility. Prohibition aims to ban prostitution outright.

Decriminalizing prostitution removes it from the criminal code, enabling sex work to be treated in the same way as other businesses. For example, sex workers working out of their homes would be considered on a par with other home-based workers such as therapists, writers or others who work alone and from home. Larger operations might be subject to zoning laws. Sex work would also then be subject to occupational safety and health standards. Decriminalization is in effect in parts of Australia, including Canberra, the capital, and in the Netherlands. Decriminalization is the solution most commonly advocated by sex workers organizations, but decriminalization of prostitution does not in and of itself eliminate conflict with neighbors or police incidents. Under decriminalization, foreign workers in sex establishments in the Netherlands now need work permits, just as with other businesses.¹¹ Furthermore, issues of race and ethnicity, gender identity, and socioeconomic status still affect how sex workers are treated by police, customers, and other agents, and what economically viable options are available to them. Regulations about noise, traffic and other matters can still be used to harass sex-oriented businesses, whether prostitution is legal or illegal. Our own respondents described receiving tickets for many offenses unrelated to prostitution.

Legalization of prostitution is a gray zone, in which some prostitution - usually indoors - is regulated and administered in ways that other businesses are not.¹² For example, legal prostitutes in the state of Nevada are subject to monthly health tests for HIV and weekly tests for other sexually transmitted infections, for which the sex workers pay. These tests allow some sex workers to feel more confident in the health of their colleagues. Such mandatory testing may seem reasonable until it becomes clear that these tests are not to protect the worker but to protect clients from infection. Policies of this kind reinforce the stereotype of prostitutes as vectors of disease, a view which is not supported by studies of the Nevada brothels (Albert 2001). The selective nature of the regulations is made clear when you consider that other workers who are also exposed to blood and other bodily fluids, including health professionals such as nurses and doctors, are not subject to similar health exams.

Health is not the only area in which legal sex workers are subject to special conditions. Brothel management can stipulate working conditions that would not be tolerated in other fields, and which are unrelated to health or morals. These include brothels where workers are not allowed to leave, appearance-related fines, and taking workers' possessions, forcing them to purchase toiletries and other necessities at inflated prices from the "company store" (Albert 2001). However, despite the restrictions and drawbacks, some people find working in legalized and heavily regulated situations more satisfying than working where prostitution is prohibited. They cite the lack of

¹⁰An earlier version of this legal summary appears in Ditmore (2002a: 21-23).

¹¹Interviews with Jacqueline Waterman of Amsterdam's Prostitution Information Center, the Netherlands, May 2002.

¹²The researchers would like to thank "Parker," a Nevada brothel worker, for generously sharing her experiences in interviews, February 2003.

worries about police and a preference for mandated use of condoms. No cases of HIV transmission have been linked to legalized brothels in Nevada (Albert 2001).

Prostitution is prohibited in the majority of the United States including New York, in China, and in many strict religious states including Saudi Arabia. Where prostitution is prohibited, every business aspect of prostitution - prostitution itself, management of prostitution, soliciting sex as a client or a prostitute - is a criminal act. The prostitutes who are most frequently arrested are the most visible - those who work on the street. Prohibition also makes it difficult for street prostitutes to report crimes against them, even violent crimes (Ditmore 2001).

Prohibition - ostensibly motivated by a desire to protect women from prostitution - typically strives to eradicate prostitution through energetic enforcement and increasingly severe penalties, but in so doing it typically creates still more dangerous situations for those who do work as prostitutes. For example, where attempts are made to curtail the migration of young, those determined to migrate are forced to use the services of smugglers and may thereby end up in slavery-like situations as victims of trafficking (Human Rights Watch 2000).

Some places that do not specifically criminalize prostitution instead criminalize attendant activities. For example, Canada has a communication law that prohibits soliciting and advertising for prostitution. Under this law, while prostitution is not itself criminal, it is impossible to practice without breaking the law.¹³

Another approach is to criminalize the activities of clients. This sometimes divides along gender lines, so that men can be arrested as clients, while female prostitutes are not guilty of any crime. This unusual policy is in effect in Sweden (Goldsmith, 1998). It is related to the new phenomenon of "John School," in which men who plead guilty to soliciting prostitutes pay a fine and attend a class in which they are lectured by former prostitutes (Goldstein 2001, Maxim 2000, Nieves 1999, Vitzthum 2000, Wagner 1998). There are John Schools in parts of the United States, including Brooklyn, New York and San Francisco.

New York City's newest innovation in prosecuting prostitution brings John School to Brooklyn. Men arrested for patronizing a prostitute pay a fine and attend the class in order to have the incident erased from their criminal records. Classes are held every five of six weeks, and have 80-85 participants. From its inception in July 2002, through March 19, 2003, approximately 900 men have attended the day-long class. As with other similar programs, the participants hear about health and psychological issues. Additionally, a social worker describes the effect of prostitution on the neighborhood, in order to contextualize prostitution for the johns and encourage them to think about drug use, theft, or other crimes that may correlate to prostitution as a part of the decline of a neighborhood. The school also provides access to a therapist specialized in the treatment of sex addiction; approximately 15 of the 900 men who have attended have sought therapy.

¹³"Sex Workers, Know Your Rights!" workshop presented by Jennifer Clamen and Valerie Boucher as part of the Festival for the Rights of Sex Workers, Montreal, Canada, February 14, 2003.

Prostitution Laws in New York State

New York, like the overwhelming majority of the rest of the United States, uses a prohibitionist model in relation to prostitution. This is not the case with other aspects of the sex industry, including stripping, pornography and its production, and internet-based adult-oriented businesses.

Criminal Law

In New York State, the five main subcategories of prostitution-related offenses are: prostitution, New York State Penal Law (NYPL), Section 230.00; patronizing a prostitute (1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th degree) NYPL Sections 230.03-230.07; promoting prostitution (1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th degree) NYPL Sections 230.15, 230.20, 230.20, 230.32, 230.35; permitting prostitution, NYPL Section 230.40; and loitering for the purpose of engaging in a prostitution offense, NYPL Section 240.37.

Prostitution as defined in the New York statute occurs when a “person engages or agrees or offers to engage in sexual conduct with another person in return for a fee.” Sexual conduct is not defined within the statute. This essentially grants courts the discretion to decide what amounts to sexual conduct on a case-by-case basis. Most recent court decisions cite *People v. Costello*,¹⁴ where the court found that the purpose of NYPL Section 230.00 was to “prohibit commercial exploitation of sexual gratification.” The court in *Costello* reasoned that the “common understanding of prostitution” comprises three specific prongs: sexual intercourse, deviate sexual intercourse and masturbation. Although the ruling in *Costello* has not been overturned, other courts, as in *People v. Hinzman*,¹⁵ have expanded its definition to include “conduct done to satisfy a sexual desire.” A more recent decision in *People v. Medina*¹⁶ opted for a less restrictive definition: “inasmuch as the *Costello* court derived its definition of ‘sexual conduct’ not from the statute but from ‘common understanding’ which is subject to change, this court is not persuaded that it should accept the categories of sexual activity offered there.” The court based its decision on a present-day “common understanding” of sexual conduct, again allowing for case-specific determinations of what constitutes sexual conduct for the purpose of prostitution.

Patronizing a prostitute involves: providing payment in compensation for having engaged in sexual conduct with another person; or providing payment with the understanding that such person or a third party will later engage in sexual conduct with the purchaser; or soliciting or requesting that another person engage in sexual conduct with the purchaser for a fee (NYPL Section 230.02). There are varying degrees of this offense based on the ages of both the person patronizing and the person providing the sexual service. The most severe of these can be found in Section 230.06 where it is a Class D felony to patronize a prostitute who is less than 11 years old.

Promoting prostitution is defined both as “advancing prostitution” and “profiting from prostitution” (NYPL Section 230.15). It too has varying degrees of severity depending in large part on the age of the prostitutes involved and the methods used to advance prostitution (i.e. force or coercion). When the owner of a premises that is being used for the purposes of prostitution does not make a reasonable effort to “halt or abate such use,” he/she can be charged with permitting prostitution under NYPL Section 230.40.

Loitering for the purposes of engaging in prostitution is a separate offense defined in NYPL Section 240.37 of the New York Penal Code. This statute prohibits remaining in and/or wandering about a public place in order to engage in prostitution. Beckoning to cars and pedestrians, conversing or trying to converse with people walking by or blocking the sidewalk for the purpose of engaging in prostitution is a criminal offense separate from the crime of prostitution itself. It applies to those acting as prostitutes, those patronizing prostitutes and those who promote prostitution. Loitering for the purposes of prostitution is a violation at the first offense and thereafter, a misdemeanor offense.

Although not specific to prostitution, criminal solicitation in the fifth degree defined in NYPL Section 100.00 occurs when “with intent that another person engage in conduct constituting a crime, he solicits, requests, commands, importunes or otherwise attempts to cause such other person to engage in such conduct,” and may additionally be

¹⁴*Costello*, 90 Misc. 2d 431, 395 N.Y.S.2d 139 (N.Y. Sup. Ct., N.Y. Co. 1977).

¹⁵*Hinzman*, 177 Misc. 2d 531, 534, 677 N.Y.S.2d 440, 442 (N.Y. Crim. Ct., Bx. Co. 1998).

¹⁶*Medina*, 179 Misc. 2d 617, 621, 685 N.Y.S.2d 599, 602 (N.Y. Crim. Ct., N.Y. Co. 1999).

used to charge those accused of engaging in prostitution.

Civil Law

Housing

Prostitution-related crimes may also be found in the civil law of New York. Sections 2320 - 2334 of the New York Public Health Law for instance, define “houses of prostitution” as a public nuisance and detail legal action that may be taken against the owners of such houses as well as the penalties that will result from conviction. A “house of prostitution” is formally defined in the statute as “any building, erection, or place used for the purpose of lewdness, assignation, or prostitution” and qualifies as a “nuisance.” Anyone who “erect(s), establish(s), continue(s), maintain(s), use(s), own(s), or lease(s)” a house of prostitution may be charged under the statute.

There also exist regulations that entitle the lessor of a multiple dwelling to terminate the lease or the owner of a multiple dwelling to repossess such dwelling if any portion of is being used as a house of prostitution (New York Multiple Dwelling Law Sections 352 - 360). These laws would be particularly applicable to those who engage in sex work in their homes or on a premises that they share with others and are currently leasing.

For those persons not necessarily living in a multiple dwelling but who are party to a lease or occupancy agreement, New York Real Property Law Section 231 stipulates that the lease or occupancy agreement made with any person or persons convicted two or more times in one year for prostitution-related offenses that occurred on the premises, will be void. This then grants the owner or lessor of the premises the right to re-enter the property. For procedure regulations and the grounds for repossessing property “illegally used,” see New York Real Property Actions and Proceedings Law Section 715.

Sex Workers as Victims of Sex Offenses

Although not directly related to the criminal prosecution of prostitution-related offenses, the New York Criminal Procedure Law poses a particular disadvantage to sex workers who have been the victims of a sex offense, including rape. NYCPL Section 60.42(2) states that evidence of a victim’s sexual conduct is not admissible in a prosecution unless it “proves or tends to prove that the victim has been convicted of an offense under section 230.00 (Prostitution) of the penal law within three years prior to the sex offense which is the subject of the prosecution.”

Multiple methods including interviews and ethnography were used in the collection of data for this project. The researchers interviewed 35 prostitutes, fifteen service providers and advocates from ten non-governmental organizations, and seven City agency or administration officials. The researchers gathered arrest and criminal justice statistics from various agencies in order to provide broader background and context for the interviews.

Of the 35 sex workers we interviewed, 2 worked exclusively indoors. They were not included in our tabulations and are identified as indoor sex workers when they are quoted. Of the 33 street-based sex workers interviewed, only 30 are included in the tabulations, because they had either been arrested in the previous year or had more than ten arrests. 28 had been arrested in the previous year, while 2 have more than ten arrests but had not been arrested in the twelve months prior to the interview. 4 sex workers who were approached declined to be interviewed.

Researchers met sex workers through outreach on the street and indoors, and through cooperating organizations whom researchers accompanied during outreach. Some respondents referred other subjects to the researchers. Indoor sex workers were referred by a local support group for prostitutes. This snowball sample is not representative of all sex workers, or of all street-based sex workers in New York City.

Data from interviews present demographic and categorical information that is fleshed out with case examples and ethnographic notes. While the sample is not large, it is extremely varied. Many of the experiences described by this highly varied group of sex workers are extremely similar. They are overwhelmingly women, three transgender, with two men. All but two subjects work in street-based prostitution. We separate out specific populations like indoor sex workers for their unique experiences among this group where unique experiences are reported. We also specify in the Findings when men, transgender women, or indoor workers are quoted and how these sex workers compare to the large number of women working on the street in this sample. These sub-populations are separated from the larger sample when relevant.

The sample is also varied in that it contains many very experienced sex workers as well as newcomers to sexual commerce. This is not surprising - workers of varying levels of experience work together in many industries, and the sex industry is no different in this respect.

The interviews highlight similarities and differences within this group of interviewed sex workers in different venues. Those with greater contact with police, usually those who worked outdoors, were uniform in their sense of persecution by police. This research project made no efforts to interview sex workers in the legal sex industry and none of this research pertains to those sectors outside of New York City. The responses of the transgender sex workers do translate to other street-based prostitutes in terms of the types of police interactions they experience. However, they also highlight the specific additional problems of discrimination and isolation which many transgender women face.

Despite the limitations on generalizing from this sample, the uniformity of the reports suggests that the data presented may reflect systemic phenomena and is not merely anecdotal. Interview after interview recorded specific and recurrent patterns of prostitute-police interactions, particularly for street-based sex workers, that are similar to those reported to the researchers by those who work with this population. We were often able to corroborate some of the specific information given by sex workers from our interviews with representatives of several organizations who interact with street sex workers in New York City on a daily basis. There were no obvious reasons for respondents to offer false information.

Demographic information is presented as percentages. The sample is too small to undertake other statistical analysis. With a larger sample, it would be useful to investigate whether adverse interactions with police correlate with drug use and/or substance dependency.

All data about police interactions was derived from sex workers and people working for organizations providing services to them. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations made based on the information given by respondents, including sex workers, service providers and City officials. Despite extensive attempts, the researchers were unable to obtain access to interview police officers.

Interviews

Sex Workers

The researchers interviewed 35 prostitutes, 30 of whom are street-based sex workers included in this report with 2 indoor sex workers included for comparison. Respondents included in this report were arrested within the 12-month period prior to the interview, or had more than ten arrests, with the last arrest within the preceding 15 months.¹⁷ Three street-based sex workers in the Bronx were interviewed but were not included in the statistics because they had not been arrested in the preceding 12-month period and had low numbers of arrests. They are specified when they are quoted. A sample of street-based prostitutes from neighborhoods in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the Bronx was sought. Interviews took place in the fall of 2002 and spring of 2003. Researchers initially conducted two pilot interviews in order to test the clarity of the language used, and made minor changes to the survey instrument based on responses from these interviews. Because changes were not substantive and only involved clarification of language, the pilot interviews are included in all relevant analyses.

All names of respondents have been changed to protect their identities. Respondents were all assured of this before the interviews.

Interview sites were chosen with cooperating organizations that directed researchers to currently active prostitution areas. Cooperating organizations that assisted in outreach at their sites included Amethyst Women's Project, From Our Streets with Dignity (FROSTD), Positive Health Project and the SIG Research Group of Columbia University. Positive Health Project was especially helpful with locating transgender women respondents. These agencies offer outreach, referrals, and social and medical services to street-based sex workers in New York City. The support organization Prostitutes of New York also assisted, especially with locating less visible sex workers who had more positive experiences with the police.

The largest number of respondents came from two separate sites in Brooklyn - Coney Island and Bushwick. Researchers sought subjects in coordination with Amethyst and FROSTD. Sex workers in both these locations were usually female. Transgender sex workers were interviewed at various indoor locations in Manhattan, some with the cooperation of Positive Health Project. Specific Manhattan neighborhoods that yielded interviews were Hell's Kitchen, the West Village, and Harlem. Researchers also interviewed street-based sex workers in Morrisania in the Bronx. Escorts and brothel workers were interviewed in Manhattan. These women had far less contact with police officers than those who work on the streets, therefore information from them was far more specific to single incidents and less general.

We observed young prostitutes in Hell's Kitchen. However, they were not interviewed. Our contacts with them will be described separately in the Findings section of this report.

Interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 2 hours. Sex workers interviewed at their places of work were offered twenty dollars for their participation. Some subjects declined the money, and some respondents returned to tell researchers about additional interactions with police without compensation. Questions addressed experiences with the police and criminal justice system (including arrests), family and living situations, spending patterns, experiences with violence, and demographic information. The interview protocol used with sex workers is included at the end of this report.

Information analyzed from the interviews includes demographic information, reported experiences of violence including police violence, sexual violence and sexual harassment by police; whether they turn to the police for help after violent incidents; whether they have had good experiences with the police, and their financial situation. None of our informants reported being trafficked or being in any kind of organized criminal operation; this suggests that there is a significant amount of prostitution in New York City that is unrelated to these phenomena. However, the researchers were not able to interview street-based prostitutes who may have been part of larger networks or stereotypical "pimp" relationships.

This report includes detailed descriptions of incidents involving police and prostitutes presented in the form of quotes from the in-depth interviews. Some interview subjects are presented as case studies. For example, a case study of a prostitute who has a working relationship with the police is included. This relationship was built upon

¹⁷Three interviewees fell into this latter category, and their interviews demonstrate how they have changed their working habits in response to their arrests and other police experiences

her report of a violent incident. When appropriate - if interview subjects asked for referrals or indicated interest in receiving immediate referral information - researchers offered such referrals, and one researcher who is a practicing attorney offered legal advice as appropriate.

Other Actors and Street Personalities

Other interviews were conducted for comparison with the sex worker responses given by our sample. Such interviewees include two residents of known prostitution areas in Manhattan, the boyfriend¹⁸ of a prostitute in Bushwick, a female drug dealer in Coney Island, and a Nevada brothel worker. These subjects are not included in the demographics or percentages. However, some information from these interviews is included for comparison with the interviews of the interviewed street sex workers.

Over the course of a month, researchers observed young men driving around specific areas in Hell's Kitchen, watching some young women. These young women on the street appeared to keep in contact with the young men with beepers or cellular telephones. The researchers were unable to obtain interviews with these young men and women. These were the only people approached who declined to be interviewed. Since the researchers were only able to observe and not to interview the sex workers or the young men in this area, there is no information about the dynamics of the relationship. However, observations of these young men and women are described in the Findings section of this report.

Service Providers and Advocates

Researchers interviewed 15 service providers and advocates from 10 non-governmental organizations about their work with populations that may engage in prostitution and for recommendations based on their expertise on criminal justice issues. Service providers from Amethyst Women's Project, From Our Streets With Dignity, Positive Health Project, the Urban Justice Center, Pathways to Housing, the Midtown Community Court,¹⁹ and Bronx Defenders, among others, were interviewed either individually or in one of two focus groups. Some service providers described police interference with public health efforts including condom distribution and medical services, leading to a new line of inquiry for this report. Police interactions with service providers was not part of the initial conceptualization of this study. However, it came up so frequently in discussion with cooperative organizations that the investigators chose to expand this study to include interviews with service providers about police and security activity that affects their work.

City Agencies and Administrators

Seven people from City agencies were interviewed for their specific expertise, including the Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinator and a judge in Brooklyn Criminal Court. Some respondents did not want to be identified, and remain anonymous informants. A former official from the Administration for Children's Services provided information pertaining to the agency's policy on removal of children as related to prostitution or drug use. Researchers were not able to interview representatives of the New York Police Department. Calls to Community Affairs Officers and relevant law enforcement officers were not returned.

Ethnography

The ethnographic component of this research was designed to document and contextualize sex work on the street, and to contrast this with specific indoor venues where clients and prostitutes may meet. The focus on police interactions led to the decision to focus on street-based sex workers because of their even more vulnerable situation and their high levels of interactions with law enforcement. All but one site was suggested by cooperating organizations that seek out street-based sex workers, the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood, west of Ninth Avenue between 40th and 55th Streets was investigated by the researchers without a cooperating organization. We do not know of other organizations conducting outreach in this area.

Researchers visited known prostitution areas in each location to observe activity and conduct interviews on a weekly basis for one month in the fall of 2002 or spring 2003. This included visits to known prostitution areas on the streets in Bushwick, Coney Island, Harlem, Hell's Kitchen, Morrisania and visits to clubs that have sex workers of all genders.

¹⁸We use the word "boyfriend" here because the couple pooled both partners' money, as is done by many sociologically mainstream couples.

¹⁹The Midtown Community Court is included in service providing agencies and not City agencies because it is part of the Center for Court Innovation, a not-for-profit organization

Observations from known prostitution areas focused on police presence, activities of other street personalities, and prostitution activity. At clubs and other indoor venues, interpersonal interactions were observed between sex workers and potential clients, service providers and other local personalities. All ethnographic data was collected with the intent to understand the comprehensive context and not exclusively prostitution activity.

Ethnographic data was the only data available on the streets where possibly under-aged street prostitutes were present, and who may have been monitored by other street personalities. Researchers could not confirm the ages of these young women. These were the only people asked who declined to be interviewed. Researchers also experienced occasional interference from other street personalities.

Statistical information

Arrest statistics were obtained from the Midtown Community Court/Center for Court Innovation and the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. The Kings County District Attorney's office provided the numbers related to Project Respect (John School) in Brooklyn.

From Our Streets with Dignity provided information about rates of HIV among street-based sex workers in New York City. Rates of HIV among the general population were taken from the website of the New York State Department of Health. These numbers offer fruitful comparisons about changes in rates of transmission in New York City. HIV statistics are included for informational purposes. There was little use in aggregating these figures for use in further statistical comparisons.

	Findings	
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All interviews were completed. Interviewers asked questions related to trafficking in persons, and found that none of their subjects were involved in coercive situations. The most important findings were that most respondents were barely surviving, that most have unstable housing and problems with substance abuse, and that the majority of respondents reported police disregard for violence and police abuses. The consistent reporting of police abuse and the lack of attention paid to crimes against sex workers from different neighborhoods persuaded researchers that this is a systemic issue.

One respondent declined to answer questions pertaining to age of entry into commercial sex and length of involvement in commercial sex. One declined to give her ethnicity. Researchers believe that these interviews with street-based subjects with substance dependencies are generalizable across this specific population because researchers were consistently told very similar things from subjects with different demographic profiles. This leads us to believe that the information presented was indicative of the situation of street-based sex workers. Additionally, service providers and advocates were able to corroborate some of the information we received as well as the general reliability of the respondents.

Differences can sometimes be categorized geographically: subjects from the Bronx described themselves as possessing the fewest resources and had the least knowledge of potential services and resources beyond their immediate area, while Brooklyn subjects were in similar situations, but described more knowledge of other areas and more experience outside their immediate vicinity.

Problems faced by respondents included homelessness, substance dependency, and extreme poverty and desperation at levels that are far worse than in the general population. The population of street-based sex workers is not representative of the sex worker population at large. Street-based sex workers generally endure more marginal situations, including unstable housing and other problems related to substance dependency. These problems contribute to the reasons that this population remains on the street. Some of them stay on the street because they do not have another place to go.

In addition to their lack of stable or permanent housing, there are other explanations for their continued outdoor work. Twenty-five respondents had problems related to substance dependency. Three of them reported participating in drug treatment programs at the time of their interviews. Some indoor venues, both inside and outside the sex industry, prefer not to employ people with substance dependencies, many of whom may not be able to maintain the schedule of a sex industry indoor venue, which is frequently not unlike the schedule of many legal businesses, with eight-hour shifts and fixed schedules. Some indoor venues do not permit employees to leave during a shift, which would prevent someone who is substance dependent from obtaining drugs when she so desired. One substance dependent woman also described feeling more vulnerable working as an escort.

More than half of the street-based sex workers interviewed described making arrangements with at least some regular clients by telephone, and many reported trying to work with pre-arranged appointments rather than being on the street, in part in order to avoid interactions with police, and in part to enhance their own safety. However, because homeless or marginally-housed sex workers often lack telephones, many have difficulties arranging to meet clients, forcing them to remain on the street in order to do business.

Interviews from two women who work indoors and reports from two other indoor workers who were not interviewed did not reflect the demographics of the street sex workers at all, with no substance dependencies and more ability to manage their finances. Researchers noted that covert, indoor prostitutes were also treated differently from overt prostitutes who work in public. Transgender sex workers reported additional difficulties related to gender identity, including issues of discrimination, and needing proper names and sex on official paperwork. This leads to some transgender women serving sentences in men's jails.²⁰

²⁰Conversation with Michael Carden of FROSTD about specific cases.

Demographics

Ethnicity/Race

This report uses ethnicity rather than race as a demographic category. Out of the 30 sex workers interviewed, 11 were Latino, 5 were white, 10 were African-American, 3 were Asian and of mixed heritage, and 1 person declined to answer the question.²¹

RACE / ETHNICITY of RESPONDENTS					
Ethnicity/Race	Latina	European -descent	African -American	Asian/Mixed	No Answer
Frequency	11	5	10	3	1
Percentage	37	17	33	10	3

Figure 2

Ethnicity/race was chosen because Latinos are of many races and so race would not acknowledge the diversity of our population. People who identified as Latino were included as Latinos. 2 self-identified Latinos were of mixed heritage, 1 of European descent and the other Israeli. All 3 Asian respondents were of mixed heritage. They included an Arab and African-

American woman, and a woman whose heritage was Chinese and European. 10 identified as African-American and 5 identified as white. Researchers did not encounter any African or Native American people in the sample. 2 women who work exclusively indoors are not included here; both are of European descent. The population of street-based sex workers in New York City is largely minority-based.

Gender

28 respondents were women. 25 of the 28 women were genetic women, while 3 were transgender women in various stages of transitioning from male to female. 2 male sex workers were interviewed.

Age

Subjects ranged in age from 19 to 53 years old. The mean age was 35 years old. There was no mode. 10 respondents were under 30 years of age, 3 of whom were under 25. 11 respondents were between 31 and 40 years old. 6 were between 41 and 50 years of age and 2 were over 50. These findings confirm that common perceptions of sex workers as young do not reflect the variety of people in the sex industry.

AGE of RESPONDENTS					
Under 20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
1	7	13	7	2	30

Figure 3

Involvement in Prostitution

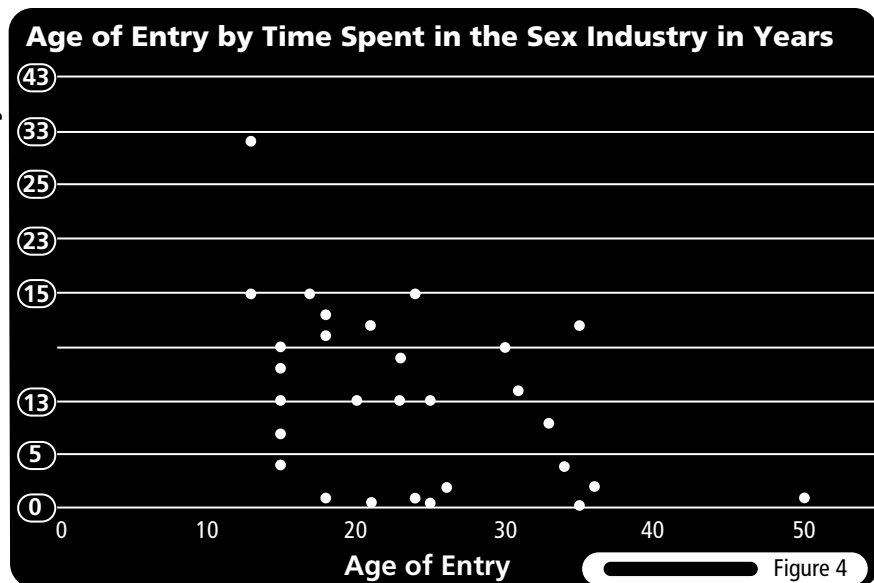
Interviewees entered the sex industry at extremely diverse ages, ranging from 13 to 50. Respondents who entered the sex industry at later ages did so uniformly for reasons related to substance dependency. In some cases, these problems were exacerbated by family and other personal reasons. The mean age of entry is 24. The mode is 15, with 5 respondents. 8 interviewees entered the sex industry as minors, 2 at the age of 13, 5 at the age of 15, and 1 at the age of 17. 3 respondents entered the sex industry at the age of 18. 10 respondents entered the sex industry in their twenties, 7 entered the sex industry in their thirties, and 1 entered the sex industry at the age of 50. One respondent declined to answer questions related to age of entry and the length of time she had been involved in commercial sex.²²

Not all respondents began their involvement with commercial sex as prostitutes. Four explained that they had worked as strippers before becoming prostitutes. It is not uncommon for sex workers to change venues or aspects of their occupation. Additionally, it should be noted that sex workers did not all remain in the industry. One 42-year-old respondent who had been working on the street for four months at the time of her interview had been an escort when she was 18 years old and then left the sex industry for over 20 years.

²¹It was not possible for the interviewer to determine her background based on observation. Her olive skin gave no indication nor did her spoken English.

²²This is not the same interviewee who did not answer questions about ethnicity. Both of these respondents answered all other questions.

This scatter-graph illustrates the diversity of ages and lengths of careers in the sex industry of those we interviewed. However, it does not convey specific details pertaining to individuals' involvement in commercial sex, such as changes in venue or occupation or a hiatus from sex work. Some interviewees had long involvement in prostitution. 17 respondents interviewed had been prostitutes for more than 10 years. Others had been involved in prostitution for far less time, with 3 respondents involved for less than 1 year, and another involved on the street for less than 6 months after a 22-year absence from the sex industry. 3 had been involved for 1 year, and 2 for 2 years. 3 who had involvement in commercial sex for 10 years or more had spent significant amounts of time as part of the indoor sex industry, sometimes in the legal sex industry, both before and after becoming involved in prostitution. Additionally, there is no indication of how many people had entered the sex industry and subsequently moved to another economic sector, nor how many from this sample will do so or when.



Stories of how people became involved in prostitution were as diverse as the range of ages. For example, Mary had been a call girl at the age of 18 for one year and left sex work for 22 years. At the age of 40, when her husband was imprisoned, she became substance dependent and turned to street prostitution to support her habit. Mary had been involved in street-based sex work for less than 4 months when she was interviewed. Due to her earlier involvement in prostitution, her age of entry was included as 18 and length of time in the sex industry was listed as 1 year. Another informant had been a stripper for seven years before becoming a street prostitute at 28. For these two cases, the younger age is used. Another woman entered prostitution at 50 years old, in order to support a drug habit acquired late in life.

Family pressures were one reason cited for initial involvement in sex work, particularly for those who were under 18 years of age when they first entered prostitution. Valerie had left an abusive family situation, "I was a runaway and I liked the money." Allison began engaging in sex work at the age of 15: "I got into the work because I was pressured into it by my kid's father. His friends came over and I'd have sex with them for money." One transgender woman reported commencing sex work at the age of 15. She described her family's inability to accept her transgender status, saying "I got into the work because I'm a Muslim child. My father's Arab, and they didn't understand. My father passed away, my mother really didn't take it so well, and my grandmother wanted to throw me in foster care. I just went on my own and started doing it."

Housing Crisis

26 of 30 (87 percent) of respondents among the street-based sex workers had unstable housing situations. Only 4 reported having stable housing. 3 respondents lived with family members and one's housing was provided by her employer. 4 reported outright homelessness, having no place to go. While everyone else reported having a place where they could go, few street-based sex workers had homes of their own. They reported staying in single-room occupancy hotels (SROs), hotels, shelters or sharing a room with friends or associates (in SROs and hotels.) Some paid to sleep in crack houses, some stayed with friends as much as they could, while a few said that they try not to sleep because it was dangerous to sleep without a place to go. These respondents worried about robbery, rape and other violence.

Marginal housing was described as staying with friends for the time being, staying in a shelter, or even paying for a place to sleep in an illegally occupied building. Shelter residents reported having been raped by guards in homeless shelters, and also reported rampant theft in shelters. Considering this, it is not surprising that some respondents did not want to go to a shelter. Additionally, shelters have fixed hours that require residents to be present after

a certain time at night, therefore eliminating the chance to earn money at nighttime prostitution. While shelters preclude working at night, they do not provide permanent housing that might alleviate the need to engage in prostitution. Some shelter residents reported participating in sex work during the day.

SROs are not considered stable housing. They have no cooking facilities and respondents perceive them as being undesirable places that attract drugs, prostitution, and other criminal activity. With one exception, subjects stated that SROs also created situations where they associated with people who were not positive influences on them. When researchers asked Linda if she had a place to stay, she replied, "No, I'm homeless." Michelle, who is also homeless, replied "I don't really sleep." Marlene also said that she is homeless. John lives in an abandoned building with his girlfriend. One of John's goals is "to have a family ... to come home and sit on a couch, and just watch a movie."

When Sissy was asked if she shared her money with anyone, she replied "Not really. Both [she and her domestic partner] pay the rent." Others also reported shared housing. Leslie lives with friends who all chip in to pay the rent. She said she had been "staying with some people for the last six or seven years, but it's dangerous for me ... lots of sick people."

Nancy said that she does not really have a permanent home but stays "with associates in a house" and "with people who own an SRO" where the "city pays rent." Allison stays with friends at an SRO/boarding house. She lives there with an "associate" who is an occasional "sex partner."

Charlotte described the difficulty of finding an apartment and of staying in hotels. "When you're living in a hotel, you have to work ... and then you have to go out every night and make \$75 for every night, and that's the craziest thing, and in the wintertime, when it's below zero, you gotta go out, unless you had a really good night [before.]"

Another aspect of SRO life is a lack of resources, such as cooking facilities, making food extremely expensive as all meals must be purchased already prepared. Respondents who lived in SROs indicated that this was a chaotic environment not conducive to discontinuing drug use. The rooms are small and one can hear, see and smell drug transactions and use. Dorothy lived in a shelter. "It's killing me, the room, you know, the atmosphere I'm not used to, the whole situation. It makes a lot of issues with my use, you know, continuing on going, because of the depression, the endless sleepless nights, the slamming doors, the people who just ..." Dorothy elaborated on the conditions that create a difficult environment in which an individual can experience great stresses while trying to confront her own substance dependency, because drugs were pervasive in the shelter.

Substance Dependency

Researchers asked respondents to state the first thing they paid for with money earned from prostitution, using this response as a barometer of substance dependency. 25 respondents were affected by substance dependency. 22 subjects said the first thing they bought with money from prostitution was drugs, including 1 subject who was just released from a detoxification program. 3 subjects were in drug treatment programs at the time. 5 subjects were occasional users or did not use drugs at all.

Some respondents were users but not necessarily substance dependent. John stated that he will use drugs only when he is working. He reported, "I never pay for it ... only if a trick [client] buys it." Charlotte, a 30-year-old transgender woman, stated that she is an "occasional user" of crack who does not use any other drugs. "People give you some for free, if they know you have \$300 in your pocket." Charlotte added, "I was clean until I was 24."

Leslie entered the sex industry at the age of 30. She told researchers that she was not involved in street prostitution for the first 5 years of her 15 years of involvement with prostitution. She was not substance dependent when she began sex work, but now is substance dependent. Leslie added "If I got extra, I'll spend it on drugs ... money from johns is for the drug habit ... SSI is for living expenses." She works "ten days a month, maybe, at most."

The first thing Bridget buys with her money is crack. She said that her money is "All for me." Jackie spends between \$100 and \$150 on drugs each day. She began getting high as a teenager and got into sex work because of her drug habit. Nancy said that she spends between \$100 and \$200 per day, "whatever I make," on crack and heroin. She was using drugs when she began sex work and stays in it because of her drug habit. Linda's major expense was drugs: she spends "like \$200" per day on drugs. Allison reported spending \$150 per day on crack, and any money earned above \$150 on her children who do not live with her.

Dorothy said, "the first thing I do? You feel guilty about what you're doing, you know what you're doing, you did

it to get high, you go get high, yeah.”

Joan is trying to control her substance dependence. “Because of my drug habit, I’ve been, I’ve tried, ... I’m not planning on getting into a habit again, okay, but at the end of the day, I like to smoke [...] because I used to have a cocaine habit before.” She stated that she continued smoking cocaine, “I’m going to, but not as much as I used to” but that she’ll give up heroin. She reported thinking she could avoid developing a coke habit again, “yes I can, yes I can, I would have had some yesterday if I had wanted to.” For Joan, the hardest thing about sex work was “knowing that you really have no choice because of the drug habit.”

Alternative Sentences and Mandated Services

15 subjects (50 percent) had never been offered any services as a result of an arrest. 15 subjects (50 percent) had been offered some type of services or alternative sentencing as a result of an arrest, such as doing community service or going to a class for a few hours. However, only 1 subject reported having been offered in-depth or long-term services, in the form of a two-year substance abuse treatment program. For 14 of the 15 subjects (93 percent) who had been offered a mandated service, the service offered was a two-hour health class covering information on sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. One problem with mandated services was that subjects would often not appear for services and then a warrant would be issued for their arrest.

Mandy was sentenced to a short class. “I had to go to a class, which is like 6 hours, nothing big. Now, they’re giving community service, now they are, not some months ago, now they are.”

One subject was offered a substance abuse treatment program, which she refused, because she would have had to plead guilty to the charge. She told researchers that she was offered no details regarding the length or intensity of the program. Leslie said they “tried to get me to sign up for a drug treatment program, but I would’ve had to plead guilty.”

Mimi decried the shortage of services made available within the courts and said that she had never been offered help from the judge or the District Attorney as a result of her arrest. “No, never. And I’ve asked and they told me I didn’t qualify... and I’ve known people with worse cases who qualified. I don’t know why I didn’t qualify.” Amy, a 19-year-old from the Bronx who identifies as a transgender woman, got a lot out of a health class offered. “It was fun though, two days of classes about prostitution, about AIDS and stuff like that. I liked it. I want to go back. It was really nice. They had a little class ... HIV, how to use a condom, they show you how to use a condom, make like ... make sure, when you’re doing something with somebody, make sure you don’t have a cut and if you have a cut, if you start bleeding, put gloves on or whatever.”

Other transgender respondents described the lack of alternatives presented to transgender women. Charlotte commented, “They don’t offer you any. ... There aren’t many alternatives. If I knew another way, I would do it, but I really don’t know. They don’t offer you ... I’ve been doing this since I was 13, and I’m just now wising up, just now waking up and realizing that I could do other things, but there are a lot of kids out that don’t know, and they’re telling the police that they’re 18 or 21 ... They don’t want to get into juvenile, because once you get into the juvenile system, you’re stuck in there, you don’t know when you’re getting out. They ship you from group home to group home. You’re locked into the system ... I had to run away from those places.” Charlotte said that she left these programs and facilities because there were not friendly to transgender youth. “No - of course not ... now, within the last few years, you see the word transgender included in things.”

Charlotte emphatically stated that she had “never” been offered services. “They don’t look at cause and effect of why girls are out there. They don’t look at the fact that some people are homeless and they have to be out there. They don’t look at the fact that there are pimps kicking their behind, beating all the women, making them go out there. They don’t look for that. They don’t even have a rescue shelter for prostitutes to go to, to learn something new, or be something different. They just want you to be like ... and if you go to the [homeless] shelters, a man can find you.”

Jamie felt that she had not been offered anything. She laughed and said “I wish they did.” “I wish they would give incentives to other transgender women.” She attended a safe sex and health class at the Midtown Community Court once, but she clearly did not consider this class to be a service, or at least one of consequence.

When Jamie was last arrested, she was sent to the Midtown Community Court, where she spent seven hours in the bullpen. She was given a sentence of five days community service, which she completed. Jamie had also been

sentenced to five days community service for an earlier prostitution offense. On that occasion, she did not do her community service and a warrant was issued. This came to light when she was arrested again for loitering for prostitution, and she was sentenced to 30 days at Riker's Island for this.

Linda's account of her most recent criminal case included the provision of services. "I kept going back to court, I had ... bail." She refused to plead guilty "because I wasn't doing what they said I was doing." "Nobody" advised her on her strategy, and she feels that this was the best choice for her in that situation "because I had just come home from Riker's Island." (She served time at Riker's Island "for not doing community service.") She added, "I got bail the first time ... They let me go on the stipulation that I go to detox and rehab... because they were offering six months and, I mean, that was ridiculous, I wasn't doing anything." Her sentence was six months in jail or to go to a drug rehabilitation program. Linda said that this case is not closed. "No, I have a warrant for my arrest because I didn't go to the detox and the rehab." Nor has she been in contact with her lawyer, "no, I know, I know, that's what I want to do, I want to go to the detox and the rehab and call up from there."

Linda feels that drug detoxification and rehabilitation services are helpful. It was useful, "yes, because I was clean for a while, I mean, you know, once I get clean, I like to stay clean, but ..." Like the community service sentence that led to the warrant and Linda's stay at Riker's Island, Linda did not attend the substance abuse services stipulated. She maintained that she wanted the help, "yes, anytime I get help, it's because I wanted it." This interestingly both contradicts and confirms the City's theory described above that "the hammer" is the only way to promote the use of services and to promote reintegration into society.

Like Linda, Nancy was mandated to a two-day drug treatment program after an arrest but did not attend. She was later arrested on a warrant because she did not attend this two-day program. She was sentenced to 60 days in jail. Nancy's defense attorney told Nancy to contact her about a referral for drug treatment because she was worried about Nancy's history.

Family Situations

9 respondents had no children. 21 did have children. Most interviewees did not live with their children. This is in part due to age: of the 21 respondents with children, 8 had only adult children. The only interviewee who lived with her children lived with her adult children. The children of the 13 interviewees with minor children almost universally lived with other family members. 11 substance dependent women described situations in which their children live with other family members. Three reported that their children were in foster care, one of whom had children in both family and foster care. Many subjects recognized that they would need to stop using drugs in order to regain custody of their children.

Loss of custody is higher among street prostitutes than among the general population. A sample of 30 people from the general population would include people who retained custody of their children. Issues of children's custody may be more related to substance dependence than to prostitution. New York City's Administration for Children's Services does not advocate removal of children from parental custody solely on the basis of either prostitution or drug use in its official policy statements. Instead, there must be an issue of parental incapacity, such as child neglect. According to official policy, children who are not aware of prostitution or drug use which does not otherwise affect them would not be removed from parental custody.²³

Jackie has four children, aged from four to thirteen. The youngest child, born in a state of drug withdrawal, is in her sister's custody. Her three older children are in state custody in Connecticut and have been for about 5 years. Her relatives do not help her. She plans to go into a program and regain custody of her children.

Joan's two children, "15 and 11, a girl and a boy" have been living with their father for two years. She added, "I had an apartment and my children were staying with me and I had a fire. That's when... [two years ago] I lost my apartment to a fire, so now I was homeless, so it was the City who would take the kids or custody to their father." She summarized her choice saying, you either "give your kids to a foster home because you're homeless or you give their father custody." She plans on having her children back, "but I have to get my life straight."

Nancy did not have enough money to care for her daughter when she left her husband. She stated that she and her daughter were abandoned by her husband, and her eleven-year-old daughter has been with her father since 1994. Nancy would prefer that her daughter reside with her sister, who helps her. However,

²³Conversation with Barbara Ditman, retired Administration for Children's Services supervisor.

Nancy added, “but I try not to bother [my sister] too much” and “I want [my daughter] with my sister.”

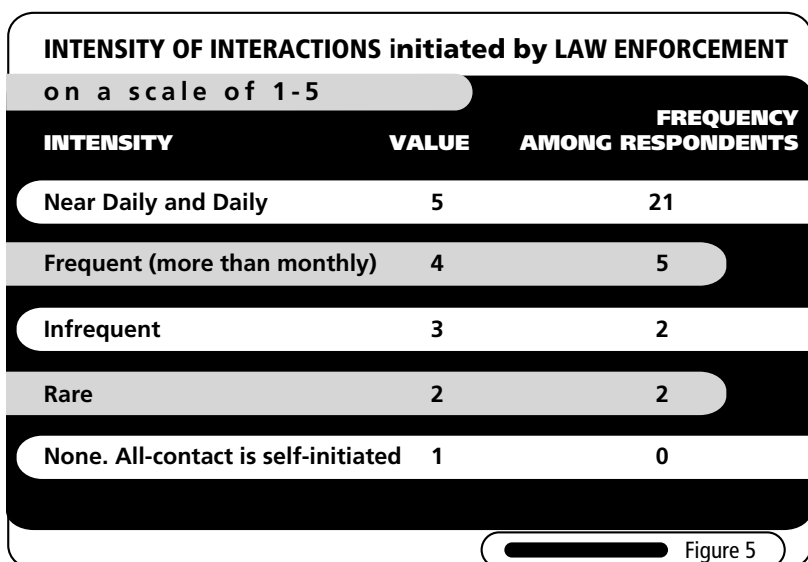
Allison has three children aged five and younger. Her mother reported her to the Administration for Children’s Services. The two oldest live with her mother, and have done so since the birth of her middle child four years ago. Allison added “I do get to see them.” Allison knew that she could not care for her youngest child, who lives with Allison’s godmother. Allison’s larger family situation is good. All of her relatives offer her assistance. She said, “If I need somewhere to go, they let me stay ... they give me food and money.”

Police Interactions

Run-ins and Harassment

Researchers asked how often respondents had “run-ins” with police, meaning interactions that were not initiated by the respondent. Some run-ins led to arrest, which is discussed exclusively in a later section. Responses were placed on a scale from 1 to 5 as follows

“Police-initiated” means that the respondent did not report turning to the police and that the interaction was begun on the part of police officers. Respondents interpreted high frequency of police-initiated interactions as harassment, especially where the respondent was engaging in no criminal activity at the time of such contact. Respondents experienced police harassment in different ways. For some, harassment was police-initiated contact including sexual situations, violence and threats of violence whereas for others harassment resulted in false arrest. Sexual situations include inappropriate touching, extortion of sex (sometimes in exchange for not making an arrest) and rape.



Two indoor workers said that they had no or very few police-initiated interactions with law enforcement. One indoor worker reported very good interactions when she went to police to report a violent incident and that her interactions were entirely positive. She therefore initiated contacts with police, as opposed to being sought by law enforcement. Hers was the only score of 1 for this question. The second indoor worker had been arrested twice and her score was 2. Two outdoor workers from the Bronx reported rare police-initiated interactions and were scored 2. Two outdoor workers reported fewer interactions, and arrests averaging about once a year, which were scored as 3. Five more outdoor workers reported law-enforcement initiated interactions happening with less than daily but

more than monthly frequency. These respondents were scored 4. Twenty-one street-based sex workers described near-daily police-initiated interactions with law enforcement, which were scored 5. Such interactions were not always related to criminal activity. Many of these respondents described being unable to accomplish non-criminal tasks like shopping for groceries and riding the subway without law-enforcement initiated interactions with police. These interactions included but were not limited to ticketing and arrest. Ticketing and arrest are described in more detail below.

In the Bronx, respondents reported that interactions were more common with off-duty officers and respondents reported far lower numbers of arrest than in other areas. In fact, their arrest numbers were comparable to those of indoor sex workers. This is reflected in the fact that the two indoor sex workers interviewed ranked their police interactions 1 (all interactions initiated by respondent) and 2 (having been arrested twice in several years). Respondents in the Bronx and in Bushwick, Brooklyn, described harassment, sexual harassment and reported that they were paid for some sexual interactions with police officers. Law enforcement crackdowns on prostitution are not uniform across New York City. In both sites in Brooklyn, respondents reported high numbers of arrests and ticketing related to prostitution and other activities, including nuisance charges such as traffic violations for

pedestrians. On the other hand, respondents in the Bronx reported few prostitution-related arrests and few tickets, which tended to be given for offenses such as violating the open container law.

Respondents in areas other than the Bronx who reported fewer police-initiated interactions changed locations frequently or were new to their area strolls. One woman who experienced few police interactions than other respondents named different locations and said “I’m all over the place” when asked if she moves around. In fact, her most recent arrest was not in New York City. One male respondent reported less interaction with police, “they [police] wouldn’t expect me to be [a prostitute], so it’s different for me.” John was also new to prostitution, having started just over six months prior to being interviewed. Being new to the work is not necessarily insulation from police contact or arrest: Jamie entered sex work in 2001, and has had “quite a few experiences with the police.” She has been arrested five times in the one year that she has been working.

When a researcher asked Charlotte if she has had any run-ins with police, she laughed and responded, “quite a few - more than I’d like to remember.” Mandy says that harassment is “pretty much on a constant level, the undercovers, the ones who ... pretty much just stand out here on the sidewalk trying to arrest us, you know, follow ... being followed, even the ones that are in the cars, they’re following us in their car, yell out things.”

Harassment is not uniform across the police force. Yasmin told researchers that levels of harassment vary dependent on who is working. Other women named specific officers whom they wished to avoid because they were more abusive or disrespectful than others. Harassment was not uniformly reported by informants across geographic locations and ethnicities. The sole white respondent from the Bronx reported that officers there were harder on her because of her race even as her whiteness was good for her business. Erin said

I always had the same guys, I would call them up and they would pick me up and, but just I guess, you know, being that I’m white in this area, you know, I stand out, you know, believe me I do, and my hair was brown at the time, so I would mix in a little, but believe me, I stand out, now that it’s blond, it’s better, it keeps me out of trouble [laughs], but I did, that’s why the cops would always be like, ‘where are you going? What are you doing?’ you know, they knew, yeah, they knew, yeah, they knew I was up to no good” and added “especially being that I was white, they would be like, ‘oh, you’re putting our race down, you’re white, you shouldn’t even be in this area,’ you know, yeah, they would always, yeah, you’re right, they would always be like, ‘white trash’ and they were white too, you know, they would just call me that, you know, ‘you should be ashamed of yourself’ and shit like that. They were so mad that I was white and I was, you know, and they were like, ‘you make us look like shit,’ and yeah, they would always be telling me. Every time they would come, they would be like, ‘[Erin]’ and they know, and they would be like, ‘come here’ and they would just search me for no reason. They would just take my bag and dump it and I was like, ‘pick it up,’ [laughs] you know, all my make-up and they would break my lipsticks and they were just so mad that I was white in the area doing what I was doing. They really were.”

Perceptions of racial and ethnic differences varied by neighborhood. All informants in Bushwick reported daily interaction initiated by law enforcement officers, but it is interesting to note that Latina women in Bushwick reported more egregious harassment than whites, African-Americans or women of mixed heritage. In this neighborhood the most violent police encounters and the most persistent verbal harassment was reported by Latinas. This included name-calling, stalking behavior and throwing food at one respondent. Additionally, the cooperating organization that conducted outreach in Bushwick had changed its location in response to police harassment of their outreach staff. This, combined with the high visibility of law enforcement officers during research site visits, convinced the researcher not to leave their site while conducting this research.

Others in Bushwick also reported police harassment. Carol said “[T]he problem I have just now is if they see me, they take me and they search me ... I know I have to get out of this neighborhood, because if I get off the street and stay in the neighborhood, it’ll be the same [with the police.]” Celia described feeling housebound by law enforcement. “Summons means you can’t come out [of] your house. ... I got one cop, he gives me a summons every time he sees me.” Bridget reports similar practice, saying that she is harassed every day. Bridget reported that officers say things like “You know you aren’t supposed to be out here.” “You mean I can’t visit somebody? They want you to be homebound.”

Celia and Sissy repeat that the police are also very disrespectful in their use of language. They reported that officers use a great deal of profanity when they talk to the women, calling them “bitches, hos and sluts” and asking “you’re not dead yet?” Mary concurs, “The police are nasty, sarcastic, degrading.” The partner of a sex worker repeated this:

"They treat us like lowlife, they say 'we gotta go clean up the trash.' They still look at you the same way as when they see you on the street -'why should we help you?'" Candy reported similar verbal harassment. "They call me names and threaten to lock me up. Every time I see them, I try to walk away, but they always stop me."

Marlene said that "When the police question us, they say 'if you don't tell me, we can go through your pocketbook, because we know you're dirty.'"

Candy reported that police officers tell her to "open her condoms and drop them into the sewer, all the time, ten times a month."

However, it was clear that harassment of sex workers or of those whom the police profiled as sex workers occurred in all areas. Charlotte notes that she receives special attention from police because she is a transgender woman. "I get harassed all the time ... every time I go to [Greenwich Village] ... if they haven't seen me before, they harass me, or if they know me, they harass me." She continued, "It's the same police who want the oral sex on the side."

Linda, in Coney Island, says that she works longer hours as a consequence of harassment: "The johns, sometimes they get scared," so there is less money. Rather than preventing street-based prostitution, harassment may encourage it as prostitutes spend more time trying to make the same amount of money.

Valerie reported that she is harassed by officers in northern Manhattan when she is not working. "I was standing in front of the hair shop ... to get my hair done, the police said, 'come here, what are you doing outside?' 'I'm waiting to get my hair done,' 'no, you're not' he said, 'you're out here working.' ... He said, 'let me see your money.' He made me show him my money. After I showed him my money, he counted and saw I had like a hundred something. He gave me a summons for soliciting, for disrupting traffic and that was messed up because I wasn't even working that day, for real. I had to go to 346 Broadway for that summons, I swear to God, and that wasn't right because I was not prostituting. Every time they see somebody out there on an avenue, I could just be walking, not even doing nothing, they think I'm doing something, you know, they would say, 'you need to stop hanging around here.' 'Don't tell me where I can't walk. I can walk where I want to walk in,' you know, 'if you see me approaching a car or something, lock me up then, but if I'm doing none, don't bother me.'"

Valerie also described being threatened with constant harassment and arrest unless she provided law enforcement officers with information.

He gave me his phone number, the police gave me their phone number They wanted me to snake on who sells the crack out there and tell me... they wanted me to snake and tell them about the prostitutes who stole the trick's car and I said, 'I don't know,' so guess what he ended up telling me, 'if you don't tell us, we can make it so every time we see you standing out there, we'll lock you up.' They say they will lock me up if I don't tell them. Let me show you their number, they gave me their number to call. They bribed me. They tried to bribe me. ... They told me if I didn't tell them what prostitutes stole the car, they said it was two prostitutes, they said, 'I want you to tell us who stole the car, what girls, what prostitutes stole the car the other day. I know you heard about that.' I said, 'I didn't hear about nothing.' They said, 'oh, you don't want to tell us,' they say, 'well, we can make it so every time we see you out, ... we lock you up, if you don't tell us,' and I said, 'I don't know nothing.' He was like, 'I'm telling you, you'd better tell us or else.' They just bribed me, they did ... because I told him, I said, 'sir, I don't go out there every day.' I don't even know [whose car that is]. I haven't heard nothing. I haven't heard anything about it. I said, 'I don't know nothing about that, so...' he said, 'oh' and he was like, 'If you don't cooperate with us, we can make it so that every time you step on Park Avenue, you get locked up.' ... The police tried to bribe me though, when they locked me up. They were trying to get me to tell them the name of drug dealers and I'm like, 'I'm not snitching off' and they were like, 'well, we're going to lock you every time we see you on the streets.'

Police Violence

9 respondents out of 30 (30 percent) told researchers that they had been threatened with violence by police officers. 8 (27 percent) reported experiencing violence at the hands of police.

Carol described an incident with an off-duty police officer who threw food at her. When she said she would

remember his license plate number, he told her he “would murder” her. She said that when she ran away from him, he chased her. Carol added “He runned [sic] back when I run [sic] to a place with a lot of people.” She found this to be an extreme form of intimidation.

Leslie described extreme violence in an incident seven years ago, in which she reported that three undercover officers jumped out of a van and kicked her. She said they “put me in the hospital.” Leslie told us that Internal Affairs (within NYPD) investigated the incident, but nothing came of this. Leslie’s biggest fear in arrest is “having drugs planted on me, or a cop hitting me.”

Mimi also worries about “harassment, they way they treat you, they way they talk to you, when they get physical.” When asked what she meant by “getting physical,” Mimi said that she has been threatened and beaten up by both police officers and clients. She added, “The cops on me? Yeah, yeah, that’s what I mean by getting physical.”

Indeed, Charlotte echoes fears of police violence, saying that when she is arrested, she hopes not to “get a creepy cop - you get that psycho cop ... sometimes they become very abusive with power.” She added “I’ve seen cops get out of a car and beat a girl, and then get back in the car and leave.” Jackie repeats this fear of violence; her greatest worry about arrest is “not coming home at all.”

Erin described violent treatment upon arrest. “Yeah, they’re always violent when they grab you, especially when they tell you they don’t want to see you again and it’s the same cops. They throw you on the floor and they step on you and they treat you like crap.”

Police Violence and Sexual Harassment

5 respondents described sexual harassment from police. 1 respondent reported being raped by a police officer. Another respondent described extreme incidents of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment included officers intimating that they would give arrested women cigarettes in exchange for sex. 1 woman reported stalking behavior by an officer. Her ongoing situation was specific to her and seemed to reflect a personal fixation on the part of the officer. Another reported having been raped by an officer. She did not want to talk about this experience in detail.²⁴

Mary reported that a specific officer followed her in his civilian car for more than 30 blocks. Mary is not the only respondent who reported excessive attention from officers outside their law enforcement capacities. Michelle’s most notable comment about police harassment was that they followed her frequently but don’t arrest her as much as they follow her. The police harassed her in ways that seemed different from the other subjects. They followed her and yell at possible clients with a bullhorn to stay away from her, by name. No one else reported any such personal proprietary feelings by officers.

Marlene described the worst experience she had with a police officer. She “had a date and got paid, and then the guy pulled out his badge,” cuffed her and forced her to perform oral sex on him a second time. She also reported that “There are times when someone says ‘It’s hot tonight, it’s a sweep, you should get out of here, now what can you do for me?’”

Other women reported less physically coercive examples of sexual harassment and abuse. Bethany said “Police have made sexual demands. [They ask] ‘You wanna get arrested or you wanna give up some head?’” Michelle reported that the last time she was arrested, a Task Force officer asked her for fellatio, saying, “I gave you two cigarettes, you want anything else, you know what you can do for me.” Jamie’s friends warned her about officers who would “propose that you give them a blow job to get your freedom.”

Carol asked whether male police officers may search women, because one officer felt her breasts, made her unbutton her shirt and leave her breasts out in view while he wrote a ticket. The officer let her button up her shirt after four or five cars had driven by.

Transgender women described similar issues with harassment, but also described specific differences relating to officers checking their genitals and making comments about their gender. However, their experience was largely similar: Charlotte reported that officers in a different area ask for “sexual favors to keep from getting arrested”

²⁴This was not unusual. Many rape victims and victims of other violent crimes preferred only to report that the incident had happened without going into detail.

but added that “when they’re off duty, they pay for it.” Mandy also reported sexual situations with police officers, saying “They do it now, they do it now, they will touch you and then, you know, since you’re in the car, they arrest you. I heard this from... I heard this from many girls and it happened to me once. I almost got arrested. I told, you know, the guy to touch me, you know, he touched my chest, but, you know, he wouldn’t pretty much, he wouldn’t touch me through my legs, so I was like ‘that’s a cop.’ They will touch you, you know, they will, you know, fondle you, but they won’t fondle you between your legs.”

Joan told interviewers that while she was being processed for arrest, [the police officer] came behind me and [said] “can I rub against you for \$10?”

Celia and Sissy have experienced many sexual situations with the police. Sissy said “A lot of cops are dates.” She reported that the majority of her clients are police officers, most off-duty. Celia agreed, saying, “One used to give me money while he was in uniform.”

Valerie reported similar experiences with police in northern Manhattan. “I’ve had a lot of, I’ve had a lot of men in uniforms, a lot of men in uniforms coming to me, pick me up, and date with me, in uniforms, they just get out, won’t handcuff me, nothing, they just get out of the car, open the back door, and tell me to come on [...]”

She also reported that officers paid for sex. “Sometimes I’ve had them say, ‘Either you give me a blow job or I’m going to lock you up.’” She added that some “were in plain clothes.”

Avery described a sexual situation with the police “when I was arrested as a child for a fare evasion ... when they patted me down, it wasn’t a pat, it was a feel down.”

Avery also described having witnessed sexual misconduct by police officers with women on the street in the Bronx. “I’ve seen things, which I thought were like horrible that police have done to girls on the streets, grabbing their vagina extra hard and one of the girls said that it really like upsets the pelvic area a lot. I actually saw with my own eyes [...] it was like he was squeezing like a handball or something, but really really hard, I said, ‘man, what does he want?’ To make sure she doesn’t come out and work, so he’s gonna injure her a little bit.” She did not get arrested, “no, he drove up to her, I didn’t even know it was the police, it was two guys in a car and they drove up on the sidewalk. He pushed her against the wall and then he pushed her against the wall after he finished that and then he said, ‘now, get off the street.’ He jumped back in the vehicle and they drove off. I didn’t realize they were policemen before she told me that they were cops.”

Arrests

Many interactions with police led to arrests, for both prostitution-related offenses and others. Respondents were asked specific questions about their last arrest and more general questions about other arrests, such as what other charges they had faced and whether there were specific incidents that they felt were important incidents they were willing to report to us.

Respondents cited arrests for the following offenses: prostitution; loitering for prostitution; possession; solicitation; selling drugs; trespassing (ticketing); loitering; and assault.

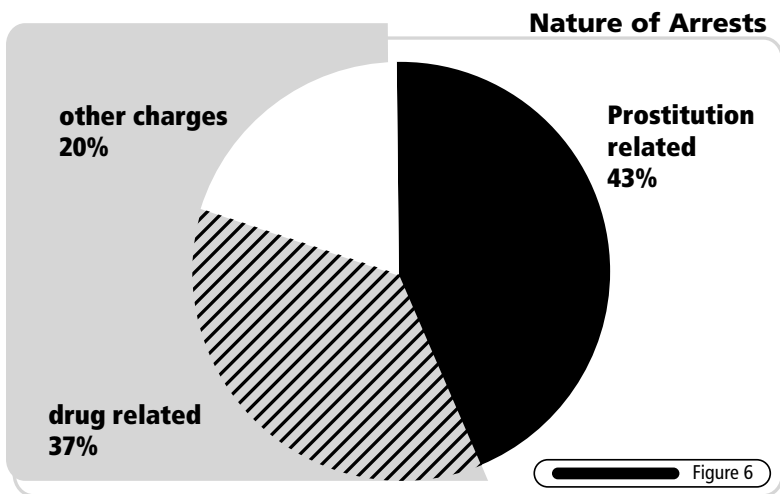
Subjects had fixed ideas about police behavior relating to arrests. Many respondents said that they believed that police made more arrests on certain days, and during specific times of the week, some of which were uniform within certain areas.

A transgender respondent said that officers often separate transgender people from the male population in holding cells. However, when she was last arrested she was held “in the pen with gangster men ... [the cops said] as long as you have a penis [you belong with the men].”

28 respondents had been arrested in the twelve months prior to being interviewed. 2 others had more than ten arrests, the most recent being in the 15 months prior to the interview. These 2 had changed their work habits in order to decrease their interactions with law enforcement officers. Numbers of arrests varied greatly, ranging from one to more than fifty. These arrests were not all for prostitution-related offenses; as reflected in the charges listed above, many respondents have arrests related to drug use. 9 respondents reported ten or more arrests.

Researchers asked respondents about their last arrest and their strongest memories of arrest. The most recent

offenses included four charges of prostitution, five charges of soliciting, nine charges of drug possession, two charges of loitering, two charges of trespassing and one each of drug production, drug sales, assault, menacing, disorderly conduct, attempted prostitution and attempted soliciting. One person was arrested on a warrant after missing a desk appearance for a ticket for violating the open container law. More than one charge was brought in some instances. In cases in which multiple charges were brought, this list reflects their recollection of their most serious offense. Multiple offenses were charges, as shown by these examples: drug possession, drug distribution, and drug manufacturing; possession of a controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia; and prostitution and public lewdness. The number of drug related charges reflects that many street-based sex workers are also involved with drugs. Street-based sex workers in this sample faced a high number of arrests on drug related charges, highlighting that prostitution may be secondary to the fact of participation in street-based drug transactions of varying sorts.



Reports from indoor prostitutes included charges of prostitution and permitting prostitution, doing business without a license, practicing massage without a license and promoting prostitution. As this report focuses on street-based sex workers, these reports are not included in the above figures. However, they demonstrate that indoor sex workers experienced police interactions and arrests and offer a comparison to street-based sex workers who were generally more frequently arrested and more frequently approached by police, with a different variety of charges brought against them.

Respondents’ descriptions of arrest include experiences with violence, sexual situations of varying extremes, and false arrest, in addition to more accepted procedures such as “sweeps,” the practice of arresting all known prostitutes or even all women in a targeted area.

Joan told researchers that her most recent arrest was with “a trick of mine.” She was not arrested for prostitution and that her companion was not arrested, “no, they let him go.” “We were driving on the highway on New Jersey Turnpike. We got pulled over. According to the cop, he pulled us over because he said that we were tailing the car in front of us, but I think he pulled us over because he was a white man, you know, with an Hispanic woman, you know, so ... and he found 25 bags of crack on me.”

Linda said, “I’ve had 32 arrests,” explaining that she has been arrested “once every couple of months.” Linda reported that she has been threatened with arrest “yeah, just for walking doing the street.” Mandy has been arrested only once, but described her frequent interactions with police, saying “just warnings out here ... the typical, you know, ‘if I see you walking around ... in my neighborhood, I’m gonna arrest you,’ ‘why are you walking around out here at this type of hour?’”

Allison’s four arrests were all prostitution and drug-related charges. Her most recent arrest was in September 2002. She said that she was standing on a corner, “the guy who picked me up was a cop.” They pulled into a parking lot and “we talked about money, and a cop car pulled up behind us.” She was charged with prostitution and felt that it was entrapment. Her guilty plea led to a sentence of five days of community service, which she did not do. She thought it was better to plead guilty - she felt that they had hard evidence because she was arrested in the car. She also decided that this was the best choice for her because she served no jail time.

Mimi reported, “I got arrested by the gas station. I got arrested in June. I came out [released from jail] in July, but before that, I got arrested also in May, and before that, in April and before that, that was like a year before. ... I was going to trick a car. He stopped for gas and next thing you know when he stepped out of the car to go and pay for the gas, they surrounded the car and they ordered me to get out. And then from there they, you know, I had drugs on me. They told me that either I give it to them or that a female officer would come down and arrest me and the guy, he didn’t even know that I had anything on me, you know, so I didn’t want him to get in trouble, because he was a really nice guy.” [He wasn’t an undercover officer?] “no, he wasn’t, no, he was a regular guy. And I didn’t want him to get in trouble. So when I tried to talk to the sergeant, you know, I told him, ‘listen, I’m going

to give you whatever you want, but please, you know, don't arrest him on that thing,' you know."

Mimi continued, "[The officer] told me if I had anything or else a female officer was going to come down and search me, which makes it worse. And I told him, 'listen, I'll give you whatever you want, but don't, you know, don't arrest him', because he didn't even know I had anything on me and, you know, that I had anything on me, so then, you know, the sergeant was very nasty, 'shut the fuck up or I'm going to bust your head open'. And I'm just trying to talk to him, you know, civilized and they were so nasty and going crazy and then when I was just pulling the stuff out of my bra, they attacked me, you know, like they started putting their hands in my shirt and everything and then, you know, I took it out and then, 'you'd better act normal or we're going to kick your ass' and I said 'no listen, I might just rather give you this and please put your hands off me.'" Her companion was also arrested.

Jamie described her most recent arrest, explaining that she was in a car with a client, in an alley. Police saw them, put on the siren, and pulled them over. When asked why did the police assume it was prostitution, Jamie said that it was because they were in a known prostitution area. Jamie added that she and the man in the car had not engaged in any sexual activity when the police appeared. She reported that she was arrested based on her getting into the car and that the police had observed her hanging out in the area and getting into a few cars. The man was released, prompting her to add "the lucky bastard."

Mandy was arrested only once, "just me, I was by myself ... I prided him. He came up to me. After he told me he was a trick, I prided him. He walked me over to his car. I got in. He said, you know, 'you're arrested for soliciting.' I said, 'okay, you know, you got me'" He was an undercover officer. "The two undercovers, they were... the only time... the only time that the police were harassing me, it was the CO [commanding officer] with the whole, you know, 'no you can't make a phone call, be quiet,' you know ... nice... I pretty much spent like 18 hours [in jail] when I got arrested."

Mandy was charged with soliciting and she thinks what she was charged with was an accurate description of what really happened: "yes, they were very fair, I mean, if they weren't, I mean, I would have argued. I didn't know the law, but they were very fair. They said, 'okay, you know, we got you on tape'. They said, 'this is your first arrest. It's not going to go on record", so, you know, I could still say, 'no, I've never been arrested.'" A legal aid lawyer advised her to plead not guilty, "it was the... that was the lawyer that was... that was the legal aid. I told them, 'fine, you know, I was busted', but I mean, once they said, 'it's not going to be on your record, no nothing', I was like, 'okay, fine ... It didn't even go on my record, no community service or anything ... I had to go to a class, which is like 6 hours, nothing big. Now, they're giving community service, now they are, not some months ago, now they are."

The worst thing that Mandy reported happening to her during the arrest process was theft. "Pretty much, when I was arrested, I didn't get all my money. I had a \$150 on me. They let me keep a \$100, but, you know, not receive the \$50. Tell me, what's the big deal, \$50? But it was my money. So they just gave me the story, 'you have to call on certain days to receive your money back' and then they were not even going to give my money cash, they were going to give me some check that, you know, it couldn't be cashed."

Thefts at arrests were also reported by respondents in the Bronx. Mandy works a higher end stroll, but for Bronx respondents, even \$10 is a significant sum. Amy said that police had stolen money from her when she was arrested. "I had like \$90 on me and when I got my things back, it was only, it was only \$60 left in there. I said, 'where's my money?' They were like, 'nobody touched your stuff.'" Avery also described having money taken from him by officers "right on the scene, when they go through your pockets, they go through, if you have any loose money, they pocket it."

False Arrests

Twenty-three respondents reported having been subjected to false arrest at some point. A positive response to this question meant that the subject interpreted the charges leveled against them as not being an accurate description of what they were doing. This was commonly related to sweeps, in which women in known prostitution areas are arrested en masse.

Marlene said that she is likely to be arrested because she's "a known prostitute in a known prostitution area" even when she is walking down the street. This is in keeping with other respondents who reported that the refrain in the police van during a sweep is "one more body, one more body." Sweeps may be prone to resulting in false arrests. Bridget reported that her last sweep arrest was by two female officers who "said I was waving a car down but it was a false arrest, I was walking down the block."

Charlotte described her long history of arrests, beginning with a false arrest. "I'm 30 now-I've been getting arrested since I was 15, so that's like over 50 arrests." and added "I got arrested for prostitution long before I knew prostitution was." "I'm not an innocent bystander in this life - not to say I haven't played my part, but ... I have been wronged by the police. Being that who I am ... [This is a reference to her transgender status.] It's just recently in the past few years that I've started realizing that I have rights, that I have a voice, but before that I was petrified ... There are times I could be coming out of the subway, and they just snatch you coming out of the subway, just because you're a tranny." Charlotte reported that she always pleads guilty in order to be released as quickly as possible. She added that after arrests, "they let the client go."

Carol described an incident she remembered well. She reported that an officer approached got out of a van and approached her in a park. He checked for warrants, and since she had no outstanding warrants, he went away. Another officer got out of a second van and arrested her. She was taken to the 104th precinct, and cried for five hours in the cell. One officer said "See this sheet? All these warrants aren't yours." She was never charged and was released after this detention. Carol asked for a letter saying she was detained five hours, the officer said that he would consider this only if she went through the system.

Bethany felt it was difficult to counter false arrests because "They're gonna believe them, they're not gonna believe me." Avery agreed, saying "and the judge is always, 'well, the police is here to tell the truth and that's what they're hired for, to abide by the law and to make sure that the laws are enforced.' It's just not true."

Charlotte reported that police officers falsified the street where she was arrested because they were out of their precinct. "You're supposed to flag down three cars in twenty minutes so they can get you for loitering for prostitution, and most girls don't do that ... so what happens is, [the police] lie about that."

Leslie was particularly incensed about neighborhood law enforcement. "Saying I'm loitering, intent to prostitute ... I've been in this neighborhood 23 years ... they tell me I can't stand on a corner ... If they see me talking to someone in a car, they arrest me."

Jamie expressed similar frustration, saying "They shouldn't arrest me for talking to a friend."

Erin described the same phenomenon in the Bronx, saying "I mean, you know, they knew me so much that, that a couple of times, they just took me for loitering, just for standing, and I lived there, I would take out my keys and say, 'look, I live right here, across the street,' 'no, you're still loitering, you're not in your house, we're going to take you,' because they knew me, they knew me, so that was like, yeah, they would always false arrest me."

Linda described being arrested "drinking a beer in front of the store ... you know, I was just... hanging out, that's it. I wasn't doing anything. I wasn't prostituting. And that's why they took me in, for prostitution, and like [the female detective] said, 'put your hands on the car, don't make it hard on yourself, I need collar', just like that."

Mimi reported that she has been falsely arrested for charges she did not commit, saying "yes, definitely yes, or adding more charges."

Yasmin was arrested coming out of the store after buying groceries. The police spilled the groceries all over the street. She was not known to them and thinks they just needed an arrest. Yasmin reported another incident, saying that police officers had planted drugs on her. She told researchers that she was arrested for possession, but did not have any drugs and was in the process of trying to get drugs when she was arrested.

Valerie said "One day, I was just standing on a corner, not even working, listening to my Walkman. They pulled up on me and locked me up."

Amy also reported having been arrested falsely. "The first time was they pulled me up because I was talking to the guy, the second time... [and you were just talking to someone?] Yeah, I was just talking to somebody, I wasn't prostituting, but they caught me as prostituting, but they still put me through the system and everything. I didn't do, the first time, I did not. The second time yes, the third time yes. The first time, I was just walking around, at the wrong time at the wrong place."

Other respondents described arrest after legal business transactions. Nancy has been arrested more than ten times. The police consider her a known prostitute and drug user. She described her most recent arrest for researchers, saying "a guy on 19th street offered to buy me a cup of coffee ... the cop said she saw me doing a transaction in the store ... she'd been waiting for me all morning." She added, "Once they searched me, they found paraphernalia

with drug residue on it.”

Entrapment

Many respondents felt that at some point, the police had wrongly “entrapped” them. However, entrapment is an affirmative defense to having committed a crime - legally, it is an admission of having committed a crime. An entrapment defense is rarely successful, as it requires a defendant to show that she would not have engaged in said activity had law enforcement not induced or encouraged her. This information makes clear to the researchers that many street-based prostitutes do not have a basic understanding of the laws that can affect them or criminalize their behavior, and that many do not receive this basic information in their limited contact with defense attorneys.

Mandy described popular impressions of entrapment, saying, “They are other girls out here who, you know, they get caught up in the entrapment thing. The cops, they’re not supposed to lure you in, they’re supposed to pretty much come out, play fair. And I hear that from a lot of girls that they didn’t come out straight forward.”

Jackie described an incident in which a man stopped her and asked if she needed a ride. When she said yes, he replied, “let’s get out of this area,” to which she answered, “What for?” He said, “To go out.” Jackie countered “I’m not here for that.” He asked her “What are you standing there for?” and she answered “To get a ride.” They turned the corner, went two blocks, and a police van approached them. This man was an undercover police officer. Jackie described the area, saying “It’s a track where girls work ... I just needed a ride, but they’ve seen me walking around.” Jackie’s attorney did not set forth an entrapment defense, but was able to have the charge dismissed.

The arrest that Joan remembers the most “was for possession. And I was ... oh my God! Okay, this is how it happened. I was walking down the avenue. A car pulls over with three guys in the car. One of them tells me, ‘today is my birthday, so we’re going to go to a liquor store, you’re going to buy a bottle’ ... I get in the car. The first thing we do, we stop by a liquor store ... bought a bottle of vodka, drank from the bottle and then, after that, the birthday boy gave me \$20, ‘okay, go buy some stuff.’ [meaning drugs] I got out of the car, bought the stuff, got back in the car. Now all of the sudden, the driver says, ‘I want to get some soda.’ ... He got out of the car, went to the store and all of the sudden, just out of nowhere, a whole bunch of cops is coming to get me, ‘get out of the car, get out of the car’ ... ‘no, you’ve been arrested for a crime, get out.’ They handcuffed me, they put me in the paddy wagon. They let the driver go, the Jamaican guy, and they pulled me down in the car. When I get to the precinct, I notice that the birthday boy wasn’t there, they were all cops, they were all cops. I’ll never forget that.” Joan felt that this was entrapment.

Attempts to Avoid Police Interaction

Research subjects described practices they developed that they hoped would allow them to avoid police contact. These include changing or varying their locations, schedules and practices in attempts to decrease the possibility of interactions with law enforcement. They use these methods to avoid both arrest and harassment. However, fear of arrest is not necessarily a deterrent. For example, Sissy says that being arrested “is not a deterrent, it’s just the way we do things.”

Interviewees reported using similar methods to avoid police, including frequently changing times and locations of their work, dressing conservatively, taking care to avoid engaging in obvious behavior while soliciting customers, and assessing whether a potential customer is an undercover police officer. However, all such attempts were made based on very subjective and individualized information. For example, when asked at what times or days police were most likely to make arrests based on prostitution, there was great variation in the answers, including the end of the month, midweek (which was the most common answer), weekends, and specific times of day. Only being in a known prostitution area and being a known prostitute were widely agreed upon as catalysts to interactions with police officers, including arrest. There was widespread agreement that police make more arrests on specific days, but great variety in responses as to the specific days.

Mimi said “I feel like there are certain days when they need to make more arrests than others, because they could be out there and they see me four or five times and they don’t even say nothing, like they look relaxed, but then, there are days when they look tense and they need to make more arrests than any other day.”

Nancy reported “They stopped me yesterday ... asked was I working ... they asked how often I’d been arrested ... said they’re coming down real hard on prostitutes.” Nancy believes that arrests are more likely “towards end of month ... have to make a quota ... [they] did a sweep a few days ago.” Jamie also feels that arrests increased during “election time ... trying to clean up the neighborhood, supposedly” “but there are other crimes ... gangs, rapes ...

child molesters, the Catholic priests.”

Mandy said that arrests were “more likely, pretty much just walking in this area period, period, I mean, if they see that you’re walking this area certain type of nights... walking in the street, pretty much if they see you following traffic, pretty much eyeing traffic, that or... if you just have that look, if you just, you know, look as... yeah.” Mandy went on, “Sweep nights and then if there are so many ... women, they have warrants, they’ll just pick up anybody who’s walking.”

Jackie says “I try not to let them see my face too much, so they can’t notice me.” She believes she is less likely to be arrested because “I’m not giving them no trouble ... I’m not chasing the guys down.” Jackie told researchers that she does not get arrested often because “I don’t make myself so obvious like that, to get in police contact.” She reported that the hardest thing about street life and sex work was “lots of cops out there ... it’s hard - you gotta be hiding from them.”

Charlotte said that she “never park[s] out in the open ... I try to keep it as dignified as possible.” She added “I go out really early, before their normally scheduled time to come out . . . usually they’ll come out around 8:00 [at night], until 4 in the morning.” “I’ll start at 7 [at night], but it’s hard to make money then, because guys don’t want to be there if it’s still light.” “or I come out after 4 in the morning. I change everything. I change the way I dress, I change the way I approach the clients ... in the last year, since the last arrest. I try to look like a pedestrian.”

Jamie said “[I] don’t make it known - I dress conservatively.” Johanna also tries not to be too obvious. She said “I try to... not stay in one location. I try to walk up and down, you know, no more than twice, no more than three times up and down the avenue” However, she does work regularly on the same avenue, “yes, well... I’ve tried [X] Avenue sometimes at night.”

John, a 25 year-old heterosexual man, avoids police by “doing what regular people do ... mind my business ... They [police] wouldn’t expect me to be [a prostitute], so it’s different for me ... I don’t think of arrest ... I think of food, or whatever I need, walk different neighborhood.” He also said that he tries to vary his location and “I mostly call people up.” Being male, he said he was “not really profiled” as a prostitute. John said “[I] don’t make eye contact ... don’t show them I’m nervous ... because if they see you on a certain block constantly, they know something’s up.”

Leslie reported, “If I see them [police officers], I don’t talk to anyone ... I don’t get into their cars.” Leslie found police cars to be cleaner and shinier than other cars. She added “I give them respect.” “[I] see them and I move myself. It’s respect.” She described changes in location and said she has made some in her methods “I wait until the man pulls over around the corner ... I ask if they’re a cop ... if they beat around the bush, then no [I don’t get in.]” In addition to varying her location, she has varied her schedule, saying “never keep the same time.”

Mimi has made similar changes to avoid having trouble with the police. She said “I come out like maybe late at night. And if I come out during the day, it’s only for a little short time. My main hours are late at night.” She has changed the way she works and her location because of the police and the residents but added “now that I work in the neighborhood, I wouldn’t know any other place.”

Allison also adjusted her patterns in an attempt to minimize police interactions. “I don’t just run up to a car ... I change the way I look for customers ... I give them eye contact, if they smile or respond and circle around the corner a few times ... they stop and ask for the time, or directions, one of us will ask, ‘do you want to go out?’” She too reported that she works in different neighborhoods. Allison reported that when she speaks with police officers, she feels “the vibe.” “I get a chill up my spine ... the way they talk.” “The night of my last arrest, I was broke and hungry ... it was my first ride in hours, and it was right there in my pockets, so I ignored my instincts.”

Mandy described her tactics to avoid law enforcement. “Pretty much, if I see a cop car, pretty much I turn my head, they only just see what I look like, what I’m wearing. When they’re undercover, I pretty much recognize the car, recognize that they’re in two, recognize their face. Also when they’re in taxis, if there are two people in the taxi, that’s so obvious, pretty much if I see the paddy wagon, you know, I get away from it. If anyone just comes too forward out light, ‘hey, you want a date,’ don’t say anything, avoid them, you know, just pretty much play it safe. However, she reported that she had not changed her location or her working habits, despite having been arrested, saying “no, it doesn’t because pretty much I just got to get over the fear because, I mean, hey! this is... this spot makes money [laughs] ... this is the money spot ... yeah, so, you know, I got over my fear quickly ... I’m just a little more cautious of who I talk to... and how I approach people.” Mandy also described receiving a tip on police avoidance from clients. She said that “a few that I’ve... Johns, they said, you know, there was a female cop walking

around here that will arrest you.”

Respondents reported receiving warnings about upcoming sweeps from officers, but Avery was most detailed about these interactions. “When they give me a warning, I usually take it, like when they’re doing a sweep or something like that or they’ll pick you up for the night, they’ll go, ‘are you going home now?’ you’re supposed to say, ‘yes, officer’ and I always do. Sometimes I say ‘yes’ and then [I leave] twenty minutes later because they’ll let you know, ‘in half an hour, we’ll be back and if we see you out, we’re going to pick you up, no questions asked,’ so they pre-warn you about picking people up.”

Dorothy also reported receiving advance warnings about possible arrest. “They used to look at me and say, ‘go home, if I see you walking,’ I would say, ‘I’m going to the store to get something,’ ‘if I see you walking here again, we’re going to arrest you, you know, we’re going to take you home or whatever,’ but it wasn’t serious.”

Tickets

Data collected reflects the influence of City quality of life campaigns. Operations Spotlight and Clean Sweep, which target quality of life issues including prostitution, use not only arrests, but also summons and desk-appearance tickets as a form of enforcement. Summons and tickets may be used for violations and low-level misdemeanors, and do not involve an arrest. Instead, they specify a date for an appearance before a judge. Subjects were often unable to detail for researchers whether they had received a summons or a desk appearance ticket, but most often used the term “tickets.” Therefore, researchers use the term “tickets.” Some ticketable charges seem to be used to harass sex workers, particularly traffic-related charges levied against pedestrians. Prostitution is not a ticketable offense, so other charges such as loitering or obstructing traffic are used to ticket people in known prostitution areas. Many respondents, including all the Bushwick participants, had received tickets as well as having experienced arrest. Ticketing is preferable to arrest for most people because they can keep the desk-appearance appointment and avoid arrest. However, many homeless or marginally-housed or substance dependent women reported that they would not meet their desk appearance dates. In these situations, a warrant is issued for the arrest of the person who missed her appearance. Respondents with substance dependencies reported receiving many tickets and missing many appearances, leading to warrant-based arrests.

Ticketable offenses are often violations (not a misdemeanor), and this is reflected in some of the charges. Yasmin was ticketed for “disturbing pedestrian traffic” while she was crossing the street. Mary said that she had received tickets for blocking traffic and assault. The judge laughed at these charges, threw them out and reprimanded the officer. Another respondent received a ticket for drinking an alcoholic beverage on the street.

Jessica reported having been ticketed frequently, regardless of her activities. “I’ll be in the store and they’ll call me over and write me a ticket.” The researcher asked what may encourage law enforcement to ticket, harass or arrest a person. Jessica said “I have no idea. I can see the same officer a hundred times and he won’t arrest me but then the next time he will. I guess it’s how many tickets they’ve given and how many they have to get.” Like many, she mentioned ticket quotas.

Carol said, “I was in the subway. A cop came over to me and said ‘someone upstairs wants to talk to you.’ I go upstairs and it’s the paddy wagon, they gave me a ticket.” She added “They give me tickets for obstructing traffic, disorderly conduct, even a ticket leaving my house.” She lives in the area and said that she feels she can hardly leave the house for the number of tickets she gets. She reported being frequently searched by the police and made to take off her shoes, so the police can look inside them for crack.

Valerie mentioned summons, saying “They always give us summons, man.”

Violence From Customers

Respondents most frequently cited violence and danger, including difficulties with the police, when asked what most makes sex work difficult. 24 out of 30 respondents (80 percent) experienced either violence and/or threats of violence in the course of their work. 18 out of 30 respondents (60 percent) had experiences with male clients who became violent or tried to force them to do things they did not want to do. These problems include rape, assault and robbery. 16 of the 30 respondents (53 percent) reported that they had been threatened with violence from men they met as clients while engaging in prostitution. 10 out of 30 (33 percent) reported that they had experienced both threats and violence. 8 out of 30 (27 percent) experienced violence but not threats. 6 respondents (20 percent) reported that they had been threatened with but did not actually experience violence with clients. Both indoor workers interviewed (who were not included in the statistics above) experienced violence. One was a brothel

employee and the other was an escort. The brothel worker described two robberies, one of which was very violent. In these incidents, the perpetrators seemed to work in groups. The independent escort described an incident that seemed more similar to those described by street-based sex workers, in that the perpetrators appeared to work alone.

Carol says the work is dangerous because she's been robbed by men pretending to be clients three times. She now sees only people whom she already knows. "The times that I took strangers is when I was robbed." Bethany has been robbed and "That's one of the reasons I stopped [seeing clients whom she did not know]." Like Carol, Bethany now sees only men with whom she is already familiar.

Charlotte reported that she had been robbed three times. She also said "I was raped by a john before" and "slashed on side of mouth" by a different man. When asked if she reported any of these crimes, she replied "Of course not," illustrating her certainty that she would not be helped by the police. Charlotte blames herself in part for these incidents, for "going against my gut feeling ... being desperate ... needing money and taking chances, going against that voice."

Mandy also blames herself for having been robbed by a john: "It only happened to me twice and, you know, that was my fault for being dumb, you know, that was all me... really, that could have happened again, but I didn't let it happen, you know ... you get a lot of people that are just like 'oh you can trust me', 'no I don't know you enough to trust you, no I don't, I don't know you, you don't know me either,' that happens all the time."

Marlene echoes this dependence on gut feelings. "I try not to be so desperate." It's the desperation that makes her ignore her instincts and take more chances, desperation for drugs, dopesick.

Dorothy reported having been raped at gunpoint by someone whom she turned down as a client. She reported that the man had said "You're going to date me no matter what" to her after she repeatedly declined his advances.

Rachel reported having been raped by a police officer, the nature of her attacker making it still more difficult for her to report the attack.

Sissy reported traumatic, violent experiences and coped in part by trying to learn from these experiences. "You can never forget, but you try to forget it, try to put it out of your mind. Learn from it so it doesn't happen again."

Outdoor workers reported more instances of violence, but, as previously noted, it is erroneous to assume that indoor sex workers are entirely protected from robbery and violence. In one of the two brothel robberies described by Gretchen, the robbers created a sense of chaos, with yelling and the use of weapons and violence against the women and men present. In the other, the robbery was committed in a more organized fashion and no one was injured. She added "These aren't clients, they're predators." Neither of these incidents were reported to the police.

Lana, another indoor worker, described positive experiences with the police after a violent incident with a predator known to local prostitutes for over a decade. She was robbed at knifepoint. Lana reported the robbery to the police and convinced other women who had been raped by the same man to testify against him. Their testimonies assisted the prosecution of this man, who is now serving a sentence in prison for these crimes.

Nancy, a street-based sex worker had a second story of conviction resulting from the testimony of a prostitute. She reported having been raped "more than once, but less than five times." She reported that she "went to the cops once. [The guy] was on parole for rape, so he got arrested and convicted. That felt good."

Jamie told researchers that "the hardest thing is to be with a client, and then he wants way more than he paid for ... it hasn't happened to me a lot, because I'm very justified when it comes to that, but it happens. ... I'm sure it's happening, especially to younger transgender girls that are selling their bodies ... because there are clients who think they can take advantage of [transgender women], because they think you're vulnerable, because you're basically so-called 'a man in a dress' that you have no rights."

Leslie told researchers that she has been forced to do things she didn't want to do, saying "of course," acknowledging that prostitutes are preyed upon by some. She added that she did not frequently endure such incidents, "no, not at all... not in a long time as a matter of fact."

Mimi described an incident when a john tried to force her do something she didn't want to do, and added "I talked my way out of it and after I felt sick, like physically sick, like I was going to vomit all over him." Mimi also reported having been robbed by clients. "Yes, like four times this year. [2002]"

Jamie also described a specific incident in which a customer stole her coat and purse, in which she could have been injured. "This john stopped, and I got into his car, and he seemed nice and everything. We ended up going to a parking lot ... we had agreed on the price ... he had paid me before we started getting into the act, and after, I told him, I'm getting out of the car to put my pants up ... my left leg was in the car, while my right leg was out, so then, I had left my coat and my pocketbook [in his car], and he drove off. thank god my left leg wasn't still in his car ... I felt used ... and it was cold, in the wintertime."

Safety Precautions

All subjects employed safety precautions in their work. Street prostitutes relied on their gut feelings to avoid violent situations, but as already mentioned 80 percent of those interviewed reported having been threatened or having experienced violence at the hands of customers. Respondents described a preference for obtaining people previously known to them as customers, relying on gut feelings and retreating from perceived danger in order to avoid violence, as well as self-defense tactics. Women in Bushwick and Coney Island, locations with a large amount of street commerce, described cooperating with other sex workers in order to enhance their own safety. Condom use was also mentioned as a safety precaution.

Charlotte said that she tries to stay away from aggressive people, "people I don't think I can handle mentally." She reported that she prefers to talk before getting into the car. Recently, she said that her precautions have worked well. However, a week before the interview, she described defusing a situation in which she almost had a problem with a client. "This guy wanted to go out for a blow job, for \$40, and he was totally wrong, he had no idea ... he tried to get me behind the car and tried to grab my bag, but ... the feeling came ... his expression changed when we got to the place ... I took him to a place I knew, that he didn't know, and I could tell that things weren't going to be going my way, so I immediately pulled back from the situation, and he couldn't stand it, he was losing control, so he grabbed for my bag, and I said, 'get off my bag' ... we argued ... he took off."

Jamie said, "In the past, I walked with knives and mace, but now, I don't really walk with anything, I just survive on my instincts, and most times I know when I go against my instincts, that's when I get into trouble." Allison, too, reported relying on her gut feelings, saying "I trust my gut." Joan also reported that she relies on her instincts. "Like I said, again I am very good with my instincts."

Like many interviewees, Joan expressed a preference for her "steadies" over strangers. Joan also implied that she prefers indoor locations rather than working in cars, and not to get into a client's car. "If I go on the highway, I want to stay at a walking distance from like, hotels." Dorothy also described working with men known to her, saying "I have friends that I contact."

Leslie has developed strategies of self-defense because she feels that "[sex work] is dangerous, more dangerous than other jobs." She said that her strategies and precautions "have saved my life a couple of times" Leslie told researchers that she learned how to defend herself because "I've been on the street since I was 14." She reported that twice, when men "[tried] to force me into sex ... I grabbed their windpipe." She also took car keys from the ignition and threw them out of the car so that the violent person had to get out to get them. Leslie now sees only people familiar to her.

Mimi described efforts among street-based sex workers to ensure their safety. "Most of the time like, you know, there's this little group of us, you know, and we all make sure we see like who's going with whom, what kind of car they're going into and try to be back at a certain time, back at the same place, you know, or if there's something like it's local, it's like right there, one of the girls goes with me and looks out."

Linda reported that she usually works in one area "because I've been here for so long... I feel safe here." Valerie spoke similarly of her Harlem neighborhood.

Mandy told researchers "Pretty much with the tricks my safety precaution is, you know, if I do get in the car, I'm not going to lock the door. If I do decide to get in the car, we drive around. I like to know where we're going. Don't take off. I don't like that. And pretty much I'd like to have a say-so of everything that's going on. And I always use condoms. You have a lot of them asking 'how much without condoms?'" She added that she sometimes accompanies a man to his home. "Sometimes ... but never on the first date because you don't know where they want to take you. That's the rule."

Like Mandy, Allison also mentioned using condoms to protect herself from infection.

Nancy reported that she carried a razor blade in order to “fight back with someone who’s attacking.”

Reporting Violent Incidents to the Police

Crimes against prostitutes usually go unpunished. There is a tacit acceptance of this form of violence, usually committed against women. The overwhelming majority of respondents did not go to the police after they experienced violent incidents. Street-based sex workers described enormous difficulties in their attempts to report prostitution-related violence to the police, many of them laughing and saying “no” or “of course not!” when researchers asked follow-up questions about customer violence with questions about whether they had gone to the police for help. Others who attempted to report violent crimes were told by the police that their complaints would not be accepted, that this is what they should expect, and that they deserve all that they get. When these women experienced further violence, they did not turn to the police.

Prostitutes often come up against a popular belief that it is not possible for a prostitute to be raped. The police practice of disregarding violence against sex workers goes beyond a lack of sympathy, places the blame on the victim of violence and encourages further violence against sex workers because it is widely understood that perpetrators of violence against prostitutes can frequently act with impunity. Sex workers have limits to what they will do in an encounter and all acts and money to be exchanged are negotiated beforehand. The rape of prostitutes is not simply a case of theft of services or not being paid: it is a violent encounter with painful consequences. The tacit acceptance of such violence, as indicated by the indifference of both society and the police, combined with a refusal to take it seriously, encourages such violence. It is critical to address and resolve this issue.

Mary said that for sex workers, “The police are not here to help you.” Ironically, other street-based sex workers thought she was an officer herself, as a white woman with stable housing who clearly looked better off than others on the street when she arrived on the scene four months before this interview. Other workers had similar feelings. When asked about helpful interactions with police, Dorothy responded, “what’s that?” Allison said that she does not ever seek police assistance and added “I just don’t like them.” Even Mandy, who has only been arrested once, said that she would still not seek help from the police when she encounters trouble. She stays away.

Difficulties reported by sex workers who had attempted to report violence confirm this perception. Carol told researchers “If I call them, they don’t come. If I have a situation in the street, forget it. ‘Nobody told you to be in the street.’ After a girl was gang raped, they said ‘Forget it, she works in the street.’ She said, ‘I hope that never happens to your daughters. I’m human.’”

Jamie had an incident where she was “hanging out on the stroll ... these guys in a jeep driving by ... one guy in a car threw a bottle at me ... I went to the cops [who told me] we didn’t have a right being in that area because we know it’s a prostitution area, and whatever came our way, we deserved it.”

Bridget does not report violence to the police because “I know they ain’t gonna do nothing for me.” Marlene used to go to the police, but no longer does. “I have, but it’s no use.” Candy told researchers “I went to the police one time when I got raped and they said ‘you shouldn’t have been out there in the first place.’”

Bethany reported that when she tried to report a violent incident to the police, they told her “It’s a trick of the trade.” She also described running away from a slasher who preyed on prostitutes. She ran out of his car without her coat and purse. Bethany said “I was lucky. Another date followed and helped me. The slasher even followed us to the precinct. The police did nothing. They got him and let him go.”

Mary reported similar treatment. “They don’t want to hear it. They don’t want to hear anything from us. One girl was raped, another was beaten.” When researchers asked if they ever go to the police, Sissy said “I go if I get raped.” Her colleague Celia told researchers, “I was almost sexually assaulted and the police officer said he would not take my report.” It is interesting to note that Sissy is white and Celia is African-American. Michelle also reported that officers were unhelpful when she had trouble. She was raped once and they told her to go to the hospital - more than they have done for other sex workers but far less assistance than other women would normally receive.

Good Police Interactions

Not all prostitute-police interactions are arrest-oriented or negative. 7 out of 30 subjects reported that they had positive experiences with police, most notably when they reported domestic violence situations.

Lana, an escort, had a very positive experience with the police that is a model for best police practices. She reported an extremely violent encounter to the police, and the officer that she contacted was not judgmental and was ready to investigate her complaint. She then helped recruit others to report similar incidents and to testify in court. Lana was able to encourage others to report similar violent crimes precisely because this officer was appropriately concerned about the violent crime committed against her, and because it was made clear that they were not themselves at risk of arrest. Ultimately, the cooperation and testimony of three indoor sex workers allowed a conviction to be attained, resulting in the incarceration of a man who had preyed on prostitutes for at least a decade. The fact that he had been able to continue unhindered for so long was because so few people had ever come forward to the police. The conviction was widely publicized, but little mention was made of the fact that he preyed upon sex workers, something which doubtless helped both the prosecution and the prostitutes who came forward about their experiences. The conviction of this dangerous violent offender was made possible by a cooperative effort between sex workers with the police, and by the readiness of the officer contacted to record and investigate the report. We feel strongly that other officers can and should learn from the example of this officer.

Another respondent reported a good experience with the police following violence from a client. It is worth noting, however, that experiences that respondents viewed as positive included instances that other civilians would take for granted, such as police simply taking reports of violence and following up on these reports.

Police have assisted prostitutes, including street-based sex workers, when violent crimes were in progress. One reported that officers responded to a call made by someone who heard her yelling for help. In this case, however, there was a more troubling aspect to the intervention. She was the victim of an attempted murder by strangulation, at a time when a number of similar murders of prostitutes had recently taken place in her area. After the incident, the police took her home, but the man who had attacked her was not arrested and was able to follow her all the way to her home.

Another subject reported being slashed by a gang, apparently as part of an initiation of new members. She complained to police and they arrested gang members the same night.

As described above, Nancy sought police assistance with a rape case involving a client. "I went to the cops once, [the guy] was on parole for rape, so he got arrested and convicted. That felt good."

Other positive interactions with police included visits to sex workers' homes in domestic violence cases. While domestic violence was not the focus of this research, these good interactions merit mention.

Those who had had positive experiences with the police were more ready to turn to them. When Leslie was asked whether she turns to the police for help, she replied "Yes, I do ... they help me ... I've been robbed." Leslie also mentioned police help in domestic violence situations. She added "I always talk with them, because they're human, too."

Amy, the youngest respondent, a transgender woman from the Bronx, reported good experiences with the police involving domestic violence between her parents and one involving a theft.

Nancy also reported that she went to the police with a domestic violence problem. "They were helpful ... referred me to an agency ... said if I called again, they'd arrest him." Not everyone was so fortunate. When Charlotte went to the police for help with domestic violence, she received no help. She felt that assistance stopped "the minute they realize you're a genetic man," and that the police have no interest in helping transgender women.

Yasmin referred to "friend-cops." When asked if she seeks police assistance in cases of violence, she said "I haven't. I've talked to my friend-cops." Friend-cops are "dates" or clients who are also police officers. Yasmin told researchers that friend-cops have checked out license plate numbers of cars driven by people with whom she has had trouble. Friend-cops have twice told her that the vehicle used in these incidents had been reported stolen. Yasmin added that friend-cops were more helpful than other officers, "were something to come up."

Some good interactions with law enforcement were not related to addressing violence. For example, Jamie stated that sometimes police officers "give me a warning to leave the area" and that "some will let you know in advance that they'll be arresting." Yasmin confirmed this, stating more specifically that some officers will warn girls to stay in or not go somewhere and she is grateful for the warnings. Joan told researchers that "One day [an officer] gave me \$10" when she was going into withdrawal, so that she could get some drugs. Another time, a police officer gave her "\$10 for [being in] a line up."

Some of the statements given were more qualified. Sissy reported that good interactions occur “only if you’ve got information for them. [In that situation] detectives are more humane, more real.”

Working

Work Locations

Interviewees reported having sex in various venues including deserted areas and cars as well as hotels and apartments/customers’ residences. In one Manhattan neighborhood where a “hot sheet hotel” had closed, one subject reported that local residents rent their homes to prostitutes for \$10 for thirty minutes. This report was confirmed by a service provider who knew the area.

Leslie sees her clients in hotels, in their apartments and in parking lots. Mimi stays away from “places with kids like parks and stuff like ... out of residential homes ... there are certain places where I will not go to.” When asked where she works, Allison said “I’m all over,” naming other boroughs and neighborhoods. Allison added that she will go to people’s apartments but that “it’s off and on ... if money’s not coming in, I’ll go call my regulars.”

Mandy never has customers where she lives, nor does she go to their homes. “No, if I meet someone, it’s always in this area, never around my house, never around their house.” She added that goes to “Hotels, pretty much hotels, every once in a while in their car, but mostly hotels.”

Bronx-based respondents repeatedly stated that they do not bring clients home but prefer to go to clients’ homes, hotel rooms and cars. At least three respondents compared having clients to their rooms as “shitting where you sleep.”

More than ten women said “I don’t like walking dates.” Mandy expressed another reason for avoiding “walking dates.” “After being arrested... since most of the undercover come by foot, so, you know, I really don’t take a lot of people that just walk up to me.” One woman noted that she will go to parks and alleys. “I used to do this at the boardwalk - no more - cops arrest you in the day, and at night, it’s dangerous ... get mugged or killed.” Only the most desperate women described accepting “walking dates,” clients whom they saw without a place to go like a car or an apartment. These were the most marginalized and desperate street-based sex workers. According to news reports from New York City’s West Village, they would also be the most reviled by neighbors.

Working Indoors versus Outdoors

17 out of 30 respondents (57 percent) of respondents reported that they would prefer to work indoors entirely. There are a number of different explanations for their continued outdoor work. One worker described feeling more vulnerable when working as an escort, but other explanations were often related to the fact that many street-based prostitutes are substance dependent. Indoor sex work venues may refuse to employ substance dependent women. People who are substance dependent may also be unable to maintain the schedule of an indoor venue, which often resembles the schedule of any other business, with eight-hour shifts and fixed hours. In some cases, employees are not permitted to leave during the course of a shift, preventing someone with a substance dependency from obtaining drugs when she desired.

Many of the street-based sex workers interviewed expressed a preference for regular clients rather than unknowns, in part to avoid interactions with police or dangerous johns. Several described trying to make arrangements with regular clients by telephone, but homeless or marginally-housed sex workers often lack telephones, meaning that this was not necessarily an option for them. For these sex workers, working on the street might be the only way to make contact with clients.

Respondents interviewed at the Bronx site and only at the Bronx site asked for clarification of the question about whether they would prefer to work indoors or outdoors. These subjects were also the least formal and most clandestine in their work: 2 of 5 reported that their partners and families were unaware of their activity, and that they did make appointments by phone but met their clients initially on the street. The secrecy surrounding prostitution at this site was unlike other sites; only 1 person at each site in Brooklyn reported that they kept their prostitution activity secret from the people with whom they lived. Even one of the two indoor sex workers reported that her family was aware of her involvement with commercial sex.

Amy described meeting customers on the streets who come by car and then become regulars. She calls them and

they call her mobile phone. "I go to the streets and then or maybe if I'm in the mood, I call somebody and I do that in their car or go to my house or go to a hotel or their house." Dorothy also said that she calls her regular clients.

Only a few of the sex workers interviewed preferred outdoor work or saw no reason to prefer indoor work. Sissy had been an escort. "I though it was more dangerous than being out here by myself." She is the sole respondent who felt strongly that outdoor work was safer. Mandy expressed a slight preference for outdoor work. "It doesn't really matter [laughs]... pretty much for me it's a money situation... either way, you know, either way something could happen to you on the streets or in brothels... out here, it seems like that way I have more control. I can see whose car I'm getting in. I always have a weapon, you know." She also referred to financial incentives for indoor work. Jessica did not see an advantage to either street-based or indoor sex work. "They're both dangerous."

Indoor work is no guarantee of safety. Both indoor sex workers interviewed had been victims of robbery and violence. Despite this, many of the street-based workers aspired to work indoors, seeing it as a way to avoid encounters with the police or violent clients.

Charlotte has worked indoors, and said "it's safer, more controlled." She also said that some men call to arrange to visit or to meet at a place they both know. "I like that better. ... I would have to know you to give you my number and have you come over." Charlotte acknowledged that "it's hard to work off-street."

Jamie reported that she has a few phone appointments. The appointment is made by phone, and later they meet in person. Aside from these appointments, she said that she has not engaged in other off-street sex work. She added that she would rather work off-street. "It's safer ... regular clients, instead of trying to get new clients ... can screen for cops and crazy men. ... There are too many crazy men out there." Ultimately, she "would rather work nine-to-five" in more conventional employment "and do this on the weekend."

Allison told researchers "It's better off the streets because it's safer, because you don't know who's in that car. It could be a crazy maniac."

Some of those interviewed worked both on and off the streets. Joan said "I was making like a good ... \$300 a day with my regulars, my steadies." She estimated that she may have been working more off the streets than on the streets at the time of her interview.

John seeks clients on the street and off the street. He reported that he works more off the street and that this is "more safe, people won't know what I do."

Leslie estimated that 85 percent of her clients are regulars. "They usually call me." For the last five years, Leslie has worked off street "most of the time" and that she would rather work off street, to "keep from being arrested." She added that "when they call" she goes to their meeting place.

Linda reported that she had worked off the streets, "yeah, when I was clean for 11 months." She would rather work "off the streets because it's safe, you don't get arrested." She added "now, I only work on the streets, I'm homeless."

Mimi said that she has worked off the streets. "Like an escort agency? Yeah, I tried it. I lost contact with the guy. I'm trying to find him. I've been trying to find him recently, because I'm scared to be on the streets now." She would rather work "off the streets, it's safer."

Jane said "I'm hoping to contact two agencies, it's too much out here with the police."

Jackie reported that she has never worked indoors but would prefer it because it seems safer.

Marlene would rather work "off the streets, definitely, because it's safer, for me, it's safer. And I don't get to be seen by the cops, the neighbors, my family."

Familiarity With Customers

Street-based prostitutes attempted to see only clients with whom they were familiar, but largely saw men whom they did not know as well. While these self-reported numbers may not be entirely accurate, they indicate a clear preference to deal with known clients. Leslie estimated that 85 percent of her clients are regulars. "They usually call me. ... A few [clients] have my phone number. They call and I meet them downstairs."

Amy said "I'm not messing up with strangers now."

Johanna relies on her "steadies." "Usually, I have steadies, I don't get any newcomers."

John told researchers "I mostly call people up." He reported that he sees the same guys a lot and has lots of regulars.

Linda also said that she sees the same guys a lot, "Less strangers than regulars."

Mandy said that she has many steadies, "oh, yeah, 40 to 50 percent" regulars.

Allison reported that her seven regulars were "off and on" and that she saw them mostly on Thursdays and Fridays, "when they get their check."

Jackie has lots of regulars, but she will go with someone she hasn't seen before.

Jamie estimated that her clientele base is 30 percent regulars and 70 percent strangers. Charlotte estimated a higher rate of strangers, at 80 percent.

Other Street Personalities

Researchers' questions about sharing money from prostitution were intended to indicate whether the respondent was involved in stereotypical "pimping" situations. No respondents in this sample had "pimps" or were in stereotypical "pimping" situations.

5 respondents (17 percent) reported that they had been approached by men who offered "to hold their money for them." They declined this "help" and were not approached again. These 5 respondents described their interactions with men whom one respondent labeled "so-called pimps." All five of these women were clear that they wanted no part of such a relationship. They said that they were not approached again and were not intimidated by these encounters. Allison reported having been approached by young men on 42nd street, "to see if I wanted them to hold my money. I said 'no.' They asked where my pimp was, but there was no pressure to work for them." She added that one of these men came from Virginia, and the other from Connecticut. She had the sense that they were gang-related, but this is impossible to confirm.

Valerie said that she had never had any problem with pimps, "when I was young, I tried one time and I said no." Mandy explained that no one helps her out, no one watches her and not working with a pimp is not a problem for her. "No, because I avoid them. No, because, you know, I don't let them know my face. I walk by, I turn around, go the other way, if it's too hectic, pop in a cab."

Two transgender women also described their conversations with would-be pimps. Charlotte, who had been on her own/the streets for half her life, said "These guys are fantasizing about being pimps now ... I've had guys come up and ask 'do I have a pimp' 'do I need a pimp?' I tell them no ... you have to be a willing participant for it to work ... maybe if I was like 15 or 16 years old, you could intimidate me, but I'm not that young anymore." Jamie added "I was approached by so-called pimps in mid-town and downtown." She also said no to them. Jamie noted that she "help[s] my boyfriend ... he's not a pimp. I have financial control." She met him in Rikers Island. When the interviewer asked if this was a "pimp-type" relationship, Jamie laughed and said that no, sometimes she just helps him out, like she would help her friends. Dorothy also stated that "My boyfriend helps me out," but not in the way that a "pimp" might "help" a prostitute.

Jamie also described a financially parasitic situation that was akin to extortion. "There used to be this girl, down on 14th street, she would beat up the girls if you don't pay your taxes ... she looked like a man in a dress ... there's another one named [] ... beats you up if you don't pay your tax ... they're with somebody ... some kind of gang ... they're taxing girls ... it's happening more now, because now, the gang boys are getting lazy, and they figured out that the working girls are easy targets."

Turning "pimp" related stereotypes around, John reported that he shared the money he earned through prostitution with his girlfriend. He supports her, but she knows nothing about his prostitution. It is very difficult to classify this as a stereotypical "pimp" relationship for a number of reasons, including the fact that he hides his prostitution-related

activity from her and that he is fulfilling the role of the male breadwinner this way.

Joan expressed a sentiment about pimps that was common to all interviewees for this report: “No, not at all, my money is my money.” Neither Sissy nor Celia share their money. When asked if they share their money, Sissy replied “Not really. Both [she and her partner] pay the rent.” Celia plainly stated “No.” Michelle shared her money with her husband before they separated. She said “He wasn’t helpful,” and so she left him.

However, younger women may have more interactions with stereotypical “pimps” than other sex workers. Over the course of a month, researchers observed young men driving around specific areas in Hell’s Kitchen, watching some young women. The same vehicle was observed repeatedly both in the same night and over numerous nights and there seemed to be a number of men watching the women but not in a client-type of relationship. These young women appeared to work in pairs and to keep in contact with the young men by beeper or cellular telephone. In a brief conversation with researchers, one of these young women indicated that she was a college student. In addition to this group, researchers observed another group of women who seemed to be with one man. The young men repeatedly and pointedly walked past the researchers as if to intimidate them or to demonstrate that they were aware of the researchers. The researchers were unable to obtain an interview with these young women and men. It is notable that young men were observed only in relation to younger women, who were well-dressed, arrived and left by car, and who worked overnight. These were the only women who declined to be interviewed; therefore we have no more information to offer about the relationships between the young women and the young men.

Finances

Many respondents had a monetary target that they sought to make nightly or weekly. This was often related to the amount spent on drugs, but was not unrelated to other expenses. However, the most common response to questions about monetary goals was “As much as I can make!” Sex work offered the greatest earning capacity for most respondents. This is reflected in reports of other employment.

Subjects also stated that prostitution recently yielded less money than it had in the past, due to increased police presence. For example, Charlotte reported that she did not make her goal of \$600 per week in the week before the interview. “It’s been really dead lately ... the cops have been giving us problems. ... Cops are really on you now.”

Jackie said that she had no weekly or nightly goal but that sometimes she makes enough to cover the cost of her drug habit. On weekends, she said that she can make maybe \$150 per day. At the interview, she stated that she had worked 4 nights straight in the last week.

Avery’s spending was related to drugs, but not exclusively determined by drug use and was more casually decided. “You pay the dealer for your credit, then you want to get cigarettes, you know, and then you go back out. ... You pay for the used drugs, you get more drugs and you get your cigarettes and your soda, your beer, your sandwich and you keep going on, but then the next time around, you already have your cigarettes, you’ve already eaten and you don’t have any dealers to pay, so you purchase more and you either go in or you stay out.”

Jamie aims to earn \$800 in a week but she also did not make this goal in the week prior to her interview. “It’s been hard recently to make money. When I was new, it was easier, I was a new face, I was fresh, and new to the game.” She added that police also have an impact because “now, they’re arresting more than ever. In 2001, they weren’t arresting as much. Now, I can honestly say they arrest every day.”

Jamie was realistic about times when does not meet her goal. “I get over it.” But she also states: “You’re not guaranteed to make money every day. ... You’re forced to make money because you don’t want to be homeless ... You don’t want to be faced with going into a shelter ... When it comes to my living situation, I’m kind of proud. I want the best.”

John’s highest spending priority is food, followed by small clothing like socks and underwear. His monetary goal is \$100 per day or a little more, enabling him to spend \$65 to spend the night in a hotel. “Sometimes we get enough to stay in a hotel for the night.”

Arrest-Related Fears

Subjects were asked what they most feared or worried about when they faced arrest. Arrest fears included withdrawal from drugs, long periods of incarceration, social stigma and consequences to family.

Joan said that her greatest fear related to arrest was “that I was going to do a lot of time in jail.” She also worries about the effects on her family, “especially my mother. She tries to keep my kids away from me.”

John reported that his biggest arrest-related fears focus on social stigma. “If people find out what I was arrested for ... [I] wouldn’t be the same person in people’s eyes ... [It is] degrading ... People don’t expect it from me.” Thus far, the worst thing that had happened to John as a result of arrest was spending 20 days in jail.

Mimi reported that her worst worry during arrest was “getting sick, doing a lot of time... at the moment, it’s just getting sick.” Researchers asked if she worried about the effects on her family and children. “No, not a hundred percent, because they know me already, I mean, yeah, my children, yeah.”

Mandy’s biggest fear related to arrest was “A weapons charge because a lot of girls, you know, you can’t come out here with no knife, no, you know, some kind of weapons, even though you don’t get arrested, you’ll still get charged for weapon’s charge. Luckily, you know, they did not, you know, see that I was carrying a weapon, so, you know, thank goodness, I wasn’t charged, I mean, they say, I mean, even the little thing, it’s just a little penknife, but it’s four fingers and it’s a weapons charge, they could have sent me to Rikers Island for that.”

Jackie told researchers that her husband worries about her getting hurt or arrested. He does not like her involvement with prostitution.

Difficulties and Danger

Researchers inquired about the difficult aspects of sex work. Difficulties included “the police,” the sexual contact itself, and the potential for violence.

Allison said that the hardest thing about making a living from sex work is “not knowing who’s in that car ... a mass murderer or a rapist or a cop.”

Mandy said that “Difficulties, pretty much dealing with assholes who don’t want to pay you a certain amount of money, you know, you can end up getting a bad date, you know, they can try to rape you, you know, rape you, steal the money that you have on you, any type of jewelry, you know, you never know, you never know when you get into that car.” For Mandy, the hardest thing about sex work is “pretty much just not knowing, you know, whose car you’re getting into. That’s pretty much it.” She wants to leave sex work “at some point, but not right now.”

When researchers asked Nancy what were the most difficult aspects of sex work she said “everything” and added that the “police” are the most difficult thing.

Leslie told researchers that the most difficult thing about prostitution is “going down on people ... having sex with them ... I get high to do it.”

Mimi saw a wide range of difficulties: “What are the difficulties? Trying to get like the first customer, you know, trying to keep it low key from the police, you know, and... you know, my safety with tricks, you know, these crazy ones out there, you know, and hoping that he’s not a cop, that’s the main concern.”

All but one respondent felt that sex work is dangerous. Charlotte named specific dangers, “because with this work comes consequences” such as drugs, police, psychos, jails.

Jamie brought up the risk of infection but was more concerned about violence, saying that the dangers included not only infection but also “being murdered, being arrested, being slashed, being molested.”

Joan considers the sex work she does dangerous, more dangerous than other things she’s done for a living, “yes, of course ... it is dangerous out there and the only reason why I’m out there is because of my drug habit.” Mimi agrees that sex work is more dangerous than other things she’s done for a living.

Leslie also said that sex work is more dangerous than other work, specifying “taking a chance when you get into a car with someone you don’t know.” Allison also mentioned this, saying “who’s in that car?” Linda felt that dangers extended beyond sex work to include her drug habit, the reason she works. “I’ll OD or I’ll get something bad or I’ll get killed.”

Work History

Researchers asked interviewees the reasons why people became prostitutes and why they remained involved in prostitution, especially in light of the difficulties and fears described above. Interviewees were asked about why they became involved in sex work, why they stayed in light of their fears and worries, and about their other employment experiences. All respondents were involved in commercial sex for financial reasons. The overwhelming majority (22 of 30, 73 percent) of street-based sex workers named substance dependency as the reason they continued to work on the streets - they were able to support their drug habits in this way. People who are substance dependent are frequently unable to meet the demands of regular employment. The street has no schedule constraints, unlike more structured environments such as brothels or legal work. Only 10 respondents (33 percent) had held jobs in the past which paid well enough for them to support themselves.

Entry to Prostitution and Difficulties Exiting

All respondents were involved in commercial sex for financial reasons but respondents gave numerous reasons for initially taking up prostitution. The most common answer among street-based sex workers was substance dependency. A lack of other employment opportunities was also a factor for sex workers who did not enter the sex industry in order to support drug use, particularly from respondents who were very young and very marginalized and from those who supported other people.

Researchers interviewed other street personalities, including neighborhood residents and the partner of a sex worker, in order to provide a contrast to the street-based sex workers interviewed. Responses from these subjects will be discussed later, but their responses also highlight financial reasons for entry into the sex sector. Consider Lisa, a substance dependent drug dealer who was never involved in prostitution. Lisa never engaged in sex work because "I never had to. I always sold drugs, or my boyfriend helps me, or my brother sees I'm getting sick, and gives me \$10 so I don't get sick." She added, "My brother gives me \$10 four days a week."

When asked about her entry into the sex industry, Charlotte referred to her youth (she was fifteen years old at the time) and said "I didn't have any other choice." There are few employment options for homeless and/or runaway youth.

Joan told researchers that she was using drugs when she became a prostitute and that she got into the work because of drugs. "That's why I started really working, to pay for my habit." She continues because of her drug habit but added "yes, I'm hoping that's gonna change now ... because [since my arrest] I appreciate my freedom more and my life."

Nancy reported entering prostitution to support her drug habit with the "fast money" she earned.

Linda reported that substance dependence led to her entry into prostitution. "Of course, that's why I started doing this work." She continues because she can support her drug habit this way, "because it's easy, fast money," but also "It's not a consistent thing [sex work]... sometimes you get it and sometimes you don't." She would change her work "if it became, you know, like life-threatening or something, I mean, really life-threatening."

Mimi also referred to drug use as the reason for becoming a prostitute, but went on to say that she continues not because of a drug habit but "because I have no other income."

Allison gave a few reasons for her continued involvement in prostitution, beginning with drug use. "You could say it's the drugs, but also this is my income I bring in." She added "I don't like to ask anybody for things" and stated that she has no other job choices. "I don't have options right now. This is what I lean on."

Jackie continues with sex work to support her drug habit. "Because it's the only thing I can do to make fast money. I got a bad habit, believe me."

Jamie gave similar reasons for her continued participation in the sex industry. "The money is quicker and easier. Other jobs, you have to wait for a paycheck, but you may need money now." She continues "I really don't have another option. ... I really haven't had any other job offers ... I've been lazy [about] job-hunting, so it's my only resource for now, until I'm able to get a nine-to-five."

Housing presents a specific difficulty for those who want to leave sex work. Homeless respondents and those with unstable or marginal housing, such as those living in SROs, described the difficulties of stopping drug use

when remaining among people who also use drugs. Being offered drugs to share by neighbors presented a nearly irresistible temptation, especially in a climate without peer support from people who are not drug users.

Not everyone referred to drug use. The indoor sex workers interviewed did not enter the sex industry for drug-related reasons. Nor did all street-based sex workers interviewed refer to substance dependence or drug use. Avery described being encouraged by sex partners to become a sex worker. He is the only respondent in this study to describe such an experience.

John engages in sex work only out of desperation and actively seeks other work. "I do all this so I can feed her ... she's trying to do programs for school ... can't interview for a regular job because I don't have a phone." Manuela chose sex work "because I couldn't find no other work at all."

Leslie also referred to basic living expenses. "I was low on food and needed food in the house." She added that she did not become a prostitute for drugs, but continues in order to be able to "support my drug habit." "I've come a long way ... I did drugs all the time ... I went into deep depression when they took my kids ... then I had nothing to go home to."

Mandy said she entered prostitution because "Pretty much this is something I don't mind. This doesn't really bother me to come out here and... this is something I don't mind." She continues for "money, money." Mandy is preparing for her future. "I assume, well... like after maybe, you know, years of school [laughs] years of school, I can go, you know, get an office job that pays pretty much the amount... I doubt I could get anything that would pay, you know, \$500 to \$600 in a few hours."

Transgender women have additional reasons to remain in sex work and spoke of discrimination in trying to find other jobs. Jamie explained "I would change my work on the condition that I get a good-paying job where I get respect. ... It's difficult for me to get a job right now, and I want to get a job where I'm respected, basically, where I'm not discriminated against."

Prior employment

Respondents frequently cited unlivable wages in other work. 10 respondents reported that they earned a livable wage in other occupations. Other occupations held by interviewees were usually low-paid, entry-level positions that did not provide enough money to live. The majority of subjects had held more than one job in the past, while six (20 percent) had not held other jobs. One respondent who had not had another job was a 19-year-old young man attending high school.

The most common job previously held by respondents was waitressing. Examples of other food service-related jobs that subjects had held, but which did not pay them a living wage, included working in fast food restaurants; managing a restaurant that was part of a large fast food chain; and bartending.

Many of the low-paying jobs cited would not be deemed skilled labor, including working in a hotel; retail sales in department and clothing stores; odd jobs; security; secretarial and receptionist positions; nurse's aide; school aide; and babysitting. Licensed or skilled labor that respondents reported did not provide them sufficient income for their needs included hairdressing and makeup; work in entertainment including singing, drag shows and dancing; positions in real estate; working as a dental assistant; and working as an emergency medical technician. Respondents additionally reported having worked in an amusement park and at a printing house.

Researchers were told that some people were able to live on these wages because they were living with family members and had few expenses, or that their wages were used to supplement other income, such as public assistance or alimony.

Charlotte commented that "the money is so slow in other jobs."

When asked whether her other jobs paid enough to live on, Jamie said "honestly, no ... I was living with my mother, so I only had to make enough for casual spending. That's why I quit my last job, in a restaurant." "I worked in a restaurant for 6 months, but it didn't pay enough. Also, [I] was transitioning [male-to-female] - it was a stressful environment - [the restaurant was] not supportive."

Joan said that her other jobs were enough to live on only because "mostly I was being supported by my ex-

husband.”

Leslie used her income from other jobs to augment her public assistance allowance. She engaged in welfare fraud to make ends meet. “Yes, because I was getting public assistance for the kids. If I wasn’t, no, I couldn’t live on it.” Mandy reported a long resume of previous employment. “I’ve done office work, I’ve been a secretary, receptionist, security, cashier, real estate agent, hairdresser [laughs], and then waitressing, fast food, maid service, I’ve pretty much done it all [laughs].” Mandy said that her best job was “it was... it was when I was a receptionist only because, you know, the work was easy. I knew the people. It was really comfortable.” When asked if she earned enough to live on, she said “no, no.” Mandy also described an inability to make ends meet in unskilled but legal labor. “And, you know, when I had the job, you know, I wasn’t on my own, I was staying with somebody and they were just like, you know, you don’t have to pay rent, so you know, of course I could keep all the money, but now when there are bills to pay, it’s harder and, you know, you find yourself working more hours, and, you know, the money is still not what you want it to be.”

Linda also said that she did not make enough money to live on, “no, not at all.” Her previous work included reception and botany.

Manuela told researchers that her prior jobs waitressing, in food service and at an amusement park did not pay her enough to live on.

Researchers asked what were the worst jobs that respondents had held. Five respondents said that prostitution was the worst job they had. Joan said, “This one, even though the money is there, you know, if I had a choice, I wouldn’t be doing this, but I want to have a choice back.” Linda said “the one I’m doing now [laughs].” John also found sex work to be the most difficult thing he’s done. “I’ve been doing this 7 or 8 months. It feels like years. ... I never thought I’d be doing things like this.”

Other “worst jobs” included restaurant work (from 3 respondents), because of the low pay and “hard labor - working overtime for nothing.” Additionally, more than one respondent said that waitressing was her worst job. Mandy replied “That would be security [laughs].”

When asked what were the best jobs they had ever had, responses included waitressing at a particular restaurant, working in a hotel, as a secretary, as a receptionist, dancing and “having sex - I enjoy it.” Marlene said “I haven’t had a best job.” It is interesting to note that the best jobs named were not always those that paid well enough to live on. For example, one woman said that her best job was working in a pet store, not because the wages were high but because she loved animals.

Ten of the street-based sex workers in the study had held jobs that paid living wages. These included nursing; city-employment positions; working in a pet shop and well-paid sales positions. One had held a few well-paying jobs, including casket sales and realty, while another had been a city employee and a third is currently a live-in nurse. Another dealt drugs. Avery earned a living wage in more traditional work, working for a law firm. He added that in this economy, “with a lot of people being laid off, the drug dealers are hiring and johns are hiring, but that’s temporary work, that’s like a temp service.”

Some indoor sex workers who spoke to the researchers had held low-wage jobs, while others had held jobs that paid living wages. A number of those encountered were in the process of pursuing education, learning other skills and starting other businesses.

Future Plans and Attaining Goals

The number of respondents who wanted to do other work was high, but many of them continued to see clients for financial reasons. Some were unfamiliar with the process of looking for work, including resume preparation and getting access to appropriate interview attire. For many, there were other obstacles: many people in the sex industry have gaps in their resumes and criminal convictions on their records can also be a deterrent in finding other employment. Subjects indicated that it would be an aid to their employment to find ways to describe the skills they have. Sex workers regularly make use of many of the same skills that are in demand in other fields, including sales ability, dealing with the public and defusing dangerous situations. Charlotte was clear about this when she told researchers that “it’s like college ... it teaches you about humanity, almost, behavior ... it’s taught me to know when a person is lying, when a person is playing a game, ... how to handle people differently.” Another subject echoed this sentiment, saying that doing this work has taught her “how to read people ... there’s some benefits that came

from it.”

Most subjects expressed plans for the future, and stated that they did not consider staying in sex work to be a viable long-term option. No one planned to remain in the sex industry full-time indefinitely, although two women said that they would always be involved to a limited degree, and one expects to be in “sex-related work,” saying “Ten years from now, I hope... I don’t know, I want to own some type of business in the sex industry, you know, escorting service, you know, something like that [laughs], I will be the boss [laughs].”

One reason that some subjects thought they would need to leave sex work eventually was because of age. Nancy said, “forget it, I’m already 36 ... guys don’t want older women, they want younger women. It’s easy when you’re young.” Leslie said, “I don’t even know if I’d make it ... I’ve run into a lot of stuff and I’m getting older ... it’s time for me ... my party days are over.” Valerie echoed concerns with age, saying that she had been a stripper “for years” and “I used to work at all the peep shows.” Valerie added that now that she is older and her body has changed over time - “with my stomach” - this is no longer an option.

Respondents discussed specific plans for the future. Marlene told researchers “My plan for the last year was to get into a methadone program.” She got into a methadone program while she was in jail, but by the time she got back to Bushwick after dealing with outstanding warrants, it was closed and wouldn’t open until the morning. She got out of court and went to purchase heroin, thereby derailing her plans. She said she would need to get off drugs to get off the street.

Yasmin echoed this, saying “The habit is the problem, not the sex.”

Celia said “I wanna straighten my life out ... I wanna be around my family more” but the difficulty is finding the way to achieve this. “How to start, hard to start, how to go about it.”

Charlotte said “I don’t think I’m going to stay in it, but I do think that I’ll participate in it from time to time. I don’t think I’ll go out and pursue it ... it might be a different level, but I’m sure that I’ll always be prostituting on some level.” Her long term goals included “start anew, be fresh,” get a new apartment, save money, “fix my credit, go to electrolysis school, and start a business.”

Jamie would like to go to college to pursue a nursing degree. However, she will continue doing drag shows, and entertaining people. “I would like to get married too. I just want to live my life as a female and be happy.”

Dorothy also mentioned college, saying “I want to go back to school, yeah, because you can go now and get 24 credits, you understand, see, this is what I want to do, this is something that I dream of, girl, I don’t care if I’m fifty, sixty, I’m going to finish that.”

Mandy thinks she’ll stay in sex-related work on some level: “sex-related yes, sex work no. ... Sex work, maybe a year or two, maybe” She does not want to look for other types of work: “no, not really, I’ve pretty much had them all [laughs].” She is also preparing for other work in the future. “Well, pretty much while I’m doing this, you know, I do plan on going to school and everything, so it’s probably going to be like a little night time thing going to school.”

Joan is going to stay in sex-related work, “yes, but not forever. I want to make enough money to get my life going... I was even thinking of opening a bank account. ... Maybe, I would say, you see, I want to go to a program. I figured like another few more months.” Joan would like to leave sex work, “oh, yes, of course, and I will eventually.” She reported that she is willing to take any other employment and has filled in applications with three national chains. “Anything, I want to be able to spend more time at work than on the streets.” Joan’s aspirations were more academically inclined. “Now I’m going to work, to get a legal job and I want to go to John Jay Criminal College. In reality, what I really, really, really want to do is go to college. I want to go to John Jay Criminal College.”

Linda said, “I want to get clean.” To achieve that, “I have to go to detox and rehab first. ... That would have to be mandated [detox and rehab].” She wants to look for other types of work, “when I get clean.”

Leslie wants to get into a drug treatment program and then learn a trade. “I’m about to make a U-turn.”

Nancy wants other types of work and looks in the paper for job advertisements. She said that she wants to “get off drugs ... back with my husband ... a normal, stable life.”

Jamie said "I'm sure I'll stay in it, but not to the point that I'll be dependent on it. ... It's already a habit ... that I've gotten used to, so in case of an emergency, I know that I'll prostitute." Yet, when asked if she would like to leave sex work, Jamie said "honestly, I would."

Arrest records present additional difficulties, but were mentioned by only one respondent. Charlotte said that it would be hard for her to return to waitressing now. "I have such a long arrest record." She added "I would like the energy, the initiative, to do something else" but continued "I stay in the work now out of habit. ... I need to develop better habits." She went on to say "I'd like to change the work, if [it can] be fulfilling work. ... I have to do something meaningful now, like what I do matters." Indeed, finding employment that would meet this criteria may be difficult with her arrest record.

Subjects honestly admitted needing to make changes in themselves, in terms of discipline and willingness to work to make difficult changes in their lives. Those who were substance dependent were generally very aware of their need to make difficult changes, and were almost the most judgmental toward themselves.

Charlotte replied that she would need to become better at "sticking to what I say" because "I get distracted so fast." Manuela described the need to "control my attitude and present myself properly."

Joan acknowledged that only she can change herself, saying "Me, myself" would help her do that. Nancy named the specific things which would help her to "get back on my feet ... get my own place ... get out of [her neighborhood]."

As the majority of respondents said they did not see themselves relying on sex work for their income in the long term, researchers asked respondents what would assist their transitions from sex work to other forms of work.

Joan cited family support and contact: "Being away from my kids is the most ... you see, I call my daughter almost every day, I see my kids every week and I really miss them now ... I want to spend more time with my kids." She also recognized that other relationships influence her ability to leave street life and the drug-oriented underground. "Like my boyfriend. He is a heroin dealer. I love him to death, but I know that if I stay with him, I'm just going to be pushed down again and again and right now, he's messed up and I'm hoping that I can make enough money to be away from this." Joan continued "If my family would, if she was to tell me, 'Joan, come, you can stay with me,' I would do it in a minute."

Joan and others felt that relocating in order to leave the drug-oriented community with which they affiliated in order to pursue more "normal" work and pastimes would help them change their lives. Not everyone felt that they were ready to make the necessary changes. One large part of the normal lives craved by respondents was related to housing. Most respondents had marginal housing and many were homeless.

Marlene has been offered substance abuse treatment in lieu of jail time, but indicated that it does not work "if you're not ready ... and I wasn't ready." She does want to get into a program, but has also turned back to drug use after participating in a methadone program because she was released from jail after the program was closed for the day. She is homeless and had nowhere to go, and returned to the neighborhood she knows where she might acquire heroin, but probably not methadone. At the time of the interview, Marlene had not "been able to cop" or acquire any drugs, but the researcher is certain that overnight she would probably have found heroin before any methadone program opened.

Nancy also wanted to "get out of this neighborhood" and "get off drugs."

John craves a stable, normal life with housing and a stable job. His aspiration is "to have a family ... to come home and sit on a couch, and just watch a movie."

Leslie would like to leave her neighborhood, and she would need to go into a detoxification (detox) or rehabilitation (rehab) program to do so. However, she felt that coming "back to the neighborhood, it's like playing the same old key all over again."

Linda said that "having my own place" would help her move away from sex work. She wishes there were people who could help her make these changes, "seeing somebody that did it before and that is making it." [However, the interviewer knows that Linda has seen people who have made it out of the life.]

Mimi described the need not only for detox programs but also for greater support including occupational training.

“They would need something like skills or something, you know, knowing that, you know, like... how can I explain it... like knowing what type of work they can do... a training, you know, skills, stuff like that, because you can't just say, 'oh, I'm going to get a job' and don't know what you're gonna do if you don't know what to do, I mean, if you don't know anything.”

Allison agreed that getting leads on jobs would help her in leaving the life.

Neighborhood Complaints

Only 3 respondents reported difficulties with neighbors. Marlene's difficult incidents directly related to substance dependence. She reported that this is because “If I'm dopesick, I'm gonna pull out at the nearest spot after I cop [buy drugs]. Kids have walked by and people say stuff.” Rachel described her Bronx neighbors threatening her physically and chasing her away from their areas, saying “move or we'll call the cops and you'll be arrested.” Researchers attempted to contact residents in Bronx neighborhoods that are affected by street-based prostitution, but were unable to find residents willing to discuss the issue.

However, three other subjects (Charlotte, Jamie, and Mandy), all of whom work exclusively in gentrified or gentrifying neighborhoods in Manhattan, were aware of neighborhood groups agitating around neighborhood issues including but not limited to street-based prostitutes, and were aware of Community Board and other organizational meetings.

It seems that residents generally complain not to street prostitutes themselves but in formal settings such as community meetings, and make their complaints to authorities such as the police or Community Boards. Residents make complaints to the police who then respond, so the original complaint is generally not known to the people on the street. Avery suspected this to be the case “sometimes, sometimes, because like when I lived down on 21st Street, it was very convenient to walk to the Village and, you know, there's a lot of business, 14th street all the way down to Washington Square Park [...] not with the residents as much, no, they weren't really harassing me, but they would call the police if you parked in like their block, you know, it's a very quiet neighborhood and you park in the block, they don't like all that activity or traffic in their block at 2 or 3 and 4 in the morning.”

Some residents do complain and act (Greene 2002), but these were in neighborhoods with less street prostitution than those focused on by researchers. Neither of the two residents interviewed for this report had ever complained. Their perspectives are detailed below. In the West Village, noise and alcohol and public sex seem to be possibly greater issues than prostitution per se (Murphy 2002, Greene 2002). It is interesting to note that press reports tend to highlight such meetings in gentrifying areas. This contrasts with other reports that neighbors in other areas not only did not complain about prostitution or sex-related activities but sex workers in northern Manhattan were even able to rent rooms from neighborhood residents at inexpensive rates in order to conduct their sex-related trade. “They charge \$10 for an hour.”

Respondents reported attempting to be less visible during their transactions. Charlotte told researchers “I try to stay in industrial areas,” away from where people live. Jamie stated that police have given her warnings but that she has had no problems with residents. In fact, she has attended Community Board meetings about noise. She also brought a little-addressed and very local phenomenon to the researchers' attention. Residents “complain about girls being too loud,” yet “at the same time, the residents are the ones that want to take you out ... to be your clients.”

Mandy believes that resident complaints to police encourage police crackdowns on prostitution. “Oh, yeah, that's why there's a lot of police now because there was a resident meeting maybe two months ago because, you know, once it is day light like how it is now, you know, there are kids walking around, they're taking the kids to school and they're constantly calling the police, constantly, that's why it's ... that's why it's like this now.” She continued “I like usually to be out of here at a certain time ... It's usually around 8 o'clock when they really start, you know, if you look, if you start to look a certain way, you know they're arresting you because a lot of people out here are complaining when they go to take their kids to school, they don't want to see us.”

Two residents of neighborhoods with active sex worker strolls shared their perspectives on street-based prostitutes with researchers. One was a resident of Hell's Kitchen in Manhattan and the other lives near a stroll in the mid-20's of Manhattan. Both residents were very aware of the people who populated the strolls, and were able to note trends, such as “The stroll seems to be primarily made up of younger women” and, when asked if the stroll appeared to be active, “On and off. They seem to get very active in certain periods and then disappear for a while.” The residents made similar observations about the times of day or night that the strolls were active. One noted, “It seems to be active nearly every night of the week except Sunday night and women are working generally from midnight until

about 6 or 7 AM. I often see the women leaving their shift in the morning.” The other resident’s response mirrored this statement: “Usually see them late at night, 1 AM onwards and often very early morning 6 to 7 AM.”

Neither resident found the presence of street-based prostitutes to be disruptive of their quality of life. They had no interactions with sex workers, and did not change anything about their schedules or routine (including sleep) because of them. However, they were aware of others in the neighborhood who were disturbed. One noted, “They do not bother me. My neighbors have spoken to me about feeling sorry for the women and are occasionally bothered if the women are very scantily dressed in the presence of children.” This resident further commented that “[t]here has always been an active stroll in this neighborhood. It has actually toned down quite a bit. Ten or fifteen years ago the women, many of whom were crack or heroin addicts, would at times walk the streets completely naked, fight with one another or with store owners or with residents, etc. They did not pose a threat to me then and definitely do not now.”

Neither resident advocated arrest of the prostitutes, although one stated that he “would rather not have prostitutes walk the street in this area” ... “because it seems to bother most people thus lowering the value of real estate” and he “[does] not like the people that feed on them, not even so much the customers but the people that make the money off them: Pimps and other people that seem to hang around the hood providing them with services.” The other resident expressed concern for the women’s safety and well-being: “I would not like to see women permanently arrested but I do prefer that they not be working the streets at all. The physical dangers, psychological manipulation and economic exploitation that they endure just aren’t at all worth the money they earn. Although I realize that my perspective is not shared by many of my neighbors, I do not want to see the women leave this neighborhood unless they are leaving the business completely. I feel like the ... area is now a safer place for them to be. There are more people on the streets during the evenings so if they need help there are others around. They are not a nuisance to me. If they can be kept even slightly safer and are going to remain street sex workers regardless then I prefer that they stay.”

Legal and Other Needs

Subjects expressed a need for a variety of legal services, addressing the following issues: criminal; child welfare; housing; domestic violence. The transgender subjects also expressed a need for legal name-change and sex-change on identification cards. Subjects also reported that they needed housing and counseling/supportive services.

Criminal

Jamie fears being a crime victim, and would like legal assistance “in case I get slashed by a tranny-basher or pervert, or if I get raped.” This reflects the difficulty faced by sex workers attempting to report violence committed against them as well as specific fears of violence against transgender women.

Respondents had both good and bad experiences with defense attorneys, all of whom were free court-appointed attorneys. Charlotte would like more information from defense attorneys. “They don’t tell you your first time, or your first five times, that you can plead not guilty.” In court, “he didn’t tell me what I’d get if I plead innocent, he didn’t explain anything. ... I had the lawyer I met for five minutes before I saw the judge. They don’t talk to you about a plan. ... They told everybody to plead guilty, that’s how they talk to us.” Bethany used the same language, saying “They told everybody to plead guilty, that’s how they talk to us.” Charlotte added that she wants a defense attorney who will “speak more on my behalf.”

Candy felt similarly to Charlotte. She was advised by the legal aid lawyer to “plead guilty, or you’ll go to jury” because she had a prior conviction, but she pleaded not guilty because she wasn’t working at the time she was arrested. Candy is certain that a private lawyer would have been better. Sissy and Celia also agreed that a private lawyer would have been more helpful than their public defenders.

Allison, like many respondents, told researchers that there was a warrant out for her now. One researcher was told by 4 interviewees that they were currently facing warrants for their arrest.

There was a distinct difference between respondents who wanted only to get out of jail and those who wanted the criminal justice system to work for them in such a way that they would not be punished when they felt they were arrested falsely. Those who wanted only to be released were more satisfied with the legal services provided by the state.

Valerie expressed dissatisfaction with her legal aid attorney. "He just kept asking me questions, what was I doing on 124th Street and I said, 'nothing' and he said 'come on, you can tell me,' and I said, 'nothing,' so he said, 'on your record, it shows a lot of solicitation charges,' I said, 'I don't give a damn what my records show,' I said, 'I know a lot of people who used to do bad things that have turned their life around,' I said, 'that stuff I used to do,' I said, 'that don't mean I'm doing it now.'"

Yasmin always pleads guilty and has neutral feelings about her lawyers, except in a felony drug sale case in which she reported that an officer planted drugs on her. She has had a different legal aid lawyer each time and reports neither great satisfaction or dissatisfaction. In the incident in which she was charged with a felony sale, she commented that her court-appointed lawyer really helped her with her felony sale charge and even communicated with her family for her.

Jessica also always pleads guilty, "so they'd let me go." Her public defender was adequate because "she was trying to get me out." She felt that it was the right plea and the right advice because she got out fast.

Mary also felt that her attorney was helpful, and she took the advice of the legal aid lawyer. Her lawyer successfully argued against community service as proposed by the judge. Mary was afraid that she would miss her assignment and then have a warrant for her arrest. "I got time served."

Mimi contrasted her attorney for her most recent arrest with others with whom she has dealt. This lawyer was helpful, concerned and defended her as well as she should have, "yeah, she did, she's the only lawyer I've had that really was concerned."

Bethany has the same legal aid attorney for all her arrests and she feels that he is very good. Bridget agreed that legal services were adequate. "My lawyer helped me, she was real nice, said I did all my community service and that I was doing great." She went on to say that her attorney was helpful and concerned and effective, and as good as a paid lawyer. Bridget had no other legal problems pending.

Gretchen, an indoor sex worker, also said that she found her court-appointed defense attorney to be helpful.

Erin's legal aid lawyer "was very helpful because they wanted to put me in a program for two years, which wasn't necessary because, you know, I was never in a program or... that's why when he said to take the 6 months and the 5 years [probation] and that would help me get a program, I was like, I took the plea, so I just took the plea that the lawyer told me to take."

Child Welfare

Some respondents were concerned with legal difficulties visiting their children and maintaining a relationship with them, even if they were currently not in a position to care for them and act as a guardian.

Nancy wanted assistance with family law. She and her husband are separated, and he had custody of her 11-year-old daughter. She reported that she has visits every weekend and alternate holidays, but that he does not honor her visitation rights. She added that her husband does let them talk on the phone and that her daughter wants to see her.

Jackie said she could get out of the work "if I had my kids". Although she was over-simplifying the situation, there was clearly a link between her desire to be with her children and her ability to leave the street social networks involved in drug use and prostitution.

While many respondents expressed affection for their children and a few fantasized that everything in their lives would change for the better if they regained custody, the majority seemed to recognize that they were not at this time in a position to be a primary care giver. They expressed both a sense of loss and hopelessness, and of acceptance of the current situation.

Housing

Housing was a crucial need for respondents. The overwhelming majority of respondents were marginally housed. 4 were homeless, and only 3 had stable housing. The lack of stable housing was related to other problems, from having a place to sleep and relax to cleanliness and to nutrition. For those who might be able to pursue a mainstream

occupation, the lack of housing was an obstacle to finding work.

Transgender women reported housing discrimination. Jamie, who is transgender, said she would like to “get my own apartment. I’m tired of being discriminated against.”

John desperately needs housing. His lack of housing presented obstacles to obtaining better work, such as an inability to be reached by telephone and difficulty appearing “presentable.”

Marlene is homeless and was interviewed just after being released from police custody. With no place to go, she returned to the area she knows best, a neighborhood known for drug and sexual commerce. As described in an earlier section, the environment is not conducive to her transitioning out of substance dependence and street-based sex work, especially when she lacks any indoor place to which to retreat, even for sleep.

Michelle said “I really don’t sleep” because she has no place to go to sleep.

Respondents who had regular places to live, with family or employers, were far more able to take care of themselves. It is unclear whether not being able to take care of oneself led to homelessness, but it is clear that homelessness contributes to the difficulties faced by respondents, including vulnerability to violence and infection.

Leslie said that she was “getting the runaround” in her search for housing. She was seeking housing assistance from a city agency that was providing her with other services, but the agency was not being effective, helpful, or active in assisting with the search for housing.

Counseling and Supportive Services

Many respondents stated in general terms that they wanted ongoing supportive help to make changes in their lives. John summed this attitude up, saying that “dealing with everyone’s mentality is very stressful.” He had problems with his mother, who kicked him out of her apartment and rendered him and his girlfriend essentially homeless. “My mom is very focused on drugs ... she wants to see me go down like her.”

Erin said that just discussing her situation with the researcher was helpful, leading researchers to suggest including counseling in health programs available to sex workers.

I’m just glad that, I don’t know, I’m glad that I could talk about it. It makes me feel better like I told you and I’m glad I met you not only for the money wise just, you know, I like to give information, you know, maybe for other women in the future, you know, maybe they can learn from it, you know, because I know a lot of, most of the prostitution leads to drugs and, you know, I think it all has to do with drugs, but like I told you, there are some women out there doing it to take care of their families ... Its good talking about it too, I feel, because, you know, you let it out, you know [research] might be positive.

While the majority of respondents spoke more generally of need for support, Leslie spoke specifically of needing help negotiating her benefits under public assistance programs.

Subjects’ Views

Researchers asked respondents to name the types of help, beyond legal assistance, that could be done to help them in stabilizing their lives, or to help them leave the life if that is what they wanted.

Respondents had many suggestions that related to housing, criminal justice practices, and supportive services. Charlotte summed up many subjects’ feelings: “People need to understand, every hooker is not out there because they want to be ... [there are] circumstances that keep people out there ... there are young kids out there ... voices that need to be heard ... You can say, ‘Get off my corner and move,’ but you don’t know if that person has any place to go to, you don’t know if that person has just been beat up, or forced to be out there, starving, hunger can really drive a person crazy.”

Many respondents felt that it was important for them to be shown a different sort of lifestyle. A few stated that it would be very helpful to have housing that combined long-term shelter or permanent housing with supportive services. One said that she would like to see a “therapeutic community for prostitutes ... show you how to live another life ... learn something else ... get a skill, or a high school diploma ... become marketable.” Subjects made

clear a desire for integrated support that included learning life skills - Charlotte remarked that she needs help "having my money work for me."

Subjects exhibited a certain level of distrust for "social workers." Researchers used the term "social workers" as a catch-all for "service providers" or "non-governmental agencies," as this term was most clear to subjects in pilot interviews. When asked about social workers, Mimi responded, "no, I don't trust them." She further explained, "What I mean is like I don't trust anybody in authority, you know, because you tell them certain things and then it backfires on you, like when I had just given birth to my daughter, I told them I had smoked a joint in the beginning of my pregnancy. When I gave birth, they tried to keep my daughter, so I'm afraid of all of them. I'm afraid to tell them the truth." Another subject noted that social workers can "put more effort into clients," which researchers interpreted as a desire for individualized help, while another laughed and said that "they should work with people more like you're doing now."

The transgender women thought that it was important to have services that specifically target the transgender population, saying that they wanted "housing specifically for transgender people" and "a specific agency for transgender women where they can have the opportunity to get a job they want." One respondent mentioned job training and opportunities geared to this specific population, saying "but I'd like to go back to school most ... nursing school, or hair/makeup school. I really wish there was another incentive for transgender people." She felt that this was critical for ultimate integration of the transgender population, commenting that "I believe in equal opportunity." Jamie expounded on this idea, stating that she "definitely" wants to look for other work. "I wish there was an agency for transgender women that could offer different jobs ... You know there are a lot of transgender women out there that are very talented and dedicated, but it's very hard to get good jobs. I wish that there was an agency that allowed you to get in a position that you wanted to be in."

Respondents also had suggestions to improve police and other criminal justice responses to sex workers. One subject felt that "police should follow their motto that they have on their cars: Courtesy, Professionalism, and Respect, because basically, they have none of these." Another stated that police should "follow rules about arrest and other things." Bethany's remarked that there should be surveillance of police activities. "They should be checked out." One subject felt that the criminal justice system should view sex workers in a more humane light, saying that "the courthouses and the judges ... those are the ones with the authority, and they should be human being enough to put themselves in our positions and realize where we stand."

Jamie said that "courts should be more lenient, and I think they should have other incentives instead of girls being arrested, and I think they should ... make things better for transgender women who are prostitutes." She also noted the specific discrimination that transgender women face by adding, "the courts and the police ... I don't think we should be harassed because of who we are, regardless if they know what we are, I don't think we should be discriminated against ... because it happens anyway, you go to courthouse, you'll still be discriminated against by the judge, by the DA, by the lawyers. in society, you're discriminated against."

Mandy stated that she "[does not] know about the courts. I've just been arrested one time and it was just pretty much in and out." ... "Police pretty much, I mean, there's nice police and then you've got the assholes. Nice cops are just like, you know, 'let me see what you look like, okay, I won't make my rounds again, you know, I don't want to see you, go home', that's the nice way about it. And you have some cops that are just pretty much, you know, they talk to you as though you are a child because you're coming out here, you know, doing what you have to do to make money and they will, they, you know, they will talk shit, they make you feel like shit, and you know, that's unnecessary, I understand you have a job to do, just to warn us and, you know, you can't arrest me for walking, you know, and that's what they pretty much do to harass you."

Others mentioned wanting assistance from police and courts. Leslie referenced violence from customers and others, and stated that police should "watch our backs instead of trying to lock us up," while another respondent said that courts should "try to help us instead of lock us up in prison ... [help us] get psychological treatment."

Two subjects commented on the prevalence of other crime that they felt is more serious. One said that it would help if "[we are not sent] to jail for [a] year, when there are other crimes," while the other stated, "other crimes should be addressed and they're not being addressed ... cops focus on prostitution more than any other crime, regardless of if you work in a brothel, you're working privately in a house, they still try to get you."

²⁵"Sex Workers, Know Your Rights!" workshop presented by Jennifer Clamen and Valerie Boucher as part of the Festival for the Rights of Sex Workers, Montreal, Canada, February 14, 2003.

Researchers asked respondents if there were things that sex workers could do for themselves that would be useful. A few mentioned safety issues. Nancy stated that sex workers can “work together to watch out for each other” and another said that they “need to unite in the neighborhood, instead of being at each other’s throats.” One mentioned personal safety, saying that prostitutes should “keep alert, you know.” Finally, one laughed and, referring to earlier comments about age and longevity in sex work, responded that “they should keep themselves looking good.”

Researchers also asked respondents if there were things that customers could do that would be useful. Answers again centered on safety and being treated with dignity. One said, “they should always take the ladies to either a hotel room or an apartment,” while Linda talked specifically about location: “that they listen more, you know like, they go where we want to park, not where they want to park, you know, that would be more, you know ...” Mandy focused on finances, laughing, “[t]ricks, just pay more,” and was echoed by another subject, who also said that they should “pay more ... pay what we ask them for.”

Views on Legal Change

Sex workers were divided about whether legalizing or decriminalizing sex work would improve their conditions and their relations with police. Many are aware of the use of other statutes against them, including charges like loitering, trespassing, or obstructing traffic. Drug users pointed out that drug laws affect them and often carry longer sentences than the other charges they face. The use of other charges against sex workers is seen in places where prostitution itself is not illegal per se,²⁵ providing support to these assertions. Others were very enthusiastic about the idea of law reform, foreseeing greater recognition of their rights. A few subjects stated with no prompting that they believed in legal change: “like I said, they should pass a law that makes prostitution legal.”

Bethany said, “If it were legal, well, of course it would be different. There would be less diseases and no arrests.” Celia was more straightforward when asked if it would be different for her, answering with an emphatic “Yes!” Gretchen, who works indoors, said “If it were legal, the house wouldn’t take fifty percent, but ten, as it would be an employment agency.”

The term sex work was salient in that it reflects some respondents’ understanding of prostitution as work. Charlotte and other sex workers interviewed saw their work as a service. When discussing legal reform, Charlotte said that legalizing prostitution would be a big help. “It’s a lifestyle, I mean it’s something that’s been going on ... sex is human nature ... a lot of people can’t control it ... and it can be borderline therapy, for you to say to someone that they can’t do what they want with their bodies, I just don’t see how the court can tell you that ... I can see that ... doing it on the corner [is not a good thing], but if you legalize it, you won’t have that. Half of the problems going on ... it won’t happen. There wouldn’t be as much hanging out ... crime on the streets ... if it was legal ... you could go to agencies.” Jamie agreed, saying that “it would be better ... I think less diseases would be spread, and there would be less violence.” She continued, “I don’t think the prostitutes are doing any harm ... we’re fulfilling a need and a fantasy.”

Joan also saw sex work as a service and felt that it is very important to “make it legal!”... “Things would be much different, “oh, yeah ... For one, marriages would be a lot happier, men would be less frustrated at home.” She thinks it would be easier for the women that participate in the sex industry, “oh, yeah, definitely.” Beside making it legal, “they should just, I don’t know, they should just arrest you less.” Avery had always seen participation in the sex industry as work, having been encouraged by sex partners to become a sex professional.

Leslie thought that things would “probably ... be different.” “Let them make their money and go about their business ... girls would be calmer, and judges would have less work.” “Sex work has been going on since days of Adam and Eve ... they can’t stop it ... you got lonely men, and women ready to satisfy lonely men.” She thought it was more important to stress being safe and avoiding police harassment.

Recognizing the concerns of residents, one stated, “and the residents wouldn’t have to worry about it ... it would be more controlled.” Linda thought that police should “let us have... like a sector, you know, a place we can park, you know, make it legal, you know [laughs]” “Of course [it would be different]... because you wouldn’t have to be sneaking around in the dark, you know, that’s what they’re waiting for, for you to sneak in the dark alley, so you can... so that they can chuck your bottoms, kill you, whatever.”

Mimi said, “yes, you wouldn’t have to scheme so much, or take certain risks in trying to find work, you know, like, like, maybe you wouldn’t have to like hide so much, you know, and stuff like that, yeah.”

Allison said, “we [could] wear what we want and not get pulled over or taken advantage of.”

Mandy said, “[changing the law] would be nice, that would be really nice, that would be pretty much... actually to be arrested, you have to be caught in the act and, I mean, that I’ve never really heard any girl that would just get caught in the act, I mean, a lot of girls get picked up for soliciting, just saying, you know, “oh,... listen, do you want to have sex”... there’s a lot of girls who just get arrested for soliciting, you know.” She continued, “Oh yes, definitely [laughs], that would be more easier. You wouldn’t have to be so cautious, you know, who’s police, who’s actually a date, you do lose a lot of money that way because you have to turn down a date, thinking a date the police... because everyone’s so suspicious... it should be like Vegas [laughs], legal [laughs]. It’s not hurting anyone, but it’s just the people around here that are always trying to clean up midtown, but I mean, come on, this is the red light district, you’re not going to clean up the red light district. [laughs]”

On the other hand, Carol thinks that nothing would change for her if prostitution laws changed, because of drugs and personal harassment. “They’re gonna bother me.” Marlene agreed, saying “They’d find something else.”

Nancy agreed that things would not be much different, because “still have the same people out there ... the violence.”

Views of Service Providers and Advocates

Researchers interviewed fifteen service providers and advocates (participants) from ten non-governmental organizations about their work with populations that may engage in prostitution and asked for recommendations based on their expertise regarding the population and on criminal justice issues. Researchers also interviewed seven City agency or administration officials about relevant issues. Service providers from Amethyst Women’s Project, From Our Streets With Dignity, Positive Health Project, the Urban Justice Center, Pathways to Housing, and the Midtown Community Court, among others, were interviewed either individually or in one of two focus groups. Participants are not identified by name. Researchers offered confidentiality to them to ensure the most honest and thoughtful responses possible.

Service providers and advocates had varied and insightful thoughts on what types of programs and policies would ultimately be effective in assisting street-based sex workers. Their recommendations focused primarily on three areas: housing programs, services and criminal justice policy. In discussing programs and services that would be useful to street-based prostitutes, many participants focused on harm reduction policies of “meet[ing] the clients where they are.” This meant that providers and advocates intended to assist prostitutes leave street-based sex work if they could or if they desired, but would also help them be as safe as possible if they did stay in the life.

Housing

Participants agreed that housing was a critical and desperately-needed resource for street-based sex workers. Providers from one agency noted that there is “nothing” or “not much” in terms of available housing for this population. They observed that there are places that distribute condoms and conduct HIV testing, but no supportive housing outside detox or rehab. The only option for many of their clients is the City homeless shelter program, which is viewed by many as dangerous or undesirable.

Participants offered different housing models that they thought would be appropriate and effective for street-based sex workers. It was agreed that more drop-in centers are also necessary to provide this population with places to go, but that there is a more urgent need for permanent housing combined with more intensive services. Participants set forth two favored housing models, each with its own advantages and disadvantages.

Advocates agreed that it was necessary to create shelters specifically for street-based sex workers, modeled on domestic violence shelters. They felt that it was critical to create places where this population can go to stay for long-term housing, where on-site counselors can assist with providing services and finding permanent housing. One advocate recommends such a model because “these shelters offer women a safe and confidential place to go and get their lives together ... to stop and figure out what’s next for them ... where services are more seamless. And the best thing is that [women who stay at shelters] are living with other women who are going through similar situations, and they can be a support network for each other.” She went on to say that “another crucial element is the presence of on-site staff ... twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week ... they provide counseling and advocacy, and referrals to take care of other needs, like maybe rehab or job training or with ACS, that a client has ... They could drive a client directly from finishing rehab to this special shelter, so there’s no opportunity to get into trouble or distracted.” Another participant said that it is very important that this vulnerable group of (mostly) women have

a place for them that “creat[es] a real safe space, especially in the winter time, when it’s real cold.” The notion that “street-based sex workers have no place to go that’s theirs ... no place to call a safe home” was a common one.

One participant who works with transgender women who engage in sex work or are at risk for doing so, says that if she could create her ideal program for this very specific population, she would create a center that is a shelter, a “place where they can at least lay their head” ... “have dress for success [programs], help them understand the idea of transitioning out of sex work ... not to knock those who have chosen it as a profession. Those [who choose it as a profession and make more money] won’t come to our group [at her agency], because our clients are at a lower threshold. Making them feel more connected to community in New York, and have them know about their rights, and showing them they can do things for themselves.” She adds that clients would need on-site “therapist[s] to help with mental health, case management, daily dinner and lunch at this place,” because many street-based prostitutes have no food, and if they live in an SRO, they can come for social services and support. Such a center would also be effective as a “way to deal with domestic violence” and problems that transgender women have with their boyfriends.

This participant adds that it is important to have a shelter whose specific purpose is to serve transgender women, because they need to feel accepted and welcome. She notes that transgender women who experience domestic violence are not eligible to enter domestic violence shelters, and “if other clients are not that friendly to them, it won’t work. If they have women’s shelters, why shouldn’t they have shelters for transgender women?” She did not think that such a shelter would require a large amount of beds, as this is “not a huge population.”

Another housing model that some advocates mentioned was a “housing first” model:

The ‘housing first’ methodology provides a critical link between the emergency shelter/transitional housing systems and the community-based and governmental services and resources that are often fragmented, difficult to access or simply not available to homeless families trying to attain stability and independence in permanent housing.

The program methodology facilitates the move into permanent housing for homeless families and then engages the newly-housed family in a progressive set of individualized case management activities and interventions for a limited period of time, as they move toward improved social and economic well-being. The “housing first” methodology is premised on the belief that multi-problem and at risk families are often more responsive to interventions and support after they are in their own housing, rather than still living in housing programs that are temporary or transitional.²⁶

One advocate spoke of an agency in New York City that practices this model. “Their slogan, their motto or their agency’s ... they say is ‘Housing ends homelessness’ [laughs].” She expounded on her understanding of the origins of the program, saying, “[they] started asking people ..., ‘what do you think..., why are you sitting here?’ [homeless and on the street] ... and people kept saying, ‘well, because I don’t have anywhere to live’ ... [and they] rent apartments and go to find people on the streets and to give the apartment to the person on the streets. The only catch is that you have to let the agency be an SSI payee, so that they can pay the rent and the phone bill and the electric bill. And then, they give [the client] the rest of the money. You can do whatever you want with it.” She noted that one benefit for people who have mental health or substance abuse problems is that if they fall out of treatment, they do not lose the apartment, saying, “[y]ou don’t have to take meds. You don’t have to be clean.” “The people [they] take are not housing ready. And the woman you’re talking about on the streets is not housing ready according to all these other models, but this is a model, he has [a very successful] retention rate in two years [as compared to] other supportive housing providers that only serve housing ready people.” She pointed out that it is critical that a person in this situation not be placed at risk of being homeless again and spiraling downward, thus losing everything.

This advocate continued on this theme, saying that it often seems that “the first step to recovery is getting somebody a house. Once you have a house, then you have like something to live for and like a reason to bring yourself together.” Another advocate agreed, saying, “yeah, I mean, the more I do this work, the more I see that it’s housing that’s like the most fundamental thing for people.” She continued, “across the board of success in drug court, the population least likely to succeed in alternative-to-incarceration programs are people that don’t have stable housing and if you eliminate that, if you use that as a criterion about eligibility,” then a program screens out

²⁶National Alliance to End Homelessness (2003). Best Practices and Profiles Report on Beyond Shelter. <http://www.endhomelessness.org/best/beyondshelter.htm> (April 17, 2003).

the most vulnerable and needy persons.

An expert on the “housing first” model who operates such an agency agreed that commitment to housing is important for street-based sex workers, whether it is a domestic violence shelter or “housing first” program. He noted that “housing first” works very well for populations with psychiatric disabilities, because they are on SSI and can pay 30 percent of their income toward rent, by making the agency a representative payee. This is critical to the model for two reasons: first, it allows the program to operate financially; and second, it allows for clients to be accountable to the program. On the clinical side, the agency “does not require sobriety of its clients,” but they are expected to “cooperate on the housing management side,” and are “required to participate in a money management class.” The financial relationship allows the agency to hold clients accountable and dissuade them from dealing drugs or engaging in sex work in the apartment which the agency has found for the client. This advocate made clear that an agency has to expect that in a minimum amount of cases, “maybe 10 percent of the cases, things will go wrong” and the agency must have ways of holding clients accountable. For example, his agency serves those with psychiatric disabilities, all of whom receive SSI. Not all street-based sex workers, even those with substance abuse issues, may be eligible for SSI. Therefore, he thought that the domestic violence shelter might be more appropriate for street-based sex workers. He also noted that the communal atmosphere of such a shelter might have a positive impact on clients. He continued that another aspect of the “housing first” model, scattered-site housing, may be applicable to these special shelters.

Scattered-site housing refers to the renting of available, affordable apartment units wherever they are, rather than finding a large shelter-type building. The participant who initially described this program described it in this manner: “They just go around and rent apartments, so you know, there’s like one in this building and two in the building next door or whatever, you know, in relatively inexpensive neighborhoods.” It is, in the words of the participant who operates the program, “very under-the-radar,” requires no permits or approval, and neighbors have no reason to complain. This advocate suggested that an agency “could get a one-family house with staff on-site ... [have] 3 women [clients] and 1 house manager, who could be a woman who has successfully” left the life.

Programs and Services

Availability of Services

Participants agreed that there were limited services available to sex workers, but had differing opinions regarding whether street-based sex workers take advantage of or utilize available services. Participants also described the types of programs that they would like to see.

When asked if the population takes advantage of services that are available to them, representatives from one program stated that while it would be a good thing for people to partake of services on their own, they pointed to research that asserts that “services are more effective when a mandate is attached.” In fact, they saw “arrest as a gateway to services.”

Providers in one focus group who had themselves lived on the street or engaged in sex work and successfully battled substance dependence were more critical of those who could not get their lives together and take advantage of available services. In answering the question whether this population takes advantage of available services, one participant stated clearly, “no - I don’t think so.” Another said, “the ones that do, abuse it” ... “[they] don’t use it to their advantage - they abuse it, [use it] as a revolving door.” She continued, “there’s no commitment [on their part]. We do the fullest that we can for them, as far as arranging for a bed for them [in detox or rehab]... and they’ll go for a couple of days, and they’ll leave after a few days, go AMA [against medical advice], or they’ll go and complete the four days or week, and they’ll leave, and being that a lot of them don’t have any [place] to go because they’re homeless, they come right back here on the street, and within a couple of weeks or so, they come right back in here to get our services again. They’re not sticking to an after-care program.” This response underscored the experience of Marlene, a respondent who described going straight to the street and looking to “cop” because she had nowhere else to go. Another participant reiterated the importance of sticking longer-term with a program, saying, “it’s critical to stick with the after-care.”

One said, “most of them are addicts and that’s how they think” in response to why some sex workers are not ready to change their lives. She continued, “one service they take advantage of is free condoms ... the others, they lose interest.”

However, upon discussing the issue at further length, the participants in this focus group agreed that “the biggest

reason they don't take advantage [of programs] is their addiction." One noted that the "root of it is dealing with their addiction ... without their addiction, I don't think they'd be out on the streets."

Other advocates, not in that focus group, had a different perspective, stating:

That's a complicated question [whether they take advantage of available services] because when you talk about a person who needs services and what they're going to do and what they are not going to do, and you try to put a label on what their problem is, it's never the drugs that are the problem really. There are underlying mental health issues. We are talking about that kind of person, a person who's forced to do sex work because of drugs and alcohol problems. It's not really the drugs that are the problem just like, that person who's saying it's not really the sex work that is the problem, the problem is underlying mental health services that they need and so, in my opinion, you can offer mental health services to deal with these things that lead someone to drug use, that lead someone to sex work, but if those mental health services are not good, you can do more harm than good and drive people away from any kind of services at all, you know, because there are really heavy issues and you might open up, you know, what you're trying to do is you're trying to get people to address their coping mechanisms, unhealthy defense mechanisms that they have to deal with, sexual assault as a kid or domestic violence or something like and once you start to peel away and take away and forbid people from utilizing their defense mechanisms, if you don't have an alternative for them, or if you're not addressing their mental health needs effectively, you know, you're gonna cause a wound to open in someone's life, you know, take away their defense mechanisms, get them to bring up issues that they've never addressed before, maybe resurfacing, you know, sexual abuse, and memories that they have that they've never thought about before, once you start peeling all that stuff, people end up in a crisis ...

Another participant in this focus group broke in at that point, saying, "and some half-hour counseling session . . . is not really going to be adequate to deal with that." This same participant continued, saying, "I'm aware of very few services that are specifically targeting the people engaging in sex work aside from some of the outreach . . . that, you know, persons in a van handing out condoms kind of services." "[There are] services that are available to somebody based on the fact that they're poor or they are homeless or they have disability or they have a substance abuse problem or whatever and those people, some of those people happen to be people who are at risk for engaging in sex work."

Participants were adamant that there are not many programs that specifically serve street-based sex workers, and that this is a factor in the success or failure of programs' effectiveness. One highlighted the unique nature of the target population: "There is so much stigma attached to prostitution, and especially for the ones working on the street ... a lot of them feel like, Why do you want to help me? What's in it for you? So many people have walked away from them, whether it's their families or their lawyers or caseworkers, it can create a real sense of fatalism. They're also hard to reach, so you have to know how to find them and make a connection, with ... acceptance, convincing them that someone cares about them . . . then once they come in, you need to provide them with multiple services at once."

One participant summed up this perspective, saying that the real issue is not about taking advantage of services, but that "there's more of a limitation on services" ... "there may be outreach workers, there may be somebody you can go to and get case management, but what's the result of that? Is there any ... I mean, what are people really getting?"

Another provider agreed that services that specifically target sex workers and make them feel welcome are almost non-existent, saying that "there are really some major deficits in availability of services that are actually in demand for." A different provider observed, "people complain about prostitutes being on the street and making noise or bothering people, but then no one wants to invest in the really intensive and long-term programs that you need to get these prostitutes off the street." ... "So where are they supposed to go? You have to give people alternatives ... something that will really take hold and make everybody [neighborhood residents and prostitutes] happy."

One advocate brought up an interesting point, saying that there are a few programs that do offer multiple services to sex workers, but that the target population either does not realize that services are available, or are unable, for

various reasons, to utilize them effectively: “I think there is all kinds of romance on the streets about what you can get from an agency that may or may not be true, based on somebody’s bad experience or their good experience, you know, people are listening to those tales on the streets about what the agency can do, so for example [X agency], they have a whole range of services that are available to the [target] community in New York, but are they good? You know, are they helpful to people? And then, what do people understand about the availability of those services is from what they hear on the streets.”

Types of Programs and Services That Sex Workers Need

In interviews with participants, this examination of whether street-based sex workers take advantage of existing services and the perceived shortage of services led to excellent discussions of the types of programs that would be more effective in serving this transient and difficult-to-reach population. Participants brought up housing, as discussed above, case management, substance abuse treatment, mental health and counseling/support, job training, money management, and healthcare. They emphasized that it is critical to address all the issues in an intensive and long-term manner. One noted the difficulty of even reaching the population, especially when they are driven away because of increasing arrests and police sweeps.

One City official, a former judge in Criminal Court, stated that it is very difficult to see “the same women” coming through his courtroom over time because they appear unhealthy and do not seem able to move forward with their lives. This echoes the concerns of advocates that this population has many needs that remain unmet. However, he also noted his frustration with the population because they do not appear for subsequent court dates and they do not actively seek help.

One participant listed a host of services that street-based services were likely to need, saying, “if you look at the whole range of every potential service in the world that somebody who is engaged in prostitution, addicted to drugs, dealing with mental health issues of greater or lesser severity whether it’s trauma or whether it’s, you know, diagnosis like schizophrenia or whatever, the thing that you have to recognize is that none of the services that the person can potentially benefit from are readily available on a voluntary basis, not mental health, not substance abuse treatment, none of them ... housing, public benefits, economic choices, job training, [or] childcare.” She continued at length, saying,

maybe they think there are enough outreach services, but [the] outreach services are not services that people who engage in or are at risk with sex work actually need and, you know, that’s putting a band-aid on things, I mean, it might be, it might be, you know, something that sex workers appreciate. And you can get some hot food and some condoms, that might be like just what hits the spot at the moment, you know, but perhaps there’s another layer of services that people who are doing sex work, who would be interested in other options might, might appreciate [laughs] which doesn’t exist, you know, I mean, what do people need? Like a lot of them need a place to live that’s not going to insult their dignity and that’s safe and maybe like, if they need to get away from a pimp or whatever they need like, you know, essentially a DV shelter kind of model. And they need like somebody to talk to them seriously about potential other career options if they are interested in these other career options [laughs], you know, which most sex workers want to get at some point where like, even if you really embrace the idea of it, you know, of it’s an economic choice. Some people may enjoy actually the work itself. There still comes a point in every person’s career as a sex worker when they’re facing diminishing returns on the job. [laughs]

Another remarked, “it’s not just tailoring these services to sex workers, because obviously that’s important ... otherwise they just feel judged, that you don’t understand them.” “You have to attack all of these problems at once, coordinating them with long-term housing ... but in addition to tailoring programs to people who work on the street, you have to reach out to them and get them to trust that someone really wants to help and wants to be there for them.” She continued, saying that “now it’s even more difficult just to reach prostitutes who are on the street, because they go underground or move their strolls around because of the [police] sweeps, and they don’t want to keep getting arrested.”

A participant who works with transgender women states that her program offers the following services to the

transgender community: case management; mental health counseling; basic counseling for HIV; job readiness; support groups and workshops; outreach; and harm reduction (clean needles for drugs and hormones, safer sex kits.) However, she says that there are not enough programs that offer such comprehensive services, “there really needs to be a lot more of the services,” and her program is not attached to housing. This participant echoes another participant’s comments, echoed above, saying, “there are services that say they offer services, but don’t reach clients.” “Our clients-their main things are survival ... really low threshold.” “People who come to [us] are more disenfranchised, immigrant, homeless, drug use[rs], and other things.”

She thinks that services “need to be [moving] more towards a holistic, harm reduction and prevention program.” She emphasized a harm reduction model, saying, “it’s not for us to judge,” and noted that this approach is one reason that many transgender women attend her program’s peer support groups.

This participant had specific recommendations that might benefit transgender prostitutes. She observed that “places that are in the courts, they should hire transgender women, because it creates sensitivity and level of comfort around transgender women.” She commended the service side of Midtown Community Court for being very sensitive to transgender needs. The court offers a two-hour class on health education (HIV, STD, Hepatitis C, safe hormones, breast cancer); information regarding legal name-change; and access to a case manager; and can escort those who attend the class to a church that will provide them with food and a shower. Her understanding was that the majority of people who attend the class are mandated by the court. The Midtown Community Court also teaches a session in their job readiness program on transgender issues.

She said that “some transgender girls do go, and three have found jobs, but one barrier to utilizing this service is homelessness, because [the women have to] focus on basic needs and revert to an unhealthy lifestyle, out of survival.”

Participants spoke specifically of the need that street-based sex workers have for counseling and support. One remarked that “some women who are addicts don’t turn to the streets.” “Some women just don’t have it in them to be prostitutes ... they can do other things, illegally, but [prostitution] is just something they can’t bring themselves to do.” She continued, “other women stay in abusive relationships with a guy who has some money, which is another form of prostitution.” Another participant added, “[there is] a lot of low self-esteem out there ... [they] don’t feel good about themselves.”

One participant once taught a class “to women who were in half-way housing and returning ... to the community and it was a class about self-esteem and it was targeted towards sex workers and so we were talking about oppression of being, you know, fundamentals of what oppression is and then the economics of sex work and then alternatives to sex work and so we had a whole curriculum.”

She continued and highlighted that self-esteem may not be the real issue in self-esteem for prostitutes and marginalized people but that their treatment from others including service providers may be the real issue at hand, saying that “women are terrified of finding out what they have. They’re afraid of finding out their status of their own health, but also women, drug users always, but I think women who do sex work, are terrified of feeling like shit, like having somebody talk to you and address you and tell you what you should or shouldn’t be doing in a way that just makes you feel horrible. Nobody wants that. No one voluntarily goes and seeks that.” Her quote demonstrates that self-esteem may be better addressed with sensitivity training for service providers who may be judgmental in a way that prevents proper provision of services, or with research that duplicates the impressions held by the researchers of self-esteem in prostitutes. Indeed, no sex workers interviewed for this report cited a lack of self-esteem but they spoke clearly about poor treatment from others.

She made an interesting point about this population and the fact that they make mistakes, for example, not showing up for appointments. She felt strongly that service providers have to stay patient and stay focused on the big picture:

they have to keep in mind life circumstances that might have prevented somebody from doing stuff, so for example, a doctor who makes an appointment with someone and the person doesn’t show up 5 consecutive times, you know, there’s this degree of anger the [doctor] is going to have, but on the other hand, there’s got to be, the question has to be asked, ‘why is this person not coming?’ I had a family for a case and the woman, we had applied for trial, and the woman kept canceling her appointments and I would get really angry. And at one point, I had to step back and say, ‘she’s canceling these appointments because she knows we’re going to lose and it’s really traumatic for her to even think about coming in and having to answer these questions,’ and so I think there’s, you know, of course

we're all going to get angry, but there's this other part where I think we all have to keep in mind what's keeping them first from doing these really basic tasks. It's related to trauma. It's related to, you know, whatever, some kind of oppression. I'm just thinking in terms of clients who are sex workers. There has to be a degree of understanding that service providers have.

At the same time, this participant said that she has "had to stop advocating for someone, you know, with two clients, I've had to actually asked to be removed from the case because of these issues of non-communication and disrespect. And that was, those were two of the most horrible decisions I ever had to make. They were related to this issue of, 'how much it is me being sensitive to the trauma of this person' and I'm talking about someone who is a sex worker, who exchanges sex for a place to stay and a family court case, you know, there's a line, you know, between me being understanding of the trauma and not being able to provide services."

Economic Issues

Participants spoke specifically of the economic issues that street-based sex workers face. One participant made a statement that was echoed by many: "a lot of them feel there is no other way they could earn a living, and this is very convenient ... they [can] work whatever hours they want." This comment reinforced many sex worker respondents' statements that one benefit of prostitution is the "fast" money. One advocate asserted, "economic options, that's the bottom line," and said "there should be ... a job program for sex workers" modeled on job programs for ex-prisoners and other targeted constituencies. "They help you do your resume, they hook you up with training program, they help you find a job ... it seems like, it seems like there needs to be something like that for sex workers and maybe it needs to be like a separate, nurturing, women-friendly ... environment."

Another economic issue that seemed important was money management. One advocate likes the representative payee option. "It's huge, you know, letting someone to help you manage your money. With sex workers, with people who are using drugs, that's one of the things that when we first started doing harm reduction ... I was thinking about helping people pay their rent and pay for day care and things like that before they started spending money on drugs and people think that it's crazy, 'You can't do that with people, the people who are addicted are only going to [spend their money on drugs.]" These types of "financial planning services, you know even if it's not to the extent of rent payee, if you're just getting public assistance benefits, or if you're just getting money from sex work, having somebody help you work out a budget, having somebody hold your money, having somebody keeping it in an account or in a safe, something like that, it's just fundamental. And sometimes it can be paternalistic, you know, when you [say to] an adult, 'You owe money for this, I'm not giving you more,' but I think people would really appreciate that ... it's like helping somebody to prioritize and then figuring out how they can dole out their money to themselves in a way that is helpful, so anyway that was one of the things that I thought on a really basic level what [useful] services are." Another participant agreed, saying that she "had so many [clients] who [said], 'I'm glad that there's somebody out there to help me with my money.'"

Career Opportunities

Participants noted that substance dependence and arrest records would not be the sole obstacle for respondents seeking more mainstream employment. Job readiness is also an issue, especially for people who are unable to maintain a regular schedule. Most subjects in this research would be classified as unskilled and therefore most qualified for low-wage jobs. One provider commented, "resume assistance would be helpful, especially for people really don't have access to computers and printers, and who may be unfamiliar with the resume format." Another observed that "appropriate clothing can be an issue for many low-income and unemployed people, and sex workers are no exception." One advocate said that "many sex workers have large numbers of contacts but they may not offer the same sort of networking capabilities that can be called upon through other, more socially acceptable, venues of contact." She also commented that while sex workers' wide social experience may help them in interview situations, they may not know more specific details, such as when to ask about salaries and prerequisites or what kinds of questions are important to ask during job interviews.

Contrary to popular belief, sex work entails more than engaging in sex. Sex work develops skills that can be applied well to other employment. These include people skills, listening skills, the ability to work with a wide variety of people, conflict resolution in possibly dangerous situations, and negotiation of money, time and services. Two respondents described learning about human behavior and psychology in sex work, including discerning when people are lying to them. One advocate stated, "Sex workers are comfortable with nudity and physical contact, which is necessary for practice patients for medical and nursing students and for art modeling. Needle users have become excellent phlebotomists."

The challenge in assistance with other employment is to find ways to emphasize these skills without exposing the job seeker to stigma for her experience in sex work.

Healthcare

Comprehensive healthcare is not offered specifically to this population. Most health services for sex workers focus exclusively on gynecological health and blood tests for sexually-transmitted infections. Services addressing drug users also focus on blood tests as well as needle exchange. These services are valuable but leave many health issues unaddressed. The most successful health projects offer general health care in addition to these services. Substance abuse treatment programs are also necessary.

Many service providers reported that people did not meet appointments or did not come to them at the right time of day to access these services. One advocate said "Programs that don't consider the schedules of their target population are misguided and unhelpful." Publications about conducting outreach to sex workers (Overs and Longo 1997, Ditmore 2002b) recommend maintaining realistic and flexible hours in keeping with the schedules of the target population.

Regarding health care, one provider said, "That's one other thing that has attracted me, the idea that there could be a medical center where someone would go to, to deal with really low-threshold medical insurance. People are so afraid. There are so many barriers to getting medical care to begin with, that when you, when you have like low threshold medical services available that make people not feel like this is gonna be a... I'm very sensitive to the fact that these are women who haven't addressed their health care for ever, that's really important for people, you know, the approachability of the physician."

Criminal Justice Policy

Service providers and advocates had a broad range of opinions and recommendations regarding criminal justice policies that affect street-based sex workers and how they may be transformed to be more effective in assisting sex workers and getting them off the street. Their recommendations focused primarily on five areas: police interaction with prostitutes; whether mandating services through arrest and court order is effective; organized prostitution networks and how police can work with prostitutes who have pimps; police response to prostitutes who experience violence at the hands of customers or other street personalities; and police interference with public health outreach efforts.

Police Interaction with Prostitutes

Participants observed that there is great deal of police interaction with prostitutes, often leading to arrests. One provider observed that "women get arrested for just being in a neighborhood ... for just walking down the street." Another commented that arrest "creates a revolving door." "If they would decide to arrest, not to put them in jail, but have something that would help them ... if there was a shelter, they would send the women there ... a harm reduction recovery place where they can go." A participant who has overcome difficulties in her own life says that girls tell her that seeing what she does gives them hope. But, she continues, "they can't get to where I am if they're still struggling with survival."

Another advocate talked about creating precinct programs for street-based sex workers, modeled on precinct programs that address domestic violence. These programs are joint ventures between police and community-based organizations in which police notify a community-based organization when a domestic violence victim has come into the precinct or called for help. "When police encounter someone whom they believe is working on the street, they could bring her into the precinct and call a community-based organization to say, look, hook her up with food, a place to stay, a shower ... whatever she needs."

She also touched upon earlier discussions of the need for intensive services and recognized that such a program would only work if necessary services were available, which "would take real commitment on the part of the City ... but if residents in neighborhoods don't want people hanging out on the street and are complaining, the City has to be willing to help these people have humane place to go." "It's pretty clear that arresting people doesn't work ... even if you send them to jail for a few months, because maybe people leave for a while, but they always come back, and they still have the same needs that they did before ... or they go to another neighborhood." She remarked that "the people who really lose, along with the prostitutes themselves, are residents in low-income neighborhoods,

because the police don't pay as much attention to their complaints as they do in [a neighborhood like the West Village], and no one is creating long-term solutions to getting people off the street ... things like getting them beyond living at barely-survival level."

One participant felt that it is important to include a court-mandated component, although others did not. "[You] have to have the City back it up that these women have to stay in the program." "It should be determined in the courtroom that when the girl is released into the custody of [our program], that if she doesn't comply with our agency, with our rules, where we're going to send her to, to their rules, if she's not in compliance with them, either, if she's going to go AMA [against medical advice], to leave ... that they're allowed to call the courthouse and let them know that she left ... [the courthouse can] issue a warrant for her, and pick her up, and let her serve her jail time." The issue of mandating services is discussed further below.

One advocate mentioned police liaisons. "A police liaison program would address community relations, in this case particularly between law enforcement and sex workers, perhaps via an intermediary organization." Police liaison programs can be implemented in different ways, with or without an intermediary organization, with specific police liaison officers, and with emphasis on goals specific to their location. This advocate commented that "the best overall result is better relations between law enforcement and sex workers, as well as with health and other outreach workers." More specific benefits include discouraging violence from both officers and others, improving police response to crimes against sex workers, preventing harassment of outreach and health workers and encouraging health promotion, including promoting condom use by sex workers. (Overs and Longo 1997: 49) Periodically, news coverage in New York includes police abuse of sex workers, with violence, sexual misconduct or extortion (Kocieniewski 1996; Rashbaum, Marzulli, and Cauvin 1998.) Data collected for this report includes such incidents.

Another provider also discussed the idea of acting as police liaisons, saying that such a program could work: "from our program ... to go and advocate on her behalf and intervening, instead of sending her away to do five days in jail, to get her into a drug treatment program, since the reason that she's out there is because she has a drug problem ... to do that assessment right away, ... at the precinct, so that [when she's] in front of the judge, ... the ADA knows that she has a drug problem, she's homeless, she has nowhere to go, let's send her to a detox, let's treat her needs." She added that it would be critical to have "the advocate called immediately on the arrest." "One part of the problem is that if it's not a drug charge, then the court doesn't see it as a drug case, so they may not pick up on her need for treatment, so [there is no] no referral to services." This participant emphasized that "there needs to be an individual assessment, post-arrest." Another added, "if a prostitute gets arrested the first time, she should be sent somewhere where they do an assessment on her and find a root cause as to why this is happening ... do a one-on-one session on her."

A participant brought up another problem with arrests and help that street-based sex workers need. "There's this issue of warrants, you know, the bench warrants, what help is available to people ... that somebody needs to go with someone to clear up their warrant. That's what people want." Another commented that with respect to outstanding warrants, "they just want you to make it go away."

One provider made an interesting observation about the effect of arrests, saying that "girls are more aware and fewer people [are coming to gentrifying areas] ... girls know it's more safe to be in the clubs rather than on streets ... or if [they] have a cell phone, or a lot of girls are learning about going online."

One participant raised another issue that makes it difficult for providers to understand the impact of police activity. "It's hard to tell who's getting arrested ... women, transgender women, men, youth ... NYPD doesn't break down their arrest numbers by age, race and gender, including transgender, at least not in published reports. It would also make sense if they would break them down by specific offense, instead of just saying that offenses are 'prostitution-related.'"²⁷

Mandated Services

Participants had differing opinions regarding whether it is necessary to mandate attendance by court order in order to have street-based sex workers take advantage of or utilize available services. Some thought that while it would be ideal for people to partake of services on their own, this target population is more likely to avail themselves of services only when a threat of going to jail hangs over their head. Others thought that mandating services creates

²⁷Breakdowns of prostitution-related arrests and other additional information for this report were provided by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services.

more problems and that it does not address the fundamental problem that enough appropriate services do not exist.

Of those that support mandating services, one said “they get arrested, and they get mandated ... sometimes they have to be forced into getting that clarity, but I don’t think they hold them long enough ... they should be mandated into treatment.” She proposed, “they need an alternative to incarceration program for prostitutes” ... “when they get sentenced ... to 3 months or 6 months, when their time comes to be released, they’re just thrown out on the street. They don’t have an address, nowhere to go.”

Many participants agreed that the criminal justice system needs to engage in screening, as discussed above. One provider said that “by the third, or preferably the first, arrest for prostitution or solicitation, they should do drug testing, assessment, and counseling” ... “find out the root cause for why she’s on the streets, and then send her to appropriate long-term services.”

One group of participants developed their idea of good alternatives to an incarceration program for street-based sex workers who have substance abuse problems which includes the following elements: it must be inpatient; a minimum of 6 months in duration; clients should be mandated to be there, with weekly urinalysis; in addition to substance abuse and mental health treatment, the program should include vocational training and schooling, and parenting skills; and the client should face a jail sentence if she does not comply. They agreed that it did not matter whether the program was in New York City or outside. They also added that it was not useful to threaten women with child removal, because substance dependence is the problem.

The issue of compliance is one that raises the most difference of opinion among participants. A few thought that “if they don’t comply ... there has to be a consequence,” while most others thought that mandating may not be appropriate because the issues are so complex.

One such participant stated, “the thing is, people are at such a low threshold in terms of where they are, that they don’t show up for a mandated service or class ... and then, where before they were initially just going to get no time, or a few days, by skipping out on a class or a counseling session, they wind up going to jail for a few months, and when they get out, they start all over again.”

Another advocate said, “when you give someone a choice between jail and some kind of... I’m assuming that you mean some kind of mental health treatment, or substance abuse treatment, are they actually going to follow... do they want the alternatives to incarceration, the answer is clearly, ‘yes.’ Are they going to follow true with it and the answer to that question I think is, it completely depends on the demands of that program on the woman, you know, does she want those services? In the mix of what is being offered, there’s probably something of value there, but if it’s not convenient and there are all kinds of barriers, you know, like 80 percent of the time, I would say probably, my answer would be ‘no,’ she’s not going to comply and there are thousands of reasons why and it’s not as simply because she’s being forced.”

She added, “some clients in [a] program [go into] it just because they want to stay out of [jail] and they [comply] more or less with enough things [and] just satisfy the court order.” She discussed a perspective that “what the court order gives you is a window of opportunity to engage somebody. And for some people the window of opportunity is an hour, and for some people it might be like a month, but if you don’t actually engage the person, if you don’t build a relationship with them and convince them that like you care about them and you have something to offer them that they can use during whatever the window of opportunity is for that particular person, then all the rest of the world won’t make the person actually, you know, actually get that.”

One provider noted that “some people think that the only way to get drug treatment anymore is to get it through the criminal justice system because ... the waiting list is for people who are voluntarily seeking services and it’s just too long and if you’re in the criminal justice system ... and so ... that is one way to answer this, that it offers access to people that in a way, that is not offered [otherwise].”

Participants also discussed specialty and community courts like drug or mental health courts. One commented, “I think that to the extent that people create specialty courts that are supposed to get people services in an environment where there’s a shortage of these services, ... and where the courts bring no new services to the community, they’re all window dressing, they’re all window dressing.” Another observed, “one thing that I think is interesting about these courts is that it does create the opportunity for creating more services ... most of the time it doesn’t, but I think that increasingly, people are understanding that [alternatives to incarceration] don’t work

because there aren't appropriate services available, so I think that what it does is ... it highlights the need for better services and so I think it brings innovation and funding to create services that weren't there before. I think that's what's going to happen."

Participants continued to discuss services in this context as well. One remarked, "there's an argument that's been made in defense of mental health courts many times ... that focusing judges on deficits in the community mental health system would bring a new political constituency who can demand reforms of the mental health system ... but I don't see it happening." Another participant agreed that "there is a potential for it," although she "[does not] see it happening anywhere."

In fact, some mandated programs that have been offered through the criminal courts have been cut recently. A representative from one of the District Attorney's offices referred positively to a program that was several months in length and "had training for women on self-respect, drug rehab, health issues including HIV and other STDs ... and if they completed the program with no further arrest," the conviction was removed from their record. The program received City funding, but its funding has been cut and it no longer operates. Another court-mandated program which does not provide intensive counseling and support but which is nonetheless a useful resource for sex workers is also in danger of having its funding cut.

Violence from Customers or Other Street Personalities

Participants discussed prostitutes who experience violence and police response to it, saying that police are not open to sex workers' complaints, and acknowledging that sometimes the police themselves engage in violence against prostitutes. One provider commented on the difficulty of persuading sex workers to report violence to the authorities. She said that she "has never taken a woman to the police because she'd been beaten up ... women don't really come to [us] about this - prostitutes feel that they're prostitutes, so they don't deserve that help." Another advocate says that it is "so difficult to get [prostitutes] to come forward when they experience violence, and this is across the board, women, men, transgender women, everyone." "It doesn't matter if it's rape or sexual assault, a beating or a mugging, they don't report it to anyone. They're afraid to ask for help."

Another participant said that "[prostitutes] know from past experience, their own or from their friends, that police will say something [negative] to them, or threaten to arrest them, even though they're the victim." One provider noted that it can be frustrating to try to have a prostitute who has been beaten or raped assert her rights because "they just don't trust that the system will work for them."

This feeling is substantiated in one provider's eyes because "there's an evidentiary rule ... that can allow for past conviction for prostitution to be used against a rape victim. How much of a chance do you have when this stuff is written into the law?"

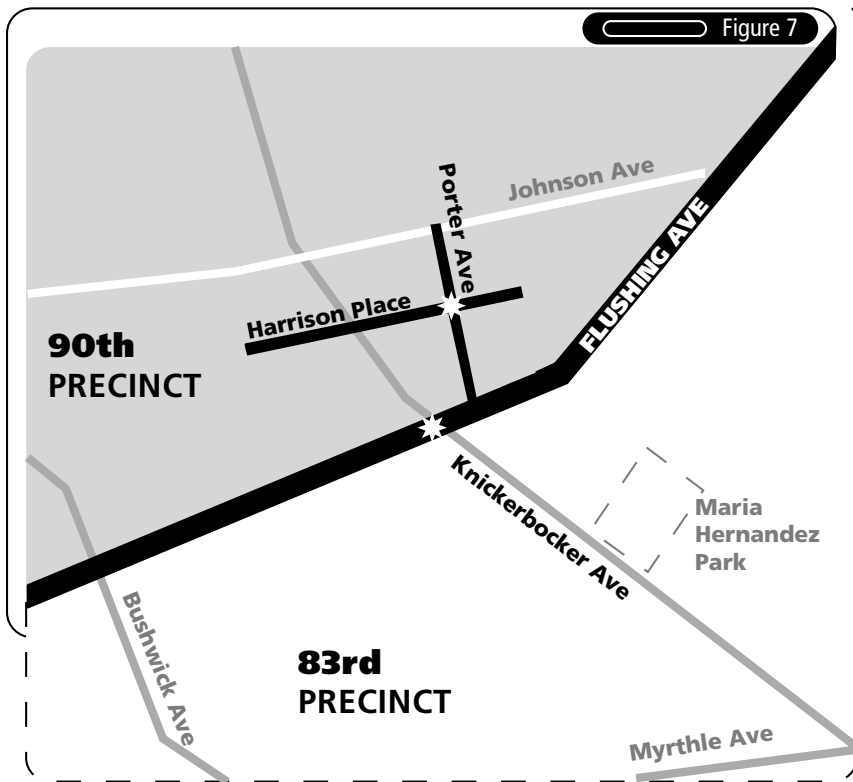
Participants stated that it is "critical" for police to "send a message" that they will respond appropriately to prostitutes who experience violence, even if the perpetrator is another police officer. They agreed that ignoring such complaints creates opportunities for people to engage in further violence against this population, whom some may see as "easy targets" because of police neglect.

Interference with Public Health Outreach Efforts

Service providers described police interference with public health projects that distribute condoms and other tools of harm reduction, sometimes including food. Reported interference included threats of arrest, false arrests, repeated pulling over of outreach vehicles, and harassment of project staff.

One project manager described project vehicles being pulled over on a nightly basis and being asked subsequent questions unrelated to driving. An officer asked if they were selling drugs and attempted to enter the project vehicle. Officers frequently parked outside the outreach vehicle and told clients that they had to show identification to them.

Outreach staff members were threatened with arrest for soliciting after the officers explained that they "understand you are doing outreach." Indeed, one researcher was cautioned not to leave the site of one cooperating project even to buy a bottle of water because of the threat of arrest. This threat affects all women in a known prostitution area. While this sounds like an overreaction, the extreme police presence encouraged the researcher to act with caution. These incidents were documented in many parts of New York City, demonstrating systemic antagonism toward public health projects.



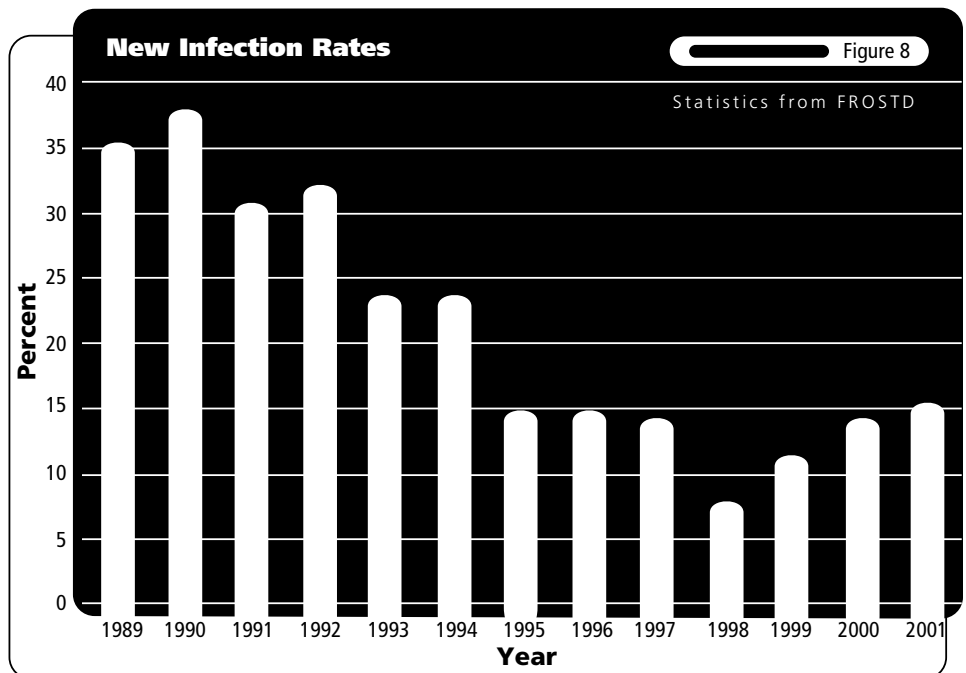
One participant observed that “one of the most extreme results of police harassment is the false arrests of these outreach workers.”

A participant expressed her concern, saying, “These practices of intimidating people into showing identification and threatening arrest are outside the boundaries of appropriate and legal law enforcement methods.” “Police stopping and questioning of outreach clients discourages people from taking advantage of these services.” In fact, it is critical to note that since early 2002 many outreach projects, especially smaller ones with fewer resources, have changed the areas in which they conduct outreach or have abandoned outreach efforts altogether as a result of police interference. Such small programs are critical to HIV prevention, because outreach workers are often demographically similar to their target populations, and therefore have

the ability to connect with them and to encourage them to engage in safe behaviors. However, these similarities also invite police interference. Another advocate said, “because many of the outreach workers are marginalized themselves, it only makes them more vulnerable to the police.” “Several of the public health outreach programs that I have been in contact with are made up of LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender] youth of color - one of the communities most targeted by the police.” She continued, “of the outreach workers that I have spoken to who have been falsely arrested, the large majority have been youth - specifically LGBT youth.” This advocate noted, “I’d say that all of [the programs] have at one point had problems with the police.” When asked to elaborate what this advocate meant by “problems,” she stated, “basically, harassment.”

Another provider said, “I think that asking police not to interfere with outreach efforts is very important though. It gets tricky when those being outreached to are, by definition, engaging in illegal activities. Regardless, I think the police/outreach worker interactions could be handled much more diplomatically on law enforcement’s end. This would entail them being on board and supporting the efforts of outreach workers and understanding the impact of their presence during outreach activities.”

A few programs reported not experiencing police harassment. Participants from one such program explained that the precinct is very close to their program’s building, and outreach workers visit the precinct “every few months” ... “we go to the precinct and introduce ourselves . . . and we make sure we always have our ID’s on us.” It should be noted that other projects that have



experienced a great deal of harassment have engaged in similar cooperative methods, such as visiting the precinct and wearing ID, but these practices have not been helpful to their programs. One participant from this program that has a positive relationship with police did observe that “they [the police] do watch us talking to the prostitutes ... if they don’t know you, then they think you are one of the prostitutes.”

The most extreme example of police harassment of public health projects reported in the course of this research was harassment in the 90th Precinct in Brooklyn. Officers told women they were not allowed to walk down the street where outreach workers were, and that the street was off limits to them.

The consequence of police harassment on outreach programs is severe. One frightening effect of this intimidation may be a rise in HIV rates among street-based sex workers. Data from one program, FROSTD, indicates a consistent decline in rates of HIV among street-based sex workers in New York City from the beginning of tracking HIV until 1997 (Wallace, Alexander, Wiener, Horn & Montanez 1998). However, more recent data from FROSTD (Wallace, Weiner and Lorber 2002) demonstrates an increase in rates of HIV among street-based sex workers since 1999. This increase is concurrent with new law enforcement approaches to prostitution including quality of life operations. It is difficult not to conclude that law enforcement interference with public health projects have interfered with public health. Considering the gravity of the HIV pandemic, it is essential that law enforcement should assist public health efforts rather than obstruct them.

In the words of one advocate, “The increase in rates of HIV is a dangerous trend ... police need to make all efforts to assist public health projects, and projects addressing HIV and AIDS, rather than [engage in] harassment.”

Organized Prostitution Networks and Pimps

Some City officials and participants suggest that stereotypical “pimp” relationships resemble situations of domestic violence. One advocate thinks that prostitutes who have pimps tend to be younger or part of more organized networks, while another said that it is “more rare [for providers] to see prostitutes who have pimps,” and thinks it “may be because pimps have more of a hold, more control on these women, so they don’t access services or assistance when they encounter it.” One advocate talked about women who work in what look like “organized networks” and are analogous to domestic violence victims, where “they have relationships with pimps in which he exerts power and control over her.” She continued, saying that “again, arresting her [the prostitute] is not helpful, but providing her with access to domestic violence services is.”

One participant remarked, “there is something so sad to me about a woman, younger or older, who goes out and works all night to make her money, and then she turns it over to some guy, who decides where it goes. There is something not right going on there.”

These participants thought that arrest of such prostitutes was not useful, because “women get out and go back to their pimps. It makes more sense to assess whether there is some domestic violence situation going on and refer the woman out [to appropriate services.]”

One City administrator has noticed the psychological aspect even with some “high-end” prostitutes that are dependent on their pimps, commenting, “it’s a domestic violence type of relationship.”

This research shows that street-based sex workers in New York City experience a number of severe problems, including but not limited to:

- excessive police contact
- violence at the hands of customers and sometimes police officers
- lack of housing and intensive supporting services which could assist them in staying off the street.

The failure to address these problems is an obstacle to the goal of finding a long-term, viable, and humane solution to the problems that face street-based sex workers. Current policy and law enforcement efforts are not effective, as indicated by the cycle of arrests that prostitutes experience. At best, they temporarily remove people from the street and garner headlines. Only targeted and substantial programs will accomplish the goals of making the streets safe for everyone.

Not everyone would agree that this population represents a priority among those in greatest need, especially during the current citywide fiscal crisis. However, the City administration, police, and residents in some neighborhoods continue to prioritize control of street-based sex workers (either directly or through quality of life initiatives.) Unfortunately, the methods chosen, involving a cycle of arrests and ticketing, consume police, court and other government resources but fail to create any appropriate long-term solution. Furthermore, to the extent that law enforcement responds to neighborhood residents complaints about street-based prostitution and want people off the streets, this goal should be balanced against the harm done by sweeps and carried out in a way that is humane and will support people who currently live on the margins of society to move into self-sufficiency.

Street-based sex workers in this sample of thirty were largely members of racial and ethnic minorities living in poverty. 28 subjects were women, 3 of whom were transgender women, and 2 were men. All were adults. While the data in this report cannot be generalized to the population of street-based sex workers at large, the similarities in the respondents' reports and the fact that their reports are reinforced and echoed by statements of service providers and advocates, gives the researchers confidence that the data presented reflect systemic phenomena and are not anecdotal.

Street-based sex workers experience a great deal of violence, from customers, from other street personalities, and sometimes even from police. The majority of subjects that we interviewed had been threatened with violence or had experienced violence from customers; some had also experienced violence at the hands of police. Moreover, the nature of their situation gave them little recourse or hope of remedy: street-based sex workers feel that they have almost no options in terms of reporting violence or pursuing justice on their own behalf, and the vast majority never complain to the authorities. Police behavior has encouraged this fatalistic view by generally failing to take such complaints seriously. While we see this widespread indifference on the part of the police as a serious problem in and of itself, we also note the existence of laudable instances of positive police responses, which we feel could act as models for best police practices. Regrettably, such positive responses are still relatively uncommon.

Street-based sex workers also experience a great deal of contact with police which they do not initiate. A majority of subjects reported near-daily contact with police, even they were engaging in legal activity and trying to accomplish daily tasks. This contact often leads to harassment and arrest or ticketing, even where no probable cause exists. These cycles of arrest create a "revolving door" approach to justice in which frequent arrests result in the subject repeatedly going in and out of the court system, spending nights at Rikers Island or in court pens at enormous expense, and coming back out only to face the same situation. This repetitive cycle offers no possibility of lasting change or benefit to either the prostitutes or to the community. Moreover, it is hugely expensive in at least two important respects. First, police efforts, court operations and the cost of incarceration are very costly in monetary terms, using up scarce funds that could more usefully be used to provide stable housing and in-depth services. Second, there is a very significant human cost associated with criminalizing people who could instead be helped to become self-sufficient at far lower public expense.

Law enforcement is responsive to the concerns and complaints of neighborhood residents. It must be remembered, however, that prostitutes are also members of the community and entitled to the same basic consideration as anyone else. Whatever measures are adopted must balance the desire for order against the harm done by indiscriminate sweeps and fiercely-repressive measures. In all cases, enforcement should be humane and the final goal should be not to punish or suppress but to support and assist people who currently live on the margins of society in such a

way as to aid them to move towards self-sufficiency.

Prostitutes are not the only targets of law enforcement activity. Public health outreach projects that distribute condoms and other tools of harm reduction, sometimes including food, also experience problems from police interference. Some projects have shifted their working areas or even abandoned the work altogether due to police harassment. Such interference is counter to federally- and locally-funded public health initiatives to combat the spread of HIV and AIDS, hepatitis and other sexually transmitted and needle-borne infections. Moreover, not only is police harassment of legitimate outreach program inappropriate, by denying access to health and educational services it may also play a role in increasing the risk of HIV and other infections for street-based sex workers and their customers.

Street-based sex workers are a marginalized, transient, and difficult-to-reach population, especially when they are driven underground because of increasing arrests and police sweeps. They urgently need help in the form of properly case-managed, intensive and seamless services spanning such areas as substance abuse treatment; mental health and counseling/support; job training; money management; and healthcare. They also need long-term, stable housing situations. But many prostitutes are reluctant to seek help, because of the stigma associated with prostitution, or because services are not flexible and tailored to their specific needs. Prostitutes also may not see themselves as ready for services because of their problems with substance dependency, or they may lack confidence that any change in their lifestyle might improve their situation.

Within the general population of street-based sex workers, there are sub-populations who have additional special needs. Many prostitutes who are mothers and have lost or are in danger of losing custody of their children place a high priority on restoring ties with their children. Some want to re-gain custody once they are in a position to care for their children, but such family reunification is impossible without stable housing. Transgender women face specific additional problems of harassment and violence and may have additional difficulties in existing at survival level, over and above the problems that they already face as members of this population.

It is not clear that mandating services, at least in their present form, is a useful policy. Arrests did not lead to the provision of useful and appropriate services for subjects in this sample. Currently, street-based sex workers who are mandated to services often fail to appear, therefore creating harsher criminal sanctions for themselves. Two issues appear to be at play. First, the services offered are often not meeting the needs of the target population. They do not address the fact that people need intensive housing and services, especially those who are substance abusers or are marginally housed, and that this population needs such services to be provided simultaneously and for a substantial amount of time. Second, many people simply are not ready to seek services, especially for drug treatment, and will not do so even when forced under the threat of facing incarceration.

In addition to their needs with respect to housing, health and other related issues, street-based sex workers also have specific legal needs that must be addressed in order to create stable lives, especially with respect to criminal and child welfare issues. As a population, they generally lack knowledge of the law and of how to pursue their legal rights.

Street-based sex workers have limited job opportunities outside of sex work, and almost no access to employment that offers a living wage. The majority of subjects had held many different jobs in the past, and the majority of those respondents cited unlivable wages in other work. Other occupations held by subjects were usually low-paid, entry-level positions that did not provide enough money to live. Choice of street-based sex work is an aspect of a broader issue of economic justice and the lack of real economic options for earning a living wage among people from economically-marginalized communities.

From our interviews of city officials and service providers, it emerged that stereotypical “pimp” relationships resemble situations of domestic violence, where the “pimp” has a certain amount of psychological control over a prostitute. Such control may make it difficult for prostitutes who work on the street in organized networks to access and take advantage of services. Therefore, arrest may not be the most useful tool of getting these prostitutes off the street or of assisting them. It may be more appropriate and effective to treat them in the same way as other victims of domestic violence, rather than arresting them.

In order to address the problem of street-based prostitution, it is critical that the City explore policies that offer an alternative to the current cycle of arrests. Favoring and expanding more humane policies can create an environment where street-based prostitutes are empowered to come forward when they experience violence, and where this marginalized population can have a sustained opportunity to move beyond an existence in which they are barely surviving.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on findings derived from this research, including the recommendations suggested to the researchers by the subjects themselves, and from service providers and advocates. They address ways to achieve humane and realistic treatment of street-based sex workers in New York City, and to revamp “revolving door” justice. The recommendations first address the need for public discussion of this issue. They further address housing, followed by programs and services, and finally, a wide range of criminal justice practices. The researchers chose to present recommendations in this order because criminal justice policies and practices relating to this population may be shaped by the availability of services and by public discussion on the issue. Relevant criminal justice policies and practices include: police interaction with prostitutes; mandated services; violence against prostitutes; interference with public health outreach efforts; and organized prostitution networks and pimps. Finally, the researchers recommend areas for further research and inquiry.

As long as the City administration, police, and residents in some neighborhoods continue to apply their methods of control on this population (either directly or through quality of life initiatives), it is essential that the voices of street-based sex workers themselves and of service providers and advocates familiar with their concerns be an influential part of this debate. At a minimum, the criminal justice system must promote harm reduction policies that coordinate with public health initiatives, and be a primary force in combating the constant violence faced by street-based sex workers.

Public Discussion

Based on these findings, which include the needs and concerns of women and men from the target population, this report recommends an informed and fact-based public discussion and further inquiry to erase the idea that prostitution is merely a criminal justice issue, and to find ways for police to be productive in ensuring the safety of sex workers.

Housing

The lack of any stable housing situation is a major factor contributing to the precarious situations in which street-based sex workers live. Homelessness creates a cycle of deepening impoverishment that may be almost impossible to escape. The lack of a fixed address or a telephone hinders attempts to find other employment. The high cost of even substandard short-stay accommodation imposes a financial burden that may be hard to meet without resorting to the “fast money” offered by illegal activities such as prostitution. Temporary accommodation creates an environment that is often not conducive to resolving other contributory problems such as substance dependency. Physical or mental illness resulting from the stress, discomforts and dangers of homelessness carry additional personal and financial costs that make it harder to break the cycle.

Housing must be addressed as one of the fundamental problems affecting this population. We offer the following recommendations:

- Create transitional shelters that are similar to domestic violence shelters, but which specifically serve street-based sex workers. Such specific shelters for prostitutes should be able to house residents for extended periods, with shelter staff assisting residents in finding and moving into permanent long-term housing. It is critical that this population, because they often operate at such a low threshold, has a safe place where they will not feel stigmatized and which will ultimately allow them to move into permanent housing. The shelters must provide on-site counselors who can concurrently provide case management and multiple services. By meeting their accommodation needs, shelters may remove the financial burden associated with short-stay accommodation and thus reduce the incentive to engage in prostitution. Another advantage of modeling such shelters on those that exist for victims of domestic violence is that sex workers can meet others who are experiencing similar problems and, like domestic violence survivors, create peer support structures for each other. Small shelters have an advantage in that they can be established without undue concern for zoning or political requirements.
- Create similar shelters which specifically serve transgender women. Because of the unique discrimination that transgender women face, it is critical that those who are working in prostitution or at risk of doing so have shelters where they will feel accepted and welcome. The provision of specific shelters is particularly important in

the case of transgender women, who are currently excluded from domestic violence shelters.

- Explore a “housing first” model for street-based sex workers who receive SSI or cash assistance. In a “housing first” model, clients pay a percentage of their income - 30 percent is common - towards the rent, and public assistance programs act as representative payees for them. These housing programs have the advantage that they create a stable home directly, rather than forcing the users to go through a transitional shelter first. They also allow for the provision of individualized case management activities and services within the home. This would allow prostitutes to obtain permanent and stable housing as a prelude to obtaining other services. Once again, meeting their housing needs creates an incentive for prostitutes to stop working on the street, because it reduces the immediate demand for cash to pay for temporary accommodation. Making an agency a representative payee is critical for two reasons: first, it allows the program to operate financially; and second, it makes clients accountable to the program, thus allowing the agency to dissuade them from dealing drugs or engaging in sex work in the agency-sponsored apartment.

- It is critical to create federal, state, and local government funding streams and to redirect money from incarceration to support these housing programs for street-based sex workers. Programs focused specifically on sex workers are definitely required: while many street-based prostitutes may be eligible for housing programs focused on other populations, such as the homeless, substance abusers, or those with psychiatric disabilities, the stigma and the wide range of unique issues that they face means that their housing needs must be treated specially.

Programs and Services

We have the following recommendations for programs and services targeting this population.

- Create and expand desperately-needed intensive case management and seamless services for street-based prostitutes. Necessary services include substance abuse treatment; mental health and counseling/support; job training; money management; and healthcare. It is critical to address all the issues in an integrated, intensive and long-term manner, combined with long-term and permanent housing.

- Services for street-based sex workers should be combined with street outreach programs, and the ability to offer an immediate place to stay. Because many people within this population are marginalized and transient, it is important to connect with them whenever there is an immediate window of opportunity.

- Programs that serve sex workers must maintain realistic and flexible hours that reflect the schedules of the target population.

- Service providers must train their program staff to be sensitive and open to street-based sex workers. Furthermore, staff must be trained to understand the stigma and discrimination to which this population is exposed, and their consequent fear of seeking help. Service providers must treat prostitutes with respect, and serve or refer them to necessary programs as appropriate so that they do not fall through the system.

- It is critical to create steady federal, state, and local government funding streams for these service programs for street-based sex workers, redirecting money from funds for incarceration as appropriate. While street-based prostitutes may be eligible for service programs focused on other populations, such as the homeless, substance abusers, or those with psychiatric disabilities, the specific character of the problems that they face, including the stigma attached to their occupation, means that their needs require additional, special attention.

Criminal Justice Policy

Police Interaction with Prostitutes

- Policy makers should carefully consider the extent to which they make prostitution a criminal justice priority, especially in a period of budgetary crisis. They should also consider the great amount of police abuse of authority reflected in this research. It is important to bear in mind that many in this population are barely surviving, and that measures designed to help them, including intensive housing and service-based methods may be not only more humane but also more effective than repressive actions in dealing with street-based prostitution.

- Police must stop engaging in arrests or ticketing of street-based sex workers where no probable cause exists. These false arrests violate the human rights of all persons who are in the neighborhood, including those who

are not engaging in illegal activity. Targets of false arrest may be “known prostitutes” who are simply walking in their own neighborhood and not working at all, or they may be people who have been wrongly profiled by police as a sex worker, simply on the basis of their age, race/ethnicity, gender, or gender identity. Such police behavior promotes the idea that the human rights of sex are limited or nonexistent. Second, they create and exacerbate a feeling of mutual distrust between police and already marginalized communities, and between police and service providers. Third, especially in these times of fiscal crisis, the City and police should not waste law enforcement resources on persons who are not committing a crime.

- Police should work with community-based organizations to utilize their contacts with prostitutes as an opportunity for needs assessment and referral to appropriate services. Rather than arrest a street-based prostitute, police should have community-based resources available, so that they can send a person who might otherwise be arrested to a housing-based program for needs assessment and treatment. At a minimum, an arrest should coincide with needs assessment and advocacy in criminal court for alternative sentencing to services. Community-based organizations can be valuable partners in such programs. These programs are modeled on police liaison programs and domestic violence precinct programs that incorporate victim advocacy into the police process.
- Arrest statistics are useful tools for government, community members, and advocates, as they inform all invested parties about significant problems and changes in street-related trends. Currently, arrest data that is disaggregated by age, race/ethnicity, gender and gender identity, and borough are not available. Furthermore, arrests are often reported as “prostitution-related offenses” and are not disaggregated by individual offense. NYPD should keep these records and make them available to the public, and report them to the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services.

Mandated Services

- It is not clear that mandating services, at least in their present form, is a useful policy. This report does not recommend mandating services at this time. There is a shortage of appropriate and intensive services, and even current court-ordered programs are having their funding cut. Furthermore, street-based sex workers who are not ready for treatment but who are mandated to services often fail to appear, therefore creating harsher criminal sanctions for themselves.
- These programs are not always appropriate for substance dependent or marginally-housed people. Many respondents in this sample had accepted community service or alternative sentencing; the mentally-ill and those with substance dependency will often accept whichever of the options presented releases them from police custody in the shortest possible time. Unfortunately, due to their disorganized living conditions and other problems, they frequently miss their assignments. In our study, substance-dependent street-based sex workers often also missed their court dates. When someone misses a desk appearance or assigned community service, arrest warrants are issued. The end result is that they sometimes receive a longer sentence because of missed responsibilities that lead to the issue of warrants. If services must be mandated, it would be more efficacious to offer an alternative sentence that could be completed immediately for these populations, and to ensure that people follow their court appearances by going directly to the mandated service or program from court.

Violence Against Prostitutes

- Whatever one’s feelings about sex work, no one should be willing to condone incidents of violence as described in this report. In no other occupation does society blame the victims of violence for acts committed against them so frequently. It is imperative that proper police training be provided, and that police adopt best practices for dealing with violence against prostitutes. Prostitutes must be made to feel that they can step forward and seek justice on their own behalf.
- Complaints by sex workers should be met with the same respect and regard that would be given to any other crime victim, and complaints must be addressed and investigated without penalty to these victims of violence, even when they were subjected to violence or attempted violence while committing prostitution or other illegal acts. It is critical that police assure prostitutes that they will not be investigated or arrested for illegal behavior if they come forward to report a crime of violence.
- Special attention must be given to police who commit violence or other crimes against prostitutes. These acts include sexual assault or abuse, sexual harassment, theft, and extortion of sexual services in exchange for not arresting the subject. Police leadership must make it known that they take such exploitation seriously. Police and

the courts must aggressively investigate and punish police officers who engage in sexual harassment or violence of any kind against sex workers.

- The involvement of service providers and community-based organizations is crucial in efforts to reduce violence against sex workers. Advocates, service providers and community-based organizations should act as liaisons and advocates to present sex worker complaints and evidence, and to assist with sensitivity training within the criminal justice system. Partly because of the stigma attached to their activities, and partly out of fear of arrest, prostitutes typically avoid the police and seldom turn to them, even in cases of extreme violence. It is unlikely that they will report such incidents themselves. In fact, unless police take violence against sex workers more seriously, this population will not even be able to place these complaints without additional support.
- Advocates and counselors at sexual assault and health care service providers must be trained to recognize sex workers, to treat them with dignity and earn their trust, and to refer and serve them as appropriate. This includes providing counseling and support, as well as advocating with police as necessary.
- Sex workers must learn more about laws that pertain to them and about their legal rights, especially regarding their rights when they are victims of violence. Many prostitutes do not understand the legal process. Legal rights education for sex workers should center on the criminal justice process, as well as their rights and options if they encounter violence or abuse, whether it is from customers, other street personalities, or police. There must be more efforts by sex workers themselves, lawyers, and service providers and advocates to create opportunities for education and dissemination of legal rights information.
- Community-based organizations and service providers must be better prepared to encounter hostility from police and other law and order forces and carry out their service programs for street sex workers in the areas where they are most needed.
- Community-based organizations and service providers can also be productive partners with police on violence issues by creating public education and awareness campaigns that would humanize sex workers and campaign against the violation of the human rights of sex workers. Community-based organizations and police can also establish ethical rules that would educate customers in advance, including awareness campaigns to convey the likelihood of encountering real and effective sanctions in the event of violations. This could then be added to “John School” curricula.
- It is critical to support the recommended law enforcement and joint advocate/law enforcement initiatives by creating federal, state, and local government funding streams, and by re-direct money from incarceration funding. Similar funding streams have been created to benefit victims of other forms of violence, including domestic violence, human trafficking, and sexual assault. Policies, best practices, and law enforcement programs focusing on sex workers need additional funding of their own, especially in light of the stigmatization of prostitutes, and the general climate of silence and fear that surrounds the problem of violence against prostitutes.
- The state should repeal NY CPL Section 60.42, which allows for the use of convictions for prostitution to be used as evidence for the defense in some sexual assault cases. Although respondents in this research did not specifically mention this statute, it is this type of legal practice that encourages stigma against sex workers, and increases the fear of not being believed or taken seriously.

Interference With Public Health Outreach Efforts

- Police must create and enforce best practices with respect to public health outreach projects that distribute condoms, food, and other tools of harm reduction. Interference such as threats of arrest, false arrests, and harassment of project staff must stop. It is unacceptable for police to engage in harassment and interference of these programs, which often operate under federally- and locally-funded public health initiatives to combat the spread of HIV and AIDS, hepatitis and other sexually transmitted and needle-borne infections. It is critical that police allow workers to engage in outreach to promote public health, to improve the health of sex workers, and to promote positive cooperation between police and service providers.

Organized Prostitution Networks And Pimps

- City officials and service providers who have had interactions with prostitutes in stereotypical “pimp” relationships say that they closely resemble situations of domestic violence. Rather than arresting street-based sex

workers who may be victims of domestic violence or be in an analogous abusive relationship, police, prosecutors, and domestic violence service providers should be trained to recognize such relationships and to refer such situations appropriate special units.

Recommendations for Further Inquiry

During the course of this research, the researchers encountered important and compelling issues which merit further inquiry, but were unable to pursue or include them due to the limited scope of inquiry in this report. Researchers hope to pursue these issues in future study.

- Subjects in this report did not report immigration status or issues as a problem, indicating that immigrant sex workers may be more likely to work indoors, a finding which could be extremely significant. A number of these sex workers may be victims of trafficking in persons. This area is ripe for exploration, addressing questions such as the locations where immigrant sex workers live and work, whether they have been trafficked into sex work, how they interact with and perceive law enforcement, and how they may best be reached and served.
- Another line of inquiry that merits further study is the experience of indoor sex workers with respect to police interaction, an understanding of whether they also operate at survival-level, and an assessment of their motivations and needs, both legal and non-legal.
- An additional area to investigate includes the study of sex workers in more organized networks, along with other street personalities. Gathering this data and interviewing personalities involved with organized crime presents specific difficulties, as noted by researchers' attempts to interview this population for this study, but it may be worthwhile for investigators to try to overcome these obstacles in order to learn more about this group.
- A critical area of proposed research is the continued documentation of police interference with public health outreach projects, and the impact of such behaviors on HIV rates.
- A different study would be expensive but useful: a large and proportionate mapping of the sex work industry in New York City so that policy-making could be done in a more targeted fashion. Similar studies were undertaken by numerous people regarding legal adult entertainment businesses when zoning was researched before its implementation in 1998 (Department of City Planning 1994, Task Force on the Regulation of Sex-Related Businesses 1994, Insight Associates 1994). Other useful research could be done via observational impact studies of various strategies to control sex work, using representative actual areas in a contemporaneous manner.
- Researchers found the employment histories of the subjects to be widely varied. It is interesting to observe that the majority of respondents had worked in many other industries and were unable to earn a living wage in these other sectors. It would be worth pursuing this line of inquiry to examine economic options available to this population in greater depth and to study alternative economic choices that might offer the population access to a living wage.
- The relationships that street-based sex workers have with their children, and the impact of sex work on the custody issue of their children, is another area of proposed study.
- More work might be done on a systematic comparative study of inside, outside and other types of sex work. The investigation would examine whether maximizing inside sex work would be a good harm reduction strategy and, if so, whether it is a viable strategy.

Appendix A - Interview Protocol

Interview # _____ Interviewer _____

Interview Date _____ Interview Location _____

SEX WORKERS PROJECT-URBAN JUSTICE CENTER

Interview Outline for Sex Workers, FALL 2002, SPRING 2003

GO THROUGH INFORMED CONSENT

INTERVIEW

Thank you for volunteering to be interviewed. We are going to cover a few different areas, including dealing with the police, housing and money situations, and your thoughts on the kind of help you would like to receive from different people or agencies.

POLICE

First, we would like to learn about your experience with the police. Have you had any run-ins with the police?

What kind of trouble? [LET SUBJECT ANSWER, THEN PROMPT]

Arrests-IF YES, ASK HOW MANY TIMES SHE HAS BEEN ARRESTED

Harassment

Violence

How often does this happen, in an average month?

Please tell me about the last time you were arrested. When and where was it? I'd like us to go through what happened step by step, from the initial police approach to your court appearance and court disposition. Please include:

Who was there when you were arrested?

Who else was arrested with you?

What were you doing, and with whom, when you were arrested?

Who arrested you?

Were they undercover?

Where were you taken after the arrest?

How did they get you there?

Where were you held after your arrest?

For how long at each location?

Did you spend any time in jail?

How long did you spend in jail?

What were you charged with?

Was what you were charged with an accurate description of what really happened?

IF NOT, what actually happened, and why do you think they reported it in that way?

How did you plead in court?

What was your sentence? [MAY ASK-“WHAT DID YOU GET?”]

What were your alternatives?

Why did you choose that plea?

Who, if anyone, advised you to make that plea?

Do you think that was the best choice for you in that situation?

Why/not?

Did you have a lawyer?

IF NOT: Why not?

IF YES:

Did you or friends pay a lawyer to represent you in court or did you have a court appointed attorney?

Tell us what the lawyer did for you.

Was your lawyer helpful, concerned, effective?

Did the lawyer defend you as well as you think you might have been defended if you were able to pay more?

What do you think your lawyer might have done for you in court that was not done?

DO YOU NEED OR WANT A LAWYER FOR ANY OTHER PROBLEMS?

What are they? [LET SUBJECT ANSWER, THEN PROMPT]

Housing

Domestic Violence or Family Law

ACS

Other Criminal

Immigration

Has the judge or DA ever offered you some kind of help as a result of an arrest or conviction?

What kind of help?

Was it useful? Did it give you any lasting help?

Why/not?

Did you want this help?

Tell me about the arrest experience that you remember most clearly.

RESPONSE TO POLICE INTERACTIONS

Now, I want to talk a little about how you deal with the police.

What do you do to avoid interference from the police?

How does this change the way you work-for example, changing your location, or the way you let men know you are looking for customers?

Have you had to shift out of certain neighborhoods because the police or the residents would threaten you with arrest or other harm if you continued?

What are you most worried about when you are arrested? [LET SUBJECT ANSWER, THEN PROMPT]

Effects on family/kids

Day job

Withdrawal/Drugs

INS

IF NOT WORRIED: Why not?

Please describe all the types of trouble you have had with the police: [LET SUBJECT ANSWER, THEN PROMPT]

Harassment/Threats

Violence/Beaten

Sexual situation

Did police pay you/discuss money?

Stealing your money

False arrest

Too many arrests

Forcing you to move to another area

What in your opinion makes the police more or less likely to arrest you?

Why are they more likely to arrest you at one point in time and in one set of circumstances, but not in others?

Is there a time of year, day of the week or time of day when the police are more likely to arrest or harass you or other sex workers?

What's the worst that has ever happened to you as a result of police activities?

Do you know of any Johns that have been arrested?

IF YES: Please describe any special circumstances that you believe might have resulted in the John's arrest.

Do you go to the police when you have trouble?

What kinds of trouble do you go to the police with, and what do they do about it?

Tell me about any good interactions with the police you have had.

Are they helpful when you have trouble, like with a threatening or abusive John, or one who tries to rob you?

Do you have trouble with people in the neighborhood where you work? [LET SUBJECT ANSWER, THEN PROMPT]

Boyfriends

Residents

Storeowners

Dealers/Gangs

Cops

Johns

WORKING

Now, I'd like to ask you some questions about working.

Do you usually work the same stroll, or do you try to change it around? Where? Why/not?

Do you see the same guys a lot?

How many of your customers are regulars?

How many strangers?

Do the customers usually come by in cars or on foot?

Do you ever have customers where you live, or go to where they live, without first arranging it on the street?

Have you ever worked off the street?

When in your life, for how long for each time, and what were the arrangements?

How often do you work off the streets these days?

Would you rather work on the streets or off the streets?

Why?

Where do you usually work/have sex: [LET SUBJECT ANSWER, THEN PROMPT]

Hotels

Brothel

Own Room

Cars

Parks or Alleys

Customer's residence

Other (Specify)

Of these places, where do you work the most, and then second most often?

How old were you when you first started working?

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS/FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Now, I'd like to ask you about current/recent living arrangements, and family.

Do you have a place where you stay most of the time?

What kind of place is it? [CAN PROMPT-APARTMENT, HOUSE, § 8, NYCHA]

Who else lives there?

Who pays the rent?

Number of Children: How many children do you have? How old are they now?

How many are:

Under 12

12-17

18-21

Adults

Who do your children live with now?

For how long has this been the case?

IF CHILDREN DO NOT LIVE WITH SEX WORKER IN THE SAME HOME:

What are the reasons for this arrangement?

What are your plans about your children?

Do any of your relatives help you out?

If so, how are they related to you?

What sorts of help do they provide?

MONEY

Now, I'd like to talk specifically about money.

What's the first thing you pay for with your money?

Do you share your money with someone when you make it?

Who?

What's your relationship with him/her?

How much of what you make do you share?

Does this person/people help you out in any way? [LET SUBJECT ANSWER, THEN PROMPT]

How?

Finding Johns

Protecting you w/Johns or cops

How much does he/she help you?

Is there anyone else you share your money with?

Who?

How much?

How often?

Do you worry about any of these people threatening or hurting you?

Who?

Why/not?

Do you owe anyone money, or did you in the past, but you paid it off? Please explain.

How much?

To whom?

For what?

Any for legal expenses or protection money?

Do you owe large amounts for any other reasons? Please explain.

By when are you supposed to pay the loans back, in what installments?

What will happen to you if you do not pay on time?

Do you have any other income beside what you get from customers?

How much/for what kind of work?

How often?

How much/from whom for support or for other reasons?

What are your main expenses? [CAN PROMPT: rent, food, clothes, child support, other (specify)]

How much do you spend on drugs per day?

What type of drugs?

Pot

Cocaine

Heroin

Booze

Other (Specify)

Were you using any drugs when you began to do this work?

Did you get into the work because of drugs?

Do you stay in the work because of drugs?

Do you pay cash for your drugs or have some other arrangement?

Do you have a nightly or weekly goal of how much money you want to make when you work?

How much?

Did you make that the last time you worked?

What happens when you don't make that goal?

How many nights last week did you do this work?

Did you make your goal?

COMPARING THIS WORK TO OTHER WORK

Now, I want to talk about other types of jobs you've had.

What other types of work have you done/are you doing on a regular basis in your life?

Did you make enough to live on, doing this [above-mentioned] work?

What's the best job you ever had?

What's the worst job you ever had?

Why did you choose to do sex work rather than the other work you have done in the past?

Why do you stay in the work?

What are your other job choices?

Under what conditions would you change your work, if any?

STAYING IN OR LEAVING THE WORK

This part is about your thoughts and concerns about working, and future plans.

Do you think that you'll stay in sex-related work?
For how long?
Do you want to look for other types of work?

How are you going to do that?

What would help you do this?

What, if any, are your plans for the future?

How do you plan to achieve them?

What will it take to achieve them?

What are the difficulties in making a living from sex work?

What is the hardest thing for you about this work?

Would you like to leave sex work?

What are the difficulties in leaving the work?

What sorts of changes would you need to take place in your life for you to be able to leave sex work?

Do you wish that there were people who could help you make these changes? Please describe.

If someone wants to leave the work, what kinds of help do you think would actually help them do it?

Have you had any trouble at any time with:
Immigration
Drugs/Alcohol
Domestic violence

If you stay in this work, what do you think your life will be like ten years from now?
Why?

Do you consider the sex work you do dangerous?

More dangerous than other things you have done for a living? Please explain.

CUSTOMERS [TRICKS/JOHNS]

Have you ever been robbed by a john?

How often has this happened?

Can you describe what happened?

Have you ever been forced to do anything by a john that you did not want to do?

What was it? Can you tell me what happened?

If it happens frequently, please give some common examples.
Have you ever been threatened or beaten up as a sex worker?

How often?

By whom? [NO NAMES-CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE]

What happened? [CAN GIVE MOST RECENT OR MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE]

[PROMPT-DID YOU REPORT TO POLICE?]

SAFETY/STRESS ISSUES

What safety precautions do you try to take to protect yourself from beatings, robberies and other forms of assault?

How well do you think these precautions have worked?

If you intend to continue in this work, what types of help would make it less dangerous and difficult for you to earn a living as a sex worker? [LET SUBJECT ANSWER, THEN PROMPT]

By police?

By courts?

By social workers?

By johns?

By pimps?

By changing the laws?

By sex workers together?

If it was legal to be a sex worker, do you think things would be much different?

IF NO: Why not?

IF YES: In what ways, and why?

What types of help do you believe would be most useful to you if you remain a sex worker?

What changes in the law or police practices about sex work, short of legalization, would make your life less hard?

Is there something I have missed asking you in this interview that you would be kind enough to share with me?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Of everything that we talked about, what do you think we should include in the report that we're going to write?

What was the most important thing that we talked about today?

Do you want to see the report when it's done? If you do and you have a way for us to get it to you, we will try. We can bring or mail copies. We can also give you the web address where it will be posted. Writing the report is still months away, but we would be interested to know what you think of it, and will include a way you can let us know your views.

Demographics:

Sex:

Age:

Ethnicity:

Where born:

Native language:

Years in USA: (Immigrant status)

Years in NYC:

Number of Children:

Years in sex work as:

[ALSO ASK WHEN SUBJECT WORKED IN EACH AREA, BY YEAR]

A. Street sex worker

B. Call girl

C. Brothel/Parlor

D. Telephone arrangements for outcalls-where they call you, and you go to meet John.

E. Other sex work: for example, phone, etc.

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