

# Opposing sexual exploitation of women: an overview of access in three Ontario cities to sites for the sexual exploitation of women

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## Summary

With the goal of informing the population of Ontario about sexual exploitation of women and girls and the risks women would face in the event of legalization or full decriminalization of prostitution, Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes (AOcVF) was interested in determining how easily sites for sexual exploitation could be accessed.

We therefore undertook an exploratory study in three Ontario cities: Hawkesbury, Sudbury and downtown Toronto. The author of this document also searched newspapers and explored Internet search engines accessible to the public. In these three cities, she also interviewed community front line workers, police officers and directors of agencies that support women.

The results show that sexual exploitation of women is very present in Ontario. We located close to 200 prostitution sites that are easily accessible, where the bodies of women and girls are bought and sold in these three locations in Ontario. The exploratory study also highlights other significant issues including abuse of women in vulnerable situations, difficulties faced by women who wish to get out of prostitution and finally, the close relationship between prostitution and human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in Ontario.

Neither decriminalizing nor legalizing prostitution can ensure women's safety because in prostitution the fundamental cause of violence, as in all other forms of sexist violence, is the power imbalance between men and women. Conscious of the devastating consequences of the exploitation of women in the prostitution industry, we should as a society insist on the assurance of a better future for Canadian women in accordance with their rights to freedom, equality and security.





## 1. Introduction

Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes (AOcVF) is a provincial organization whose mandate is networking and training for front line workers, creation of material and development of French language services to address both partner violence and sexual assault. AOcVF is a member of the Women's Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution, a coalition working to bring an end to sexual exploitation of women and girls. The six other members of the Coalition are: the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres, the Native Women's Association of Canada, the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, the *Concertation des luttes contre l'exploitation sexuelle*, the *Regroupement québécois des centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel* and the Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter.

The Coalition takes an abolitionist approach to prostitution, that is, decriminalizing women in prostitution and maintaining criminalization of johns and pimps. The Coalition is of the opinion that prostitution is a form of violence against women, that it exploits the most vulnerable women and that it undermines women's rights to equality and security. This is why the Coalition is opposed to the legalization or full decriminalization of prostitution.

The position for the legalization of prostitution includes establishing norms to regulate prostitution because prostitution would be inevitable. Laws would be expected to control the negative effects of prostitution. These could include the obligation to register, to undergo medical examinations, to declare income, etc. The position for decriminalization of prostitution lobbies for suppression of all the *Criminal Code* articles that relate to prohibiting or limiting prostitution, meaning no laws would exist to regulate prostituted women or clients or persons who live on the avails of prostitution. Prostitution would thus be considered a choice and would be regulated by the same labour laws as other jobs. Neither of these two approaches takes into account the violent nature of prostitution nor do they take into account the fact that this violence is intrinsically linked to social and economic inequalities between men and women.

In June 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada heard arguments from various parties concerning the decision made by the Court of Appeal for Ontario in the case of Terri Jean Bedford, Amy Lebovitch and Valerie Scott. These women had asked that the current provisions of the law regulating prostitution be eliminated, citing the right to security as found in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. This would permit them to legally run brothels, where according to them, prostituted women would be safer. The Attorney General of Canada and the Attorney General of Ontario are appealing the decision before the Supreme Court. The Coalition obtained permission to have its arguments heard, arguments counter to those of Mss. Bedford, Lebovitch and Scott.

In the decision to come from the Supreme Court, there are a number of probable scenarios:

- the Supreme Court could be of the same mind as the trial court, that is, the Superior Court of Ontario, and declare the provisions of the law unconstitutional. The effect of this would be that solicitation, running brothels and living from the avails of prostitution would no longer be prohibited;
- the Supreme Court could be of the same mind as the Court of Appeal for Ontario. Keeping brothels and living from the avails of prostitution (except in the case of exploitation) would no longer be prohibited. However, street solicitation would remain prohibited;
- the Supreme Court could have a completely different interpretation of the right to security and other rights.

As soon as the decision is rendered, Parliament will most likely want to rewrite the laws governing prostitution in order to make changes to regulations governing activities linked to prostitution. Nonetheless, faced with all these possibilities, the Coalition firmly believes that the rights to equality and security of all Canadian women are at risk of being affected.

Front line workers in French language sexual assault centres in Ontario work directly with women who are involved in prostitution. For over ten years they have analyzed the effects of maintaining current laws, legalization or decriminalization of prostitution using an intersectional<sup>1</sup> feminist analysis of the phenomenon of violence against women. Together they listened to women, studied the literature and reflected about how to best preserve the constitutional rights of all Canadian women as well as acquired rights gained through various international conventions such as the *International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, the *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* and the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women*.

In 2008, AOcVF published a document entitled *Prostitution: Violating the Human Rights of Poor Women*. This document by Shelagh Day was helpful to AOcVF member agencies, providing them with information on the issues related to prostitution and the possible impacts of various legislative changes. The nine French language sexual assault centres in Ontario: Oasis Centre des femmes in Toronto, Centre Victoria pour femmes in Sudbury, Centre Novas in Prescott-Russell, Carrefour des femmes francophones du Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario, Colibri Centre des femmes of Simcoe County, CALACS francophone d'Ottawa, Centre des femmes francophones du Nord-Ouest de l'Ontario, Centre de santé communautaire de Hamilton et Niagara, and Centre Passerelle pour femmes du Nord de l'Ontario – were unanimously in favour of an abolitionist approach to prostitution. Many francophone women's shelters and other programs that address violence against women in Ontario support the decision of these sexual assault centres.

With the goal of informing the people of Ontario about sexual exploitation of women and girls and the risks to women in the event of legalization or full decriminalization of prostitution, AOcVF was

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<sup>1</sup> An intersectorial or intersectional feminist analysis framework provides an understanding of how diverse situations combine with discriminatory practices to produce and maintain inequality against women. See the text of Oxman-Martinez, J. and J. Krane. 2005. "Un décalage entre théorie et pratique? Violence conjugale et femmes issues des minorités ethniques". *Le Journal International De Victimologie*: 10, 3. Accessed July 12 2007 [http://www.jidv.com/OXMAN-MARTINEZ-J-JIDV2005\\_10.htm](http://www.jidv.com/OXMAN-MARTINEZ-J-JIDV2005_10.htm)

interested in finding out how easily sites for sexual exploitation can be accessed. Beginning with the hypothesis that prostitution is widespread even with current laws, the Supreme Court decision could result in increased access to prostitution and in consideration of prostitution as a “job like any other” for women.

AOcVF therefore proceeded to conduct a preliminary exploration with a survey in three Ontario cities: Hawkesbury, Sudbury and downtown Toronto. The author of this document also did a time limited search of newspapers and Internet search engines accessible to the public. In addition, she held interviews in the three cities with community front line workers, police officers and directors of agencies that support women.

This brief exploratory study shows that sexual exploitation of women is very present in Ontario. It occurs in multiple locations that are easily accessible, where the bodies of women and girls are bought and sold. We specify “women and girls” because the average age of those entering into prostitution in Canada is 14 years<sup>2</sup>, which means that a large number of prostituted persons are in fact minors.

The study also highlights other significant issues including abuse of women in vulnerable situations, the difficulties faced by women who wish to get out of prostitution and finally, the close connection between prostitution and human trafficking for sexual exploitation in Ontario.

Recognizing the limits of this study, we do not consider this research on prostitution in Ontario as exhaustive. However, we do wish to contribute to a better understanding of the impacts of possible legislative changes on communities and on the rights of Ontario women, in particular those who are most vulnerable and most susceptible of being recruited into prostitution.

In this report on the sexual exploitation of women, we shall first establish some facts about prostitution. We will then describe the methodology used in the study to collect data about the prostitution

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<sup>2</sup> Poulin, Richard. 2007. “Chapitre 2 — Mondialisation des industries du sexe, crime organisé et prostitution: Éléments d’une sociologie de la production “prostitutionnelle”.” *L’agression sexuelle : Coopérer au-delà des frontières*, Cifas 2005. Montréal: Cifas-Institut Philippe-Pinel de Montréal, p. 40.

sites. Thirdly, we will present the results obtained in the study in each of the chosen locations and fourthly we shall analyze the collected data. Finally we will propose recommendations and courses of action for the lawmakers, for the ministries responsible for social and correctional services as well as for agencies that deal with sexual assault.

## 2. What is prostitution

### 2.1 It is violence against women

Violence against women is the consequence of the power imbalance between men and women. Given the inequalities that continue to exist, prostitution cannot be considered simply as a sexual service in exchange for money without taking into account the power imbalance between the john and the prostituted person. In the world of prostitution, men hold the power and decide what sexual acts will take place. In the world of prostitution,

women's choice of pleasures and partners has been constrained by male desires, by male control and male violence<sup>3</sup>.

In these situations of constraint and control, violence quickly manifests itself. In a study conducted in nine countries, Canada being one, Farley *et al.* interviewed 854 persons recently active in prostitution, including 100 women in Canada. We can infer from the following table that Canadian women participants have experienced many forms of violence in prostitution<sup>4</sup> :

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<sup>3</sup> Day, Shelagh. 2008. *Prostitution, Violating the Human Rights of Poor Women*. Ottawa: Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Farley, Melissa *et al.* 2003. "Prostitution and Trafficking in Nine Countries: an Update on Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder." *Journal of Trauma Practice*: 2(3/4), p. 33–35.

<b>Canada (100 respondents)</b>	
Threatened with a weapon during prostitution activities	67 %
Physically assaulted during prostitution activities	91 %
Raped during prostitution activities	76 %
(Among those who were raped) raped more than 5 times	67 %
Experienced attempts to have them do what had been viewed in pornography scenes	64 %
Pornography scenes were filmed while they were engaged in prostitution	67 %
Diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome	74 %

Not only do women who are active in prostitution experience multiple forms of violence, but violence is also part of the supply system. As mentioned by Geadah, violence does not only appear with prostitution because in reality, it

is part of the sex trade supply system through incest, rape and abuse of all kinds that drive thousands of women and children into prostitution.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, once they are integrated into the prostitution system, women risk becoming victims of violence perpetrated not only by johns who believe anything is permitted because they pay for these “services”, but also by pimps. In fact, pimps use physical, sexual or psychological violence to maintain women in their hold, under their control and under their domination. This coercion occurs through manipulation, threats, physical violence, social isolation, economic control and sexual violence such as rape<sup>6</sup>.

It is also important to note that violence is not only present in “street” prostitution but also in brothels and in escort services, prostitution that is “indoor”<sup>7</sup>. As mentioned in the *Factum* presented to the Court of Appeal for Ontario by the Women’s Coalition for the Abolition of

<sup>5</sup> Geadah, Yolande. 2003. *La prostitution un métier comme les autres?* Montréal: VLB éditeur, p. 157. (unofficial translation)

<sup>6</sup> Ricci, Sandrine, Lyne Kurtzman and Marie-Andrée Roy. 2012. “La traite des femmes à des fins d’exploitation sexuelle: entre le déni et l’invisibilité”. *Les Cahiers de l’Institut de recherches et d’études féministes*. Collection Agora no 4, p. 178.

<sup>7</sup> Day, Shelagh. 2008. *Prostitution, violating the human rights of poor women*. Ottawa: Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes, p. 26.

Prostitution, indoor prostitution is equally characterized by all forms of violence against women:

Contrary to the analysis of the court below, indoor prostitution is not safe or healthy for women. Prostituted women routinely face acts of physical and sexual violence in all locations from johns and pimps<sup>8</sup>.

## 2.2 It is a “non-choice”

In Ève Lamont’s documentary, one woman states “we do not do this because one morning we feel like it; the majority of girls are in a bad state”.<sup>9</sup> When women lack options and resources to ensure their social and economic security, entering into the prostitution system often becomes a necessity or a “non-choice”.

It would be a choice if all women had equal opportunities for work, salaries, family responsibilities, education and possibilities for advancement. This is clearly not the case. The fact is most women will become integrated into the prostitution system for economic reasons.

In the context of budget cuts at various levels of government resulting in continued diminishing resources meant to offer economic and social security to the Canadian population, prostitution becomes somewhat of a survival strategy for poor and vulnerable women.

For example, in Canada, a disproportionate number of women in prostitution are aboriginal women. Many of them do not have an adequate standard of living and a number of these women lack the support and security necessary for their survival. These women are therefore often forced into prostitution because of systemic discrimination, social and economic deprivation and the breakdown of healthy family life resulting from boarding schools, racism toward

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<sup>8</sup> Faraday, Fay and Janine Benedet. 2011. *Court of Appeal for Ontario. Factum of the Intervener Women’s Coalition*. Toronto: Women’s Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution, p.6.

<sup>9</sup> Lamont, Ève. 2010. *L’imposture, la prostitution mise à nu*. Canada: Productions du Rapide-Blanc Inc. (unofficial translation)



aboriginal people and the impact of colonialism on traditional values and culture, as well as overcrowded and substandard housing.

According to the Aboriginal Women's Action Network,

[Aboriginal women] have a long, multi-generational history of colonization, marginalization, displacement from our Homelands, and rampant abuse that has forced many of our sisters into prostitution<sup>10</sup>.

Given that financial instability and social exclusion are sources of vulnerability, immigration of women, characterized by these factors, could also be a source of vulnerability leading to prostitution<sup>11</sup>. Immigrant women, refugees or survivors of armed conflict are often marginalized in society and are affected by multiple oppressive systems deeply rooted in social, economic, cultural and political structures. These women live daily and, depending on their circumstances, the cumulative effects of racism, sexism, classism, etc. Power imbalance is found in all these experiences.

In addition, the fact that prostitution is not a real choice is also related to the average age of girls entering prostitution. It is an indicator of the coercion that girls experience, often because of sexual abuse they experienced in their childhood. In their study, Farley *et al.* indicate that among one hundred Canadian participants:

54% said they entered prostitution before age 18; 84% reported being sexually abused as a child; 86% had been or were homeless; and 95% wanted to leave prostitution<sup>12</sup>.

This strong data supports the following statement,

if prostitution were truly a question of choice, we would not systematically find in prostitution persons who are the most vulnerable and fragile, members of ethnic and national

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<sup>10</sup> Day, Shelagh. 2008. *Prostitution, Violating the Human Rights of Poor Women*. Ottawa: Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Conseil du statut de la femme du Québec. 2012. *La prostitution: il est temps d'agir*. Gouvernement du Québec: Québec, p.49. Accessed June 10 2013. <http://www.csf.gouv.qc.ca/modules/fichierspublications/fichier-29-1655.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Day, Shelagh. 2008. *Prostitution, Violating the Human Rights of Poor Women*. Ottawa: Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes, p.25.

minorities, from subordinate social classes and victims of sexual assault in their youth.<sup>13</sup>

In their study on trafficking women for sexual exploitation<sup>14</sup>, Ricci *et al.* affirm that social pressures and the importance of conforming to the image that women have of success could cause some women to convince themselves that they are in prostitution by choice and that it is a form of sexual liberation. In the documentary *Not for Sale*, one participant is eloquent in this regard, “women have to tell themselves they have made a choice to survive.”<sup>15</sup>

They would therefore need to convince themselves that it is truly a choice, because the dissonance would be too painful.

### 2.3 It is not true consent

Many advocates of decriminalization or legalization of prostitution will state that this activity is a sexual encounter between “consenting adults”. However for over thirty years, in Ontario and elsewhere in the world, women work to denounce sexual assault, that is, sexual encounters where there is no true consent. True consent should be obtained without violence or pressure of any kind. In fact, the women should choose as described by Day (2008):

The right of women to make decisions about when and whether to have sex, and with whom, is understood to be integral to women’s equality with men, and to their autonomy and dignity as human persons.<sup>16</sup>

A non-consensual act or an act entered into under pressure is considered violence against women. Therefore, when women are

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<sup>13</sup> Poulin, Richard. 2006. *Abolir la prostitution, manifeste*. Montréal: éditions Sisyphe, p.59. (unofficial translation)

<sup>14</sup> Ricci, Sandrine, Lyne Kurtzman and Marie-Andrée Roy. 2012. “La traite des femmes à des fins d’exploitation sexuelle: entre le déni et l’invisibilité”. *Les Cahiers de l’Institut de recherches et d’études féministes*. Collection Agora: no 4, p. 176-177.

<sup>15</sup> Vermeiren, Marie. 2006. *Not for Sale*. Belgium: Coalition against Trafficking in Women and European Women’s Lobby.

<sup>16</sup> Day, Shelagh. 2008. *Prostitution, Violating the Human Rights of Poor Women*. Ottawa: Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes, p. 5.

obliged to turn to prostitution to survive, because of violence or out of fear of reprisal, these are not considered desired sexual encounters, but rather exploitation of the vulnerability of women. We cannot speak of true consent in such cases because it is obtained under duress, in a culture where marketing the bodies of women and girls is tolerated. And finally, one cannot always make reference to consenting “adults” knowing that pimps recruit many women as young as 12 or 13 years of age.

## 2.4 It is not a job like other jobs

The *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* stipulates that each person has a right to “work that is freely chosen”<sup>17</sup>. Knowing that the majority of prostituted women are coerced or controlled by pimps, prostitution could not be considered a choice that is made freely.

Today the international community recognizes that certain occupations are unacceptable and “should be prohibited because of the level of harm that they cause to the health of workers”<sup>18</sup>. Given the violence experienced by the majority of prostituted women and the physical and psychological consequences of prostitution, prostitution falls into this category. Prostitution cannot offer just, equitable and safe working conditions and could not in any manner satisfy current labour law regulations. For example, the law now protects workers against different forms of discrimination based on age, appearance, ethnic origin, handicap, etc. All this protection is quickly disregarded in prostitution where, among other elements, beauty and age are criteria used in selecting women, resulting in setbacks to protection acquired by human rights.

If prostitution became a “job like any other” as is the case currently in the Netherlands, women seeking employment could be forced to

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<sup>17</sup> Day, Shelagh. 2008. *Prostitution, Violating the Human Rights of Poor Women*. Ottawa: Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes, p. 30.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

“work” in a brothel to reintegrate into the workforce<sup>19</sup>, despite the known risks.

Finally, sexual exploitation of women undermines established international conventions in labour law: the right to dignity and physical integrity, to non-discrimination, to favourable and just working conditions and to be protected from trafficking for the purpose of prostitution.<sup>20</sup>

## 2.5 It is linked to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation

It is important to point out that there is a close relationship between prostitution and human trafficking. The expression, “trafficking in persons for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation” denotes:

Recruitment, transportation and transfer – within or outside a country, through legal or illegal means – as well as harbouring or receipt of persons, principally women and children for the purpose of sexually exploiting them<sup>21</sup>.

We know that trafficking in women and children is characterized by threats, force and other forms of coercion. Women and girls are victims of kidnapping, fraud, deception, abuse of authority and are in a highly vulnerable situation.

It is difficult to obtain precise data on trafficking in persons because of its criminal and clandestine nature. It is however estimated that globally the number of persons who are trafficked each year is between 700,000 and 4 million persons. The International Labour Organization estimates that about 1.7 million victims of sexual

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<sup>19</sup> Vermeiren, Marie. 2006. *Not for Sale*. Belgium: Coalition Against Trafficking in Women et European Women’s Lobby.

<sup>20</sup> Day, Shelagh. 2008. *Prostitution, Violating the Human Rights of Poor Women*. Ottawa: Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes, p. 47.

<sup>21</sup> Ricci, Sandrine, Lyne Kurtzman and Marie-Andrée Roy. 2012. “La traite des femmes à des fins d’exploitation sexuelle: entre le déni et l’invisibilité”. *Les Cahiers de l’Institut de recherches et d’études féministes*. Collection Agora: no 4, p. 2. (unofficial translation)

exploitation, mainly women and children, are trafficked into prostitution<sup>22</sup>.

## 2.6 It is an obstacle to women's right to equality

Finally, to understand the phenomenon of prostitution one must not overlook the fact that 90% of prostituted persons are women and girls, and that a large majority of johns are men. On one hand, we have mentioned that prostitution is not a sexual act between consenting adults and that by definition, it is violence against women. On the other hand, we have also shown that women are forced to prostitute because of such factors as poverty, racism, and childhood sexual abuse as well as the inadequate social safety net.

Prostitution reinforces the inequalities between the sexes and deprives women of their sexual freedom. It is violence against women, most often exploiting the most vulnerable women and girls, and an obstacle to Canadian women's equality rights.

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<sup>22</sup> Ricci, Sandrine, Lyne Kurtzman and Marie-Andrée Roy. 2012. "La traite des femmes à des fins d'exploitation sexuelle: entre le déni et l'invisibilité". *Les Cahiers de l'Institut de recherches et d'études féministes*. Collection Agora: no 4, p. 3. (unofficial translation)

### 3. Methodology

AOcVF knows that prostitution is present in all Ontario regions and communities however it did not have firm data regarding ease of access to sites for sexual exploitation. We therefore conducted a preliminary study of the phenomenon in three Ontario cities, Hawkesbury, Sudbury and downtown Toronto. Even though the study was not as exhaustive as we would have wished, the results do offer an overview of this accessibility.

#### 3.1 Identification of locations used in the investigation

A participatory approach was used in the selection of communities for the study. In January 2013, French language sexual assault centers were asked to suggest communities for the study. Subsequent to this request, the following locations were chosen because of their differing characteristics: Hawkesbury, Sudbury and downtown Toronto (Table 1).

The plan was to conduct the study in at least three very different locations: urban, semi-urban and rural, in order to create a profile, a snapshot of accessibility to sexual exploitation and to present a brief analysis by community.

Table 1: Introduction to the cities and their characteristics

	Hawkesbury <sup>23</sup>	Greater Sudbury <sup>24</sup>	Toronto <sup>25</sup>	Canada <sup>26</sup>
Population	10,869	157,857	2,503,281	31,612,897
% of population francophone	77%	27.5 %	1.2%	21.8%
% of population anglophone	15.9%	63.5%	49.6%	57.2%
% of population immigrants	4.3%	6.7%	50%	19,8 %
% of population aboriginal	1 %	6,1 %	0,5 %	3,7 %
Median annual income for women	\$16,305	\$19,948	\$21,153	\$20,460
Median annual income for men	\$27,236	\$37,098	\$28,800	\$32,224
Unemployment rate for women	5.5%	7.7%	8.2%	6.6%
Unemployment rate for men	6.9%	8%	7.1%	6.5%
Persons of low income	22%	12.7%	24.5%	15.3%

In these three cities there is a francophone population ranging from a very small minority in Toronto to a large majority in Hawkesbury, with Sudbury somewhere in between. The francophone population in

<sup>23</sup> Statistics Canada. 2006. *Selected trend data for Hawkesbury (T) 1996, 2001 and 2006 censuses*. Accessed May 31 2013. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/92-596/P1-2.cfm?TID=0&Lang=eng&T=CSD&PRCODE=35&GEOCODE=02008>

<sup>24</sup> Statistics Canada. 2006. *Selected trend data for Greater Sudbury / Grand Sudbury (CMA) 1996, 2001 an 2006 censuses*. Accessed May 13 2103 <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/92-596/P1-2.cfm?TID=0&Lang=eng&T=CMA&PRCODE=35&GEOCODE=580>

<sup>25</sup> Statistics Canada. 2006. *Selected trend data for Toronto (C), 1996, 2001 and 2006*. Accessed May 31 2013. <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/92-596/P1-2.cfm?Lang=eng&T=CSD&GEOCODE=20005&PRCODE=35&TID=400>

<sup>26</sup> Statistics Canada. 2006. *Selected trend data for Canada, 1996, 2001 and 2006 censuses*. Accessed May 31 2013. <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/92-596/P1-2.cfm?Lang=eng&T=PR&GEOCODE=01&PRCODE=01&TID=0>

Hawkesbury is not diverse; it is slightly more diverse in Sudbury and in Toronto a large proportion of the francophone population are immigrants.

In each of the three cities, the following sites for the purpose of sexual exploitation were identified (Table 2).

Table 2: Sites for the purpose of sexual exploitation identified

Sites for the purpose of sexual exploitation
❖ Strip clubs
❖ Massage parlours (advertising themselves as erotic) (including Spas)
❖ Escort agencies
❖ Peep-shows (erotic or pornographic shows) and erotic movie theatres
❖ Street prostitution

These sites were selected because they are generally known for sexual exploitation of women and because it was thought possible to survey them. AOcVF recognizes that buying and selling of women's bodies can occur elsewhere, for example in private homes, brothels, erotic cruises, swingers clubs, etc. In addition, we chose to focus on the sites indicated above because they are easily identifiable and results can be obtained based on advertisements or known facts. However, many sites may not have been identified due to tactics used by pimps, johns and prostituted women to keep their practices secret. The sites for sexual exploitation selected in this investigation therefore represent very partial results obtained within the limits of our research. Nevertheless, they are indicative of the extent of the phenomenon.

### 3.2 Data collection: survey

First, the researcher surveyed sites for sexual exploitation using an Internet and local newspaper search. Local newspapers were



consulted to determine whether sexual services were advertised in the classified section, either in the paper or in the online version.

The following key words were used in the *Google.ca* search engine:

- \* Erotic / érotique
- \* Strip Club / strippers / bar danseuses nues
- \* Escort / escorte
- \* Massage exotic / exotique / sensuel / sensual
- \* Peep show / porn theatre / adult cinema / cinéma érotique / cinéma pour adulte
- \* Adult entertainment / divertissement pour adulte
- \* Prostitution

The name of the city surveyed, that is, Hawkesbury, Sudbury and Toronto was added to each of these key words. The first three pages of the results of the *Google* search were examined.

No on-site visits were made to verify the information gathered from the Internet and local newspapers.

### 3.3 Data collection: interviews with resource persons

Second, the researcher travelled to each of the three selected cities and conducted three interviews in each community. The interviews were conducted with executive directors of agencies that provide services for women, with community front line workers and with municipal or provincial police services (except in the case of Sudbury<sup>27</sup>). The goal of these interviews was to gather qualitative data about sexual exploitation of women in their community. A total of nine persons participated in the interviews.

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<sup>27</sup> Despite many attempts it was not possible to obtain a meeting with the Sudbury police service.

Table 3: Interview list

Hawkesbury	Sudbury	Toronto
Two directors, services for women who are victims of violence	Front line worker, services for women who are victims of violence	Detective, Special unit, Toronto Police Service
Ontario Provincial Police officer	Street worker	Front line worker, services for women who are victims of violence
	Coordinator of a program for sex workers	Executive director, services for women who are victims of violence

These semi-structured interviews were aimed at gaining insights into sexual exploitation in the three cities investigated. The questionnaire in Table 4 was used in the interviews.

Table 4: Questionnaire

Are you aware of sexual exploitation, of women in particular, in your city?
Could you describe to me what you observe when you intervene with women?
Could you describe how the sexual exploitation system works here (for example, connection to the drug network or organized crime)?
What factors could prompt a woman to become involved in prostitution?
Where can one find women who are sexually exploited?

Can you name sites or intersections?
How is solicitation carried out?
What is your role in dealing with sexual exploitation?
What are the options or resources for women who want to quit?

In order to record the comments of the interviewees, notes were taken during the interviews and later a report created for each interview. The content of the next section of this document entitled “Overview of the Ontario situation” is based on these reports.

### 3.4 Time frame for data collection

The purpose of this study was to carry out a preliminary exploration of sexual exploitation in the three cities, thus providing an initial overview of specific locations. For this study, approximately one week was allocated for data collection in each city. Despite time constraints and the sensitive nature of the subject, the results did show ease of access and provided an indication of the extent of sexual exploitation of women and girls in these three Ontario locations.

## 4. Overview of the Ontario situation

### 4.1 Hawkesbury

#### 4.1.1 The survey

In Hawkesbury during the week of February 11, 2013, we did not locate any openly advertised strip clubs, erotic massage parlours, escort agencies, erotic movie theatres or street prostitution. However, it is easy to travel to Grenville, a Quebec town a few minutes from Hawkesbury where there are at least two strip clubs. Even though no erotic massage parlours are officially advertised, an advertisement published in one of the local newspapers during the week in which the research occurred hinted at the possibility of obtaining an erotic massage. One might thus presume there are women who offer sexual services privately in Hawkesbury.

Even though sites for buying and selling women's bodies may not be visible or recognized as such, sexual exploitation may be an issue in Hawkesbury according to the directors of community services for women and an Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officer. Support services for women who are victims of violence serve women who were sexually exploited in Hawkesbury or who were recruited in Hawkesbury, but exploited in Montreal<sup>28</sup>.

During our investigation, we found that sexual exploitation occurs much more discretely in this small city than in large urban centres.

#### 4.1.2 Factors that contribute to the integration of women into the sexual exploitation system

According to Hawkesbury community services directors, poverty, lack of jobs and resources as well as substance use may be issues that contribute to women's integration into the prostitution system.

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<sup>28</sup> This could be considered human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

#### 4.1.3 The context in Hawkesbury

According to the OPP representative in Hawkesbury, there appears to be a close connection between the drug trade – run by organized crime – and sexual exploitation of women. It appears that because this city is between Ottawa and Montreal it is seen as the “gateway” for the drug trade in Ontario. Pimps and drug dealers from Montreal may recruit women in Hawkesbury bars, most often through seduction and charm. Ricci *et al.* speak in this regard:

Generally older than their recruits [the pimps] took on the role of protector or provider to seduce vulnerable young women who lack direction or who are experiencing financial difficulty and wanting to leave home.<sup>29</sup>

Pimps may frequently use the incentive of drugs to recruit women into prostitution. At first, narcotics are offered “free of charge” but in the end women are coerced into prostitution to reimburse the debt<sup>30</sup>. On the one hand it is an endless cycle for women who are at risk of increasing drug use in order to endure the exploitation and on the other hand a flourishing activity for the pimps who exploit women for profit.

#### 4.1.4 Solicitation and sexual exploitation sites

In Hawkesbury, solicitation appears to occur mainly through word of mouth between johns or through the drug trade system in bars. There are few publically advertised sites for prostitution and women who are sexually exploited are not visible in the streets or in public places in Hawkesbury.

Because Hawkesbury is a small city, johns may prefer to remain hidden by travelling to the neighbouring city of Grenville. It may be

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<sup>29</sup> Ricci, Sandrine, Lyne Kurtzman and Marie-Andrée Roy. 2012. “La traite des femmes à des fins d’exploitation sexuelle: entre le déni et l’invisibilité”. *Les Cahiers de l’Institut de recherches et d’études féministes*. Collection Agora: no 4, p. 52. (unofficial translation)

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

that women who are sexually exploited in Grenville bars frequently offer to travel with a john to Hawkesbury.

According to the OPP, the absence of strip clubs in the city could possibly be explained by the strict application of municipal regulations that tend to discourage owners from applying for permits for this type of business.<sup>31</sup> The active presence of the OPP in the city could possibly also explain the closure of sexual exploitation sites. Police officers patrol day and night and investigate suspicious public places. However on the other side of the river, the offices of the Sureté du Québec are not located close to Grenville and officers investigate sites where sexual exploitation might be occurring only when they receive a complaint. Sexual exploitation of women in Hawkesbury may take place discretely, generally in a john's home, in the home of an "independent"<sup>32</sup> or in a hotel.

#### 4.1.5 Challenges for women who want to get out of prostitution

The interviews in Hawkesbury also raised the point that security issues remain a major obstacle for women who wish to get out of prostitution. It is very difficult for them to report pimps out of fear of reprisal. However women's shelters are available for women to call on for assistance.

#### 4.1.6 The findings

- In a small city such as Hawkesbury, sexual exploitation is carried out in a discrete manner. It must not be presumed that prostitution is not an issue in this city even if at first glance it is not apparent (as much for the population as for the police).
- Women find themselves in this exploitation system for survival reasons, for example the need to pay for housing and food.

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<sup>31</sup> In effect, knowing that the OPP inquires about each person who would work in such a club, most of the strip club owners in Hawkesbury preferred not to enter into the process.

<sup>32</sup> That is, they do not work in a club or in an agency or in a massage parlour; they advertise under their own name. It is however difficult to confirm whether they are independent because it is possible they answer to a pimp.

- Drug use and debt often lead to prostitution, factors themselves often linked with exploitation of vulnerable women and girls.
- Sexual exploitation may be closely linked to the drug trade and to organized crime.

## 4.2 Sudbury

### 4.2.1 The survey

In Sudbury, during the week of February 18, 2013, our findings were the following: the existence of at least two strip clubs, eight escort agencies and five streets known for the presence of prostituted women, therefore a total of fifteen openly advertised sites for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

In addition, even though there are no publically advertised erotic massage parlours, it is possible to find a number of advertisements for erotic massages or sexual services by independent women escorts in Sudbury. In one day, about ten such advertisements were published on Internet sites or in local newspapers. Many other escort agencies offering their services in Sudbury are not physically located in Sudbury so they were not included in our data.

### 4.2.2 Factors that contribute to the integration of women into the sexual exploitation system

According to the information obtained in Sudbury, pimps may take advantage of women's vulnerability to recruit them into the sexual exploitation system. Often pimps initially use charm to create an emotional bond with the women – sometimes even to the point of marriage – and later encourage them to offer sexual services in exchange for an income from which in principle both would benefit. Initially, women comply to help their partner or boyfriend out of debt, but as time passes, the relationship becomes one of power and manipulation in which the woman is sexually exploited.

The front line workers hypothesize that level of education and the lack of job opportunities are factors that contribute to the presence of women in the sexual exploitation system in Sudbury. Financial gain is attractive because significant amounts can be quickly earned.

According to one of the front line workers interviewed in Sudbury, an independent woman escort could make between \$2,000 and \$5,000 per week. Some young women might enter prostitution specifically to pay for their education or to buy a vehicle. The increase in the cost of living and high tuition fees or rent might pressure a growing number of students to offer sexual services in exchange for money.

A majority of interview participants in Sudbury stated that human trafficking there is not highly visible, but that the issue does exist. Media in the region, as well as Sudbury police, are interested in this issue<sup>33</sup>. Pimps appear to lure women into the human trafficking network generally through social media such as *Facebook* or in strip clubs using seduction and the incentive of drugs.

#### 4.2.3 The context in Sudbury

Persons interviewed in Sudbury mentioned the possible link between prostitution and the presence of the mining industry<sup>34</sup>, because miners often have good incomes that allow them to fully take advantage of consumerism. Trivialization of the phenomenon of prostitution might result in the perception that it is entertainment like any other, without regard for the fact that it markets and commercializes women's bodies.

In addition, in Sudbury the presence of a considerable number of aboriginal women from Northern reserves is significant. These women often find themselves in a vulnerable situation because of poverty and

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<sup>33</sup> CBC News. 2013. *Human trafficking a problem in Sudbury: police*. Accessed April 15 2013. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/story/2013/02/19/sby-sudbury-police-human-trafficking-training.html>

<sup>34</sup> Only the mining industry was mentioned in the interviews.



exploitation<sup>35</sup>. In her study regarding the *Plan Nord* proposed for Quebec, Aurélie Arnaud cautions against an increased exploitation of aboriginal women where the mining industry is a major employer. Coupled with the presence of vulnerable aboriginal women is the

Arrival of a disproportionate number of white men from the South for many weeks, often bringing with them alcohol, drugs and negative stereotypes.

Even though there is insufficient data to fully illustrate the phenomenon, *Femmes autochtones du Québec* finds that this situation is an explosive cocktail that results in the growth of prostitution near the worksites and aboriginal women are often the initial victims.

"White" men's image of aboriginal women is still often that of an easy woman, easy to discard, and with complete impunity.<sup>36</sup>

According to Julie Miville-Dechêne, president of the Conseil du statut de la femme du Québec,

Indicators lead one to believe that the current economic boom north of the 49th parallel has detrimental effects on many women. For example, they are the first victims of the housing crisis and the growth of prostitution<sup>37</sup>.

We can only surmise that the same phenomenon would apply to Ontario's North.

Furthermore, other studies show that establishment of a mine in a rural area results in serious social consequences for the communities. With the arrival of many workers from outside the region, habits are often seen to change and in some cases there is an increase in alcoholism, prostitution and partner violence. It is possible that a similar phenomenon is occurring in Sudbury where there are many

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<sup>35</sup> Porter, Jody. 2012. "Former prostitute warns chiefs about dangers of sex trade." *CBC News*. Accessed April 30 2103. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/story/2012/11/09/tby-prostitute-warning.html>

<sup>36</sup> See Arnaud, Aurélie. 2012. "Plan Nord – Où sont les femmes autochtones?" *Mondialisation.ca*. Accessed April 30 2013 <http://www.mondialisation.ca/plan-nord-o-sont-les-femmes-autochtones/30656> (unofficial translation)

<sup>37</sup> Miville-Dechêne, Julie. 2012. *Le plan de développement du Nord - Avis du Conseil du statut de la femme*. Accessed June 10 2013. <http://communiqués.gouv.qc.ca/gouvqc/communiqués/GPOF/Octobre2012/18/c7964.html> (unofficial translation)

vulnerable aboriginal women and young girls who come to the city from the province's northern reserves.

#### 4.2.4 Solicitation and sexual exploitation sites

Erotic theatres and massage parlours have not openly advertised for a number of years, but one of the interviewees confirmed that it would be relatively easy to obtain erotic massages in at least one of the city's massage parlours. Also it may be that an increasing number of women independently offer sexual services.

Even though solicitation can occur because of the visibility of prostituted women on the streets or by word of mouth between johns, more and more is occurring on the Internet, for example through online dating services. For example, five such advertisements for Sudbury were found between February 18 and 22, 2013 on the *backpage.com* site<sup>38</sup> and three others on February 20, 2013 on *myproviderguide.com*.

Despite police efforts, street prostitution still exists in Sudbury. More than once during the interviews, safety risks for women "working" in the streets were raised. Reasons given as examples were the isolation and the fact that they are not as valued as women associated with escort agencies.

#### 4.2.5 Challenges for women who want to get out of prostitution

Even though programs have been developed to avoid criminalization of prostituted women, much remains to be done in order to offer appropriate support to women who are sexually exploited. The majority of prostituted women in Sudbury may not be adequately equipped to get out of the system for multiple reasons: isolation, fear of the pimp, limited options, etc.

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<sup>38</sup> An Internet site recognized by authorities and the media in Ontario as the reference for solicitation of sexual services.

Prostituted women may often be victims of prejudice on the part of their families, friends and neighbours. According to testimony from the interviews, they may be described as "bad mothers" and "incapable of making good decisions". It is presumed that they all have substance abuse or mental health problems. If women are thus judged by those closest to them, there is an enormous barrier to overcome in leaving prostitution.

In Sudbury, police offer to women arrested for solicitation the possibility of participating in a session entitled "Jane Diversion". This free session is offered to inform women of available resources to help them leave the prostitution system. Once they have completed the session, the charges are withdrawn. However, this approach is criticized because women would need much more support than a short information session in order to successfully leave an exploitative system.

Johns who are arrested can participate in a "John School" session at a cost of \$500.00 during which they are given information on the impacts of prostitution on the community and on their own life. Once they have completed the session, the charges are withdrawn<sup>39</sup>. However, a few hours are not enough to modify the behaviour of men who, conditioned by the societal inequalities, sexually exploit women.

#### 4.2.6 The findings

- Sexual exploitation of women is visible in Sudbury, in the street, in advertising and in strip clubs.
- The Internet is often used for solicitation.
- Pimps take advantage of women's vulnerability to lure them into sexual exploitation. They do this by taking advantage of their economic and emotional needs.
- Even though it is not often recognized as such, human trafficking is an issue in Sudbury.

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<sup>39</sup> Pickard, Arron. 2012. "Prostitutes, johns go to school". *Northern Life.ca*. Accessed April 15 2013.  
<http://www.northernlife.ca/news/policeandCourt/2012/02/22-john-jane-school-sudbury.aspx>

## 4.3 Toronto

### 4.3.1 The survey

In our exploratory study in downtown Toronto that took place the week of February 25, 2013 we found: ten strip clubs, more than 140 erotic massage parlours, more than thirty escort agencies and at least three streets known to be frequented by prostituted women. This represents a total of 183 sites for the purpose of sexual exploitation that are openly advertised.

A quick Internet search, while not including an exact count, uncovered a few hundred advertisements for independent women escorts offering erotic massages as well as a number of escort agencies doing business downtown.

### 4.3.2 Factors that contribute to the integration of women into the sexual exploitation system

According to the persons interviewed, the majority of women who are integrated into the sexual exploitation system in downtown Toronto may do so because of urgent financial needs. Women's lack of resources due to numerous cuts to the social safety net or to government aid programs, including those for immigrant women, could force them into prostitution.

According to the study respondents, most of the women who are in prostitution say they entered "by choice". However, in fact, they find themselves forced to stay for many reasons. They are forced to stay because the pimp exercises control or because they lack the financial resources needed to quit or because they suffer from addiction.

Other factors also influence the supply and demand for sexual services, including the presence of many strip clubs as well as increasing social media and Internet usage. These factors contribute to sexual exploitation and make it much more accessible by facilitating communication between pimps, prostituted women and johns.

In addition, human trafficking both inside the country and internationally affects many women and girls in Toronto. According to the police service, this phenomenon involves more and more youth, especially trafficked girls as young as 16 years of age. Yet,

most kids are not making an informed choice to get into the sex trade. They are most often forced by circumstances and adults who know there is a lucrative market for the young [...]. Many of those who end up involved in prostitution have been sexually abused as children. Often these young people see no other choices or options. When they come to us, they are among the most in need of counselling and support to change their lives.<sup>40</sup>

If, initially the "business" relationship between the young woman and the pimp is considered voluntary, it is eventually transformed into a relationship of power and control.

Covenant House, a centre that offers shelter and support for street youth, is concerned about the impacts on youth of legalizing prostitution, and with reason: according to a study at St. Thomas University in New Brunswick, it may be that as many as 30% of Canadian street youth are sexually exploited<sup>41</sup>, a reality that often leads to prostitution.

Toronto appears to be:

- a place where recruitment occurs: pimps recruit in Toronto, mainly on the street, near youth shelters or in shopping mall food courts for example;
- a place where persons are in transit: women who are exploited sexually often have to travel (for example from Niagara Falls to Ottawa) to avoid being identified by police and frequently travel through Toronto to "offer their services";
- a destination: women in human trafficking are sexually exploited in Toronto.

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<sup>40</sup> Covenant House Toronto. 2012. *Legalized Sex Trade Threatens More Young, Homeless Kids, Covenant House Fears*. Accessed April 18 2013.

<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2012/4/prweb9387642.htm>

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

Human trafficking may also take place between gangs who control territories. They may exchange women as they would drugs or weapons in order to meet the demands of johns:

Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg are identified as hot spots for human trafficking in Canada. In the Toronto region, trafficking seems mainly to be under the control of the Russian mafia.<sup>42</sup>

#### 4.3.3 The context in Toronto

Being a large urban centre, Toronto is a favourable location for large scale events such as sporting events or festivals that attract many persons from all over the world. These types of events are known to be advantageous to the sex trade and to human trafficking. For example, a report published by The Future Group indicates that large scale sporting events contribute to a rapid increase in the demand for sexual services and facilitate entry of a large number of persons as "visitors", persons who could potentially be transferred to a site for exploitation.<sup>43</sup>

Toronto is also a business centre where many large companies have established their offices. One interviewee stated that some businesses may be in the habit of organizing entertainment events that include the presence of prostituted women in order to reward their employees or to entertain their clients. Articles appearing in the Toronto Star in 2007<sup>44</sup> in Maclean's in 2012<sup>45</sup> indicate that funding from Canadian companies, notably Toronto companies, may be used to retain the

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<sup>42</sup> Ricci, Sandrine, Lyne Kurtzman and Marie-Andrée Roy. 2012. "La traite des femmes à des fins d'exploitation sexuelle: entre le déni et l'invisibilité." *Les Cahiers de l'Institut de recherches et d'études féministes*. Collection Agora: no 4, p. 46. (unofficial translation).

<sup>43</sup> The Future Group. 2007. *Faster, Higher, Stronger: Preventing Human Trafficking at the 2010 Olympics*. Alberta, p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> Donovan, Kevin and Diana Zlomislac. 2007. "Hookers and booze: Your tax dollars at work." *Toronto Star*. Accessed April 30 2013. [http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2010/10/27/hookers\\_and\\_booze\\_your\\_tax\\_dollars\\_at\\_work.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2010/10/27/hookers_and_booze_your_tax_dollars_at_work.html)

<sup>45</sup> Sorensen, Chris. 2012. "Sex on the company dime: Employees who expense prostitutes are more common than you'd think." *Maclean's*. Accessed April 30 2013 <http://www2.macleans.ca/2012/03/07/you-can-expense-that/>

services of prostituted women to “charm” clients.<sup>46</sup> These events contribute to trivializing and normalizing sexual exploitation of women and girls in addition to contributing to create an unhealthy climate for the female employees of these companies.

#### 4.3.4 Solicitation and sites for sexual exploitation

According to the Toronto police services division that deals with sexual crimes, there seems to be less street prostitution than before, but some streets are still known for the presence of prostituted women. Some brothels may have been established in strip club basements, for example. In addition there are numerous erotic massage parlours although most are located outside of the downtown core. Finally, of the women who are sexually exploited, a majority of them are sexually exploited through advertisements on websites such as *backpage.com* or classified advertisement sites such as the *NOW* magazine that in one day listed more than one hundred advertisements for sexual services for Toronto.

The Internet is a veritable “business opportunity” for pimps. It facilitates buying and selling women’s bodies and the clientele can grow rapidly online. Pimps also use these means to recruit women by proposing they become business partners.

#### 4.3.5 Challenges for women who want to get out of prostitution

Even though the Toronto police work in collaboration with community services and they have established strategies to avoid criminalization of women who have been sexually exploited, there are still many women who do not dare report out of fear they themselves will be arrested and incarcerated. Programs such as *Crime Stopper* and *Hot Lines* allow women to anonymously report those who exploit, thus avoiding being criminalized themselves.

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<sup>46</sup> An article appearing in *The Guardian* also denounced this practice at the international level, in the United Kingdom. The article estimates that many important business meetings are in strip clubs or have prostituted women to entertain clients. See Hopkins, Kathryn. 2009. “City bankers “regularly offer prostitutes to clients.”” *The Guardian*. Accessed April 19 2013. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2009/oct/14/banking-prostitution>

The consequences of the exploitation of women who were forced into prostitution are significant:

After having to distance themselves from their own identity, to emotionally disengage, then to dissociate from their own self to survive this activity, prostitutes still have to pretend to their clients that they are consenting and that they experience pleasure.<sup>47</sup>

According to a front line worker who participated in the survey, many prostituted women use substances such as alcohol and drugs to escape this reality. Some women say that they no longer experience sensations in their body, a phenomenon that in some cases lasts many years after leaving the exploitation system. Leaving the sexual exploitation system in these circumstances requires access to concrete and varied supports: housing, support, care, protection, etc. At the present time, women who want to leave experience difficulty accessing these services.

#### 4.3.6 Findings

- Internet and social media are regularly used to access the sexual exploitation system.
- The number of strip clubs, erotic massage parlours and escort agencies is such that one might think the exploitation of women has become trivialized in Toronto.
- Human trafficking exists in Toronto: recruitment, transit and destination.
- The physical and psychological consequences of prostitution are serious and devastating for women.
- Street youth are particularly at risk of being sexually exploited.
- Women find themselves in the sexual exploitation system because of economic reasons.

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<sup>47</sup> Geadah, Yolande. 2003. *La prostitution un métier comme les autres?* Montréal: VLB éditeur, p. 148. (unofficial translation)



- Police seem to have become more conscious of the complexity of the issues related to prostitution and of the need for protection for women who are sexually exploited.

## 5. Analysis of the information collected

### 5.1 The system for buying and selling women's bodies is easily accessible

In the case of a small community such as Hawkesbury, sexual exploitation of women is much more discrete whereas in Sudbury prostitution is quite visible for example on downtown streets known to be frequented by prostituted women. In the case of downtown Toronto, sexual exploitation of women and girls is relatively widespread, occurring in many locations.

Despite the limitations of this study, we can assert that sexual exploitation of women is a phenomenon that is widespread and well established in Ontario. Sexual exploitation of women and girls affects both small and large communities on a scale that would probably surprise the majority of Ontarians.

In only a few days, we counted 140 massage parlours, twelve strip clubs, 38 escort agencies and eight streets, for a total of more than 198 sites for sexual exploitation publically advertised in Sudbury and in downtown Toronto. To this figure one might add the hundreds of advertisements on Internet sites and in social media.

### 5.2 Internet and social media contribute to the growth of the exploitation system

The Internet and the extensive use of social media are transforming the system of sexual exploitation of women. They make buying and selling women's bodies very accessible. If for example in certain instances prostitution is less visible in the street, this does not mean that sexual exploitation of women is declining, but that it is happening through different means. In interviews in Sudbury and Toronto, the respondents indicated that there are many Internet forums or sites on which johns evaluate the performances of prostituted women. In addition to treating the women as merchandise, the comments, accessible to the public, have detrimental consequences. The front line

workers stated that prostituted women are victims of physical, psychological and economic violence as a result of these client comments.

The abundance of pornographic sites on the Internet also contributes to trivializing access to sexual services and to "consumer sex". A study published by Melissa Farley *et al.* that analyzed the behaviour of 103 johns in London found that johns rationalize the sexual exploitation they do by assuming that prostituted women are being satisfied sexually while at the same time earning money.<sup>48</sup> This is a myth supported by pornography, whereas in reality, the study by Farley *et al.* demonstrated that women feign excitement and pleasure to satisfy the john and the pimp who wants to do "good business".

### 5.3 Prostitution is presented as a type of sexual freedom

During the Toronto interviews it was emphasized that prostitution was sometimes perceived as liberalization of sexuality, a message that attracts the attention of youth in particular. In Ève Lamont's documentary, a participant states that "the sex industry is everywhere [...] and seduces youth with all that is sexy and glamour."<sup>49</sup> However, since the man holds the power and thus the control over the bodies of the women and girls, this does not in any way resemble sexual empowerment for those who are bought. In their study on the behaviour of johns, Farley *et al.* emphasize that:

Many of the men who buy women for sex think that the women they buy have no rights in the interaction. As Kinnell (2008) argues, such men believe that "buying sex entitles them to do anything they want"<sup>50</sup>.

Prostituted women do not have decision making power over their own body, they are rather forced to execute what the johns demand and they often do this at the price of their physical integrity.

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<sup>48</sup> Farley, Melissa, Julie Bindel and Jacqueline M. Golding. 2009. *Men Who Buy Sex: Who they buy and what they know*. London: Eaves, p. 19.

<sup>49</sup> Lamont, Ève. 2010. *L'imposture, la prostitution mise à nu*. Canada: Productions du Rapide-Blanc Inc. (unofficial translation)

<sup>50</sup> Farley, Melissa, Julie Bindel and Jacqueline M. Golding. 2009. *Men Who Buy Sex: Who they buy and what they know*. London: Eaves, p. 13.

For sexuality to be free, consent from both parties must be given. In fact as Day (2008) indicates:

The bargain inherent in prostitution is that women have unwanted sex with men they do not know, and feign enjoyment, in exchange for money.<sup>51</sup>

Therefore, qualifying such an act as a sexual encounter between consenting adults does not account for:

the fundamental inequality in the sexual and human transaction between the women and men involved [...]. This is not a transaction in which a woman and a man together, voluntarily, seek to give and receive sexual pleasure. Prostitution is a transaction in which women provide commodified sexual services to men, in exchange for money. It is a form of social and sexual subordination.<sup>52</sup>

#### 5.4 Economic pressure is still the main reason for the integration of women into the prostitution system

Richard Poulin, in a document entitled *Abolir la prostitution, manifeste*, refutes the myth that views prostitution as a route to financial wealth. He shows that:

financial pressures, in particular social instability and the absence of alternative livelihoods, is one of the causes. Prostitution seems to represent, at least in an illusory fashion one of the rare access routes to a standard of living not possible for those of modest social origins and low competence levels.<sup>53</sup>

However, despite the apparent income, most of the women who are sexually exploited are not rich. Many women in the prostitution system are obliged to remit a percentage of their income to agencies or to pimps. This percentage varies from 40% to their entire income. It is plausible that certain women could have control of their income,

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<sup>51</sup> Day, Shelagh. 2008. *Prostitution, Violating the Human Rights of Poor Women*. Ottawa: Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes, p. 24.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>53</sup> Poulin, Richard. 2006. *Abolir la prostitution, manifeste*. Montréal: éditions Sisyphé, p. 56. (unofficial translation)

but as one participant in Lamont's documentary comments: "It is fast money, but at what price?"<sup>54</sup>

One often hears of "casuals" or "opportunists" who pay for their education with money earned from prostitution. For these young women,

accessibility of the Internet might also seduce more and more students who envision using their body to make money, because this platform makes their work safer and more discrete. Sex workers no longer need to solicit publically, are less apt to find themselves "under the control of organized crime" and do not have to share their income with pimps.<sup>55</sup>

In an article that appeared in the Vancouver Sun in January 2013, journalist Tara Carman reported on students who use the Internet to meet older individuals to assist them financially in exchange for time spent together or for sexual services<sup>56</sup>. The Sudbury and Toronto interviews included mention of the existence of this practice.

In the Hope for the Sold site blog, a site that promotes measures against human trafficking, Michelle Brock indicates that the Adult Entertainment Society of Canada (AEAC) may recruit students on campuses and shopping centres following the discontinuation of the practice of issuing visas for exotic dancers from outside the country:

AEAC representative Tim Lambrinos, says they plan to recruit at educational institutions and malls. They would merely set up a kiosk with a pole<sup>57</sup> and information. [...] Lambrinos confirmed a draft of the recruiting package that says the following:

If you are visually appealing and comfortable with your naked body and are comfortable about taking all your clothes off, you can be working right now as an exotic

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<sup>54</sup> Lamont, Ève. 2010. *L'imposture, la prostitution mise à nu*. Canada: Productions du Rapide-Blanc Inc. (unofficial translation)

<sup>55</sup> Lépine, Philippe. 2011. *Payer ses études en nature*. Université du Québec à Montréal. Accessed June 10 2013 <http://montrealcampus.ca/2011/09/payer-ses-etudes-en-nature/> (unofficial translation)

<sup>56</sup> Carman, Tara. 2013. "UVic students flock to "sugar baby" website", *Vancouver Sun*. Accessed April 15 2013 <http://etudiant.lefigaro.fr/les-news/actu/detail/article/le-tragique-isolement-des-etudiants-prostitues-1360/>

<sup>57</sup> This is a reference to "pole dancing".

dancer and earn your tuition fees for university and college.

Regarding foreign workers who are already in the strip club industry in Canada, the AEAC wishes to extend their permits for another year. They are also encouraging people to marry the foreign nationals so they can keep dancing here.<sup>58</sup>

In France at the Université de Poitiers, an awareness campaign about this phenomenon was established because it was recognized that the urgent need for money for tuition, food and housing might influence many students to enter prostitution.<sup>59</sup> Some of these students would be coerced into remaining after receiving their diploma.

The phenomenon of prostitution exists in the student population. However the johns justify their exploitation of these young women by saying that the women also "benefit" because they use the proceeds to pay for their education, contributing to the myth that prostitution is a "choice" or a "job like any other". Johns thus consider themselves to be "good clients" and consider their actions morally justifiable. A CBC report<sup>60</sup> deals with the increase in prostitution in Newfoundland and Labrador. The report states there are numerous advertisements on the *NL Adult Classified* website by men who are looking specifically for "women students" for sexual encounters.

Access to education is an important consideration for Ontario women and girls. The high cost of education and the low salaries generally earned by women are barriers to post-secondary education. As we learned in this study, other factors that might lead young women into prostitution need to be examined, such as childhood sexual abuse, violence or seduction by a pimp on campus.

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<sup>58</sup> Brock, Michelle. 2012. "On a Mission: The Adult Entertainment Association of Canada is Recruiting Students into the Sex Trade Industry." *Hope for the sold*. Accessed May 13 2013. <http://hopeforthesold.com/on-a-mission-the-adult-entertainment-association-of-canada-is-recruiting-students-into-the-sex-industry/>

<sup>59</sup> Gibour, Raphaël. 2013. "Le tragique isolement des étudiants prostitués." *Le Figaro.fr*. Accessed April 15 2013. <http://etudiant.lefigaro.fr/les-news/actu/detail/article/le-tragique-isolement-des-etudiants-prostitues-1360/>

<sup>60</sup> White, Jen. 2013. "Sex Trade Workers in High Demand in N.L.", *CBC News*. Accessed May 13 2013. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/story/2013/05/06/nl-sex-trade-boom-investigation-507.html>

## 5.5 Prostitution exploits the vulnerability of women and girls

In addition to economic pressures, among the factors of vulnerability that affect mainly women are vagrancy and runaways, having lived in a dysfunctional and violent home, having been sexually exploited or mistreated in the past, entering prostitution as a minor and finally, belonging to an ethnic minority or to the aboriginal community.

In addition, certain structural factors also contribute to the growing phenomena of sexual exploitation and trafficking of women and girls. In this regard, consider the following structural factors as presented by the *Conseil du statut de la femme du Québec*<sup>61</sup>:

- the large number of private and public sites for sexual exploitation;
- poverty coupled with the lack of viable alternatives that forces women and children into prostitution;
- war, armed conflict and ecological disasters that result in making women and children vulnerable to organized sexual exploitation;
- racism and the effects of colonialism that marginalize aboriginal women;
- traditional attitudes favourable to prostitution;
- consumer ideology that leads young persons to consider prostitution as a means to satisfy their need to consume;
- the pornography culture that is more and more visible in the public arena and that contributes to social acceptance of prostitution.

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<sup>61</sup> Conseil du statut de la femme du Québec. 2012. *La prostitution : il est temps d'agir*. Gouvernement du Québec: Québec. Accessed June 10 2013.  
<http://www.csf.gouv.qc.ca/modules/fichierspublications/fichier-29-1655.pdf>

All of these vulnerability factors and all the structural factors facilitate recruitment and exploitation of women and girls in the prostitution system.

In addition, as we have seen, a considerable number of women in the prostitution system are vulnerable not only when they enter prostitution, but while they are in prostitution. As Richard Poulin emphasizes:

The pimp's hold on the prostituted person derives from a complex mechanism that often begins with seduction, followed by a phase in which physical as well as psychological submission begins.<sup>62</sup>

According to Poulin (2006), pimps use manipulation – such as a promise of marriage or a business venture – and destabilization to create dependence in women or girls who prostitute.

Confinement in a system where money is quickly earned (and quickly spent), the gradual loss of bearings and relationships outside of prostitution as well as the weight of society's stigma keep her excluded and sentenced to a world apart.<sup>63</sup>

With women in such a vulnerable position, pimps exercise a great deal of control over them. According to the testimony in Ève Lamont's documentary, if in the beginning women saw "through rose colored glasses" and felt good in the role of "seductress", they realize very quickly that they do not have decision making power and that it is the man who decides the price and the manner in which the sexual encounter will take place. One of the women says "you are no longer a human being, you are a robot".<sup>64</sup>

In their research that analyzes johns' behaviour, Farley *et al.* state that:

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<sup>62</sup> Poulin, Richard. 2006. *Abolir la prostitution, manifeste*. Montréal: éditions Sisyphe, p. 50. (unofficial translation)

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 51. (unofficial translation)

<sup>64</sup> Lamont, Ève. 2010. *L'imposture, la prostitution mise à nu*. Canada: Productions du Rapide-Blanc Inc. (unofficial translation).



55 % of [...] men who bought sex believed that a majority of people in prostitution were lured, tricked or trafficked.<sup>65</sup>

However, this does not prevent men from continuing to exploit them. These men deliberately close their eyes to: sexual and economic exploitation, violence experienced by women, racism, social conditions that condemn them to poverty, risks to women's physical, sexual and psychological health and criminalization of the persons they exploit. And for what reasons? As Mott explains,

Men pay for sex, not to communicate, not because they are alone and not spontaneously: men pay to exercise control, for the freedom to impose any sadistic sexual act they desire to impose, free from consequence, free to consider their acts as "disposable" sex.<sup>66</sup>

In brief, and as we have previously mentioned, it is a relationship of domination and control by men who can afford to buy the bodies of women and girls with no strings attached.

## 5.6 There is a direct link between substance use and sexual exploitation of women

Substance use is common in the sexual exploitation system. Alcohol or drug consumption is often linked to sexual assault in the past; it has been shown that a large number of prostituted women were sexually abused as children. This connection was also established in a study involving post-traumatic stress disorder, in which 80% of women in treatment for addiction had experienced a physical or sexual traumatic experience at some time in their life.<sup>67</sup>

According to Farley *et al.*

Symptoms related to post traumatic stress disorder are often found in prostituted women, comparable to those symptoms found in military personnel and persons who have lived through

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<sup>65</sup> Farley, Melissa, Julie Bindel and Jacqueline M. Golding. 2009. *Men Who Buy Sex: Who they buy and what they know*. London: Eaves, p. 25.

<sup>66</sup> Mott, Rebecca. 2012. *Prostitution — Un déni facile à comprendre*. Accessed June 10 2013. [http://sisyphe.org/imprimer.php3?id\\_article=4141](http://sisyphe.org/imprimer.php3?id_article=4141) (unofficial translation)

<sup>67</sup> Mueser, K. et al. 1998. "Trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder in severe mental illness." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*: 66, pp. 493-499.

wars or violent traumatic events. These symptoms include depression, insomnia, memory loss, excessive anger, cardiac problems, respiratory problems, digestive problems and suicidal tendencies. These symptoms were found in 68% of respondents.<sup>68</sup>

While some women were already using drugs or alcohol before their integration into the prostitution system, a significant number of prostituted women "have also developed some form of addiction to withstand the violence of prostitution."<sup>69</sup> In addition, as has been shown in the present study, many pimps recruit women by encouraging substance use. Creating dependence in a recruited woman is advantageous to the pimp, often himself a drug dealer or affiliated with this business, thus resulting in double the economic benefit.

## 5.7 Trafficking of women and girls is connected to the sexual exploitation system in Ontario

Even though human trafficking is a much better known phenomenon in the Toronto region, many other Ontario communities may be affected. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) estimates that approximately 600 women and children enter Canada each year for the purpose of sexual exploitation, to which can be added the number of women and children who are victims of trafficking inside the country.<sup>70</sup>

According to Ricci *et al.*:

Trafficking is a flourishing activity for organized crime that seeks to maximize profit by exploiting women and children<sup>71</sup>.

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<sup>68</sup> Conseil du statut de la femme du Québec. 2012. *La prostitution: il est temps d'agir*. Gouvernement du Québec : Québec, p.54. Accessed June 10 2013 <http://www.csf.gouv.qc.ca/modules/fichierspublications/fichier-29-1655.pdf>

(unofficial translation)

<sup>69</sup> Ricci, Sandrine, Lyne Kurtzman and Marie-Andrée Roy. 2012. "La traite des femmes à des fins d'exploitation sexuelle: entre le déni et l'invisibilité". *Les Cahiers de l'Institut de recherches et d'études féministes*. Collection Agora: no 4, p. 126.

(unofficial translation)

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> Ricci, Sandrine, Lyne Kurtzman and Marie-Andrée Roy. 2012. "La traite des femmes à des fins d'exploitation sexuelle: entre le déni et l'invisibilité". *Les Cahiers*

Also according to Ricci *et al.*, the prostitution system may be controlled "by large criminal organizations, in particular bikers and the mafia"<sup>72</sup>.

In the event of decriminalization of prostitution, it would become even more difficult to prevent trafficking of women and girls because it would be connected to a legalized system of prostitution. This could greatly increase the number of women and children who are victims of trafficking. According to the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, Germany legalized prostitution a decade ago and appears to have a serious trafficking problem. It would be extremely difficult to even investigate cases of exploitation. The law may have made the market even more attractive for traffickers. According to the Munich police chief, there was an "explosive increase" of trafficking of women from Romania and Bulgaria and the police lack "access to the necessary tools to investigate."<sup>73</sup>

## 5.8 Current laws and their enforcement do not ensure protection for women and girls

In our exploratory study, the level of commitment of police services to end sexual exploitation of women varies from one city to another. In Hawkesbury, the police seem to favour an approach that aims to protect public order by relying on municipal laws to prevent strip clubs or other similar places from opening their doors in the city. The sexual crimes unit of the Toronto police service seems to understand the issues of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, but indicates that the current legal framework is a significant obstacle to effective action.

A punitive approach, applied mainly to women, only makes the practice of prostitution more secretive, significantly increasing the safety risks for women. In addition, current provisions related to

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*de l'Institut de recherches et d'études féministes*. Collection Agora: no 4, p. 52. (unofficial translation)

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47. (unofficial translation)

<sup>73</sup> *Der Spiegel*. 2013. *Unprotected: How Legalizing Prostitution Has Failed*. Accessed June 3 2013. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/human-trafficking-persists-despite-legality-of-prostitution-in-germany-a-902533.html>

solicitation are ineffective for the Internet and social media, thus allowing an explosion of opportunities for exploitation and recruitment in the prostitution system.

### 5.9 Women who wish to get out of prostitution are faced with many obstacles

According to Ricci *et al.*, prostituted women are often controlled by a pimp. When they attempt to exit the system, in addition to fear of reprisal, they often realize they have lost their bearings, often having lost contact with family members or friends outside of the prostitution system. They are economically and often emotionally dependent on the pimp. Taking steps to get out of this exploitation system can often be perceived as an insurmountable ordeal:

Women [who were or who are in prostitution] were submersed in a system that produces and reproduces their alienation.<sup>74</sup>

Because of risks for their safety and sometimes for that of their family as well as the psychological trauma they experience, reintegration into society is a struggle. Women in prostitution often remain criminals in the eyes of the law. In addition, when they attempt to rebuild their life, they are confronted with society's prejudices, sometimes even within the services that they access.

In Marie Vermeiren's documentary, prostituted women speak of feeling humiliated and dehumanized, feelings that remain with them whether prostitution is decriminalized or not. They fear that legalizing or decriminalizing prostitution will result in elimination of support programs for women who want to get out, condemning them to a life of violence and exploitation.

In research conducted by Farley *et al.*, participants spoke about many needs that illustrate the hold that prostitution has on their life, as seen

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<sup>74</sup> Ricci, Sandrine, Lyne Kurtzman and Marie-Andrée Roy. 2012. "La traite des femmes à des fins d'exploitation sexuelle: entre le déni et l'invisibilité". *Les Cahiers de l'Institut de recherches et d'études féministes*. Collection Agora: no 4, p. 169. (unofficial translation)

in the following table<sup>75</sup> (Table 5).. The study found that the women's needs for health care, legal aid, courses in self-defence and psychological assistance are indicative of the detrimental effects of violence experienced in prostitution. This data can serve to guide the establishment of programs to assist women to get out of prostitution.

Table 5: Needs expressed by women

	<b>9 countries (n=854)</b>	<b>Canada (n=100)</b>
Leave prostitution	89%	95%
Home or safe place	75%	66%
Job training	76%	67%
Drug/alcohol treatment	47%	82%
Health care	61%	41%
Peer support	51%	41%
Individual counselling	56%	58%
Self-defence training	45%	49%
Legal assistance	51%	33%
Legalize prostitution	34%	32%
Physical protection from pimp	23%	4%

<sup>75</sup> Cited in Day, Shelagh. 2008. *Prostitution, Violating the Human Rights of Poor Women*. Ottawa: Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes, p. 28.

## 6. Conclusion

During this three week exploratory study we located close to 200 prostitution sites in three Ontario cities (or part of). With additional resources we could have surveyed a few thousand prostitution sites in Ontario where thousands of women are forced to remain through violence, poverty and the lack of options.

Decriminalizing or legalizing prostitution cannot ensure the safety of women because the fundamental cause of violence in prostitution is the imbalance of power between men and women, as is the case in all other forms of sexist violence. Neither legalization nor decriminalization will rectify this inequality. Germany, where prostitution was legalized in 2001, is an example according to Der Spiegel<sup>76</sup>. Legalization did not succeed in protecting women from violence, from human trafficking and from inhumane, degrading and humiliating working conditions nor did it assist them to get out. On the contrary, it is the pimps and johns who profit by exploiting women, legally.

Legalizing or fully decriminalizing prostitution in Canada could have consequences for all women. When looking for work or being obliged by social assistance to find a job, will young girls and women be forced to accept work that would then be considered legal in an erotic massage parlour or an escort agency? Are these the “job opportunities” we have in mind for our daughters, our sisters, our friends?

It is time for Ontarians to ask themselves if they want prostitution to have a greater presence in our society, advertising its services everywhere and encouraging young people to “make a career” of prostitution, while normalizing exploitation of the most vulnerable. Because we are aware of the devastating consequences of exploiting women in the prostitution industry, we should as a society ask the

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<sup>76</sup> Der Spiegel. 2013. *Unprotected: How Legalizing Prostitution Has Failed*. Accessed June 3 2013. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/human-trafficking-persists-despite-legality-of-prostitution-in-germany-a-902533.html>

lawmakers to ensure a better future for Canadian women in accordance with their rights to liberty, equality and security.

AOCVF is a member of the Women's Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution that takes an abolitionist approach, that is, decriminalization of women in prostitution and maintaining criminalization of those who prostitute: pimps and johns. The Coalition is of the opinion, like many other social groups, that prostitution is a form of violence against women, that it exploits the most vulnerable women and undermines women's right to equality and security. This is why the Coalition opposes the legalization of prostitution or full decriminalization of prostitution.

What the Coalition is asking for is the abolition of prostitution, abolition of inequalities against women and girls and the abolition of poverty. The Coalition is asking for:

- Equality for all women
- Guaranteed income
- Decriminalization of women in prostitution
- Criminalization of johns and pimps
- Respect for aboriginal rights, treaties and international human rights of aboriginal women<sup>77</sup>.

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<sup>77</sup> Women's Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution. *We want more for women*. Accessed June 20 2013. <http://www.abolitionprostitution.ca/english/home>

## 7. Recommendations

Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes believes it is necessary to fight against the exploitation of women and girls in Ontario. This must occur at many levels. Here are some recommendations that result from the exploratory study about access to sites for sexual exploitation.

### 7.1 Women's rights

- Lawmakers must ensure that the constitutional rights of Canadian women are respected and that acquired rights against all forms of discrimination, particularly discrimination in employment, are not compromised. Federal members of parliament should be informed about the abolitionist position.
- The law should not penalize prostituted women but should criminalize pimps and johns for their participation in exploitation. Effective and strict measures should be established to penalize persons who exploit the vulnerability of women and girls (pimps and johns). These measures must convince johns to modify their behaviour, for example, listing in a register of sex offenders, public display of their identity or other punitive measure.<sup>78</sup>

### 7.2 Programs to assist women leaving prostitution

- Substantial investment should be allocated to the establishment of programs to assist women leaving prostitution. Funds saved by neither prosecuting nor incarcerating women in prostitution would be used to fund these programs. These programs should focus on

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<sup>78</sup> In the study by Farley, Melissa, Julie Bindel and Jacqueline M. Golding. 2009. *Men Who Buy Sex: Who they buy and what they know*. London: Eaves, p. 22, it was shown that consequences related to the reputation of johns are effective deterrents to buying women's bodies.



empowering women who have been sexually exploited and should foster their independence and autonomy.

- Programs to assist women to get out of prostitution should use a feminist analysis of violence against women, taking into account safety needs, basic needs and needs related to training and reintegration into the job market.
- Collaboration must be fostered between police services that are in contact with victims of sexual exploitation and community services in order to offer effective assistance and protection for the women.

### 7.3 Establishment of a large scale awareness program

With the goal of:

- Informing the general population about issues related to sexual exploitation, its impact on women and girls and on the community.
- Reducing the stigmatization of women in prostitution by the public, community services, education services, social, health and other services in order to foster a climate of solidarity.
- Raising awareness in the community about the connection between human trafficking, sexual exploitation and the role played by organized crime in Ontario.
- Raising the awareness of young people in school as early as kindergarden about gender equality.

## 7.4 Prevention programs

- It is important to abolish poverty and to reduce the economic inequalities women experience: better access to affordable housing, pay equity, access to post-secondary education, employment support such as affordable and universal day care programs.
- It is important to develop prevention programs so that young girls and boys understand the risks associated with human trafficking and prostitution.
- In schools it is important to promote sexual education programs that include sexual health, sexual violence and the types of sexual exploitation.
- It is essential that sexual assault centers be equipped to implement the action plans of programs to prevent, to raise awareness and to work to abolish all forms of sexual exploitation.

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