

## Chapter 2

# Review of the Research Studies on the Demand for Prostitution in the European Union and Beyond

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At the present time there is a fundamental gap in research knowledge on the demand for *trafficked* prostitution. In fact, up to now, the most significant literature has mainly focused on prostitutes, traffickers, routes, dynamics of the phenomenon and clients of *common* prostitution, but almost nothing has been done regarding the demand for *trafficked* prostitution.

Yet these actors, neglected by scientific studies, play a decisive role in the development of the phenomenon. Obviously, without demand for trafficked prostitutes this segment of the sex market would not exist.

This chapter surveys the most significant studies carried out to date on the clients of prostitutes, and on what induces them to seek commercial sex. The survey divides into two main parts: the literature on the clients of *common* prostitutes, and the literature on the clients of *trafficked* prostitutes. As stated above, the latter comprises a limited number of studies, because research in this field has concentrated almost entirely on the analysis of the supply of trafficked prostitution.

### 2.1 Clients of Common Prostitution

#### 2.1.1 Extant Literature on Clients of Common Prostitution

The majority of studies on the demand for prostitution have been conducted in the UK and the USA, and since the late 1930s. Davis (1937) analysed the phenomenon, confuting the assumption that poverty is the sole cause of the supply of sexual services: *A frequent proposal for abolition<sup>1</sup> under capitalism is that the salaries of working girls be raised. This proposal, which ignores the demand side, assumes that girls enter prostitution through economic necessity. [...] The harlot's return is not primarily a reward for abstinence, labor, or rent. It is primarily a reward for loss of social standing. She loses social esteem because our moral system condemns the commercialization of intercourse* (1937: 750).

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<sup>1</sup>In this context 'abolition' means the prohibition of prostitution.

Davis also stressed that pure economic measures are likely to be ineffective: *In a competitive system as soon as the salaries of working girls are increased, the supply of prostitutes diminishes. The resulting scarcity increases the effective demand, in the form of price, which rises as the supply diminishes. [...] With the rise in price, working girls even with good salaries will be tempted into the profession* (1937: 751).

After Davis's study, further research was conducted to determine the demand for prostitution. To be noted in particular is that the literature has concerned itself with two main questions: understanding "who clients are" (i.e. age, social class, number of customers, etc.); and "what motivates them to purchase sexual services" (i.e. what their attitude to prostitution is, and why they seek out commercial sex).

### **2.1.1.1 Profiling the Client: Number, Personal Features, Violence on Prostitutes and Life Stories**

#### **How Many Men Purchase Sex?**

The first significant study on the role of clients in the sex market was conducted in the US in the late 1940s (Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin, 1948). The aim of this survey was to estimate the number of males who had paid for sex at least once in their lives. According to the survey's results, two thirds of the men contacted had done so and 15–20% were regular clients of prostitutes.

In 1949, the Mass Observation Unit in Britain (quoted in Stanley, 1995) conducted a study in which the methodological shortcomings of the work by Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin were stressed and remedied.<sup>2</sup> The outcome of the survey was that around one fourth of the males interviewed had bought sex at least once in their lives (1995: 450).

During the 1970s, two distinct studies highlighted that the majority of clients were married and aged between 30 and 60 (Winick and Kinsie, 1971) and that a large number of them purchased sex when away from home (Gagnon and Simon, 1973).

In 1989 in Norway, another quantitative study was carried out to estimate the number of clients of prostitution in the country. The analysis found that 13% of the 1,001 men randomly chosen for the study had paid for sex at least once in their lives. However, the significant finding was that only a minority of the men interviewed were habitual clients. This induced the researchers to conclude that only a small proportion of prostitute clients are responsible for the largest part of the overall sex market (Prieur and Taksdal, 1989).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The methodology used (direct and short interviews conducted only with males) was criticised as being inaccurate (Brooks-Gordon, 2006: 134).

<sup>3</sup>To be noted is that a substantial proportion of the men interviewed were sailors who had hired prostitutes during long periods abroad. This datum affected the overall calculation made by the study (on this see also Brooks-Gordon, 2006: 82).

In 1992, the National Health and Social Life Survey (NHSLs) was carried out in the USA. This study warrants particular attention because it represented a very important step forward in research on the demand for prostitution. The methodology consisted in administration of an anonymous and general questionnaire on health issues in the fifty states of the Union. Among other things, the interviewees were asked if they had ever paid for sex in their lives. The results showed that 16% of the men interviewed had paid for sex at least once in their lives. Although there were no other specific questions on frequency, type of woman and sexual acts chosen, the overall findings yielded an overview on trends in prostitution in the US. For example, the percentage of men who had paid for sex and had served in the army was triple (35.9%) that of those who had not served in the army (12.6%) (Michael, Gagnon, Laumann and Kolata, 1994).

In the same period, two similar surveys conducted in Britain estimated at around 7% the number of men who had purchased sex at least once in their lives (Knox, MacArther and Simons, 1993; Wellings, Field, Johnson and Wadsworth, 1994).

In 1995–1996, Liverpool City Council, Liverpool City Challenge and Liverpool Centre Partnership (Campbell, 1998) conducted a survey on street prostitution in Liverpool. The researchers adopted an ethnographic approach to construct a profile of prostitute clients in the city. To this end, semi-structured interviews were conducted with clients who called an anonymous hotline established for the research (1998: 158). The sample was not representative (as stressed by the author); however, it enabled the collection of useful information on the features of prostitute clients: in particular, data on age, ethnic origin, employment status and residence (1998: 159–160). In contrast with previous surveys, the overall finding of this study was that the typical prostitute client was an ordinary man, not a deviant (1998: 160).

One of the widest-ranging surveys on the demand for prostitution was conducted in six countries (Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Ireland and USA) between 1996 and 1997 (Atchinson, Fraser and Lowman, 1998: 173). This composite survey was divided into two phases. First, analysis of the existing literature on the phenomenon and the study of judicial files<sup>4</sup> in Vancouver (Canada) led to the design of a questionnaire on “sex and sexuality” aimed at collecting information on sexual trends and reasons for buying sexual acts. The second phase was conducted also via the Internet and involved administration of the above-mentioned questionnaire to residents of the six countries examined. In addition, some interviews were conducted with Canadian clients (1998: 172–173). The findings of this research showed that 8% of the men surveyed had paid for sex only once in their lives, 33% had paid between two and ten times, 32% between eleven and fifty times, and the remaining 27% more than fifty times in their lives (1998: 198). This seems to confirm Prieur and Taksdal’s (1989) hypothesis that a limited number of clients are responsible for the largest portion of the sex market. The survey also pointed out that clients purchased sex in more than one venue: streets, escort services, massage parlours, bars, hotels, personal advertisements and brothels (1998: 198).

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<sup>4</sup>For kerb crawling.

In 1998 in Puerto Rico, a survey was carried out on relationships between elderly male clients (aged over 60) and prostitutes (Santos Ortiz, Lao-Melendez and Torres Sanchez, 1998). In this case, a qualitative approach was used to gain better understanding of sexuality in men aged over 60 and their possible contacts with prostitutes. One of the most interesting findings was that a high percentage (61%) of the males aged between 60 and 93 interviewed “reported a frequency of one or more instances per week” with a prostitute (1998: 213), thus confuting the stereotype of the absence of sexuality in elderly people.

In 2004 in France, the *Mouvement du Nid* and *IFAR* contacted 63 male prostitute clients and interviewed them to collect details on their features and motives for seeking commercial sex (Bouamama, 2004). The study found that the majority of the interviewees were aged over 50 (36.6%), mainly single or divorced (65.1%), but 55.5% of them had one or more children. As regards the type of prostitution chosen, 46% of the men stated that they used women working on the streets (2004: 28–30).

Another study on the demand for prostitution was conducted by Sven-Axel Månsson (2005) and made some of the most reliable estimates on the number of men paying for sex at least once in their lives in nine countries (Finland, Norway, Sweden, Great Britain, Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain, Russia<sup>5</sup> and USA). The results ranged between 7% in Britain<sup>6</sup> and 39% in Spain.<sup>7</sup>

After this brief description of research estimating the number of prostitute clients in several countries, Table 2.1 summarizes the findings of the above-illustrated studies.

#### Personal Features of Clients (Age, Marital Status, Race, Education, etc.)

As far as the personal features of prostitute clients are concerned, the above-mentioned research by Atchinson, Fraser and Lowman (1998) showed that, in the six countries investigated, “their ages ranged from eighteen to sixty-seven years, with a mean of twenty-nine. [...] 57 percent are single, 33 percent are married or live in a common-law relationship, and 9 percent are separated or divorced. [...] Eighty-seven percent of the respondents are Caucasian. The majority of respondents are employed full-time (56 percent) or they are students (30 percent)” (1998: 197).

In the same period, Martin A. Monto conducted a study for the American National Institute of Justice on the clients of street prostitutes (Monto, 1999). For his research, Monto used a sample of 1,342 men voluntarily attending a re-education program for clients of prostitutes (who had been arrested for soliciting) in San Francisco, Portland and Las Vegas.

The research found that the clients’ ages ranged between 18 and 84 with a mean of 38; with a slightly higher proportion of Hispanics and Asians compared to the overall population of the three cities. In addition, some significant differences in

<sup>5</sup>Data for Russia refer only to the city of St. Petersburg.

<sup>6</sup>Based on the above-illustrated data collected by Wellings, Field, Johnson and Wadsworth, (1994).

<sup>7</sup>Based on data collected by Leridon, Zesson and Hubert, 1998.

**Table 2.1** Percentage of men who paid for sex at least once in their lives in a number of countries.

Country	%	Year	Reference
Finland	13%	1999	Haavio-Mannila and Rotkirch, 2000
Great Britain	15–20%	1948	Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin, 1948
Great Britain	25%	1949	Stanley, 1995
Great Britain	6.4%	1993	Knox, MacArther and Simons, 1993
Great Britain	6.8%	1991	Wellings, Field, Johnson and Wadsworth, 1994
Multi-country <sup>8</sup>	8%	1997	Atchinson, Fraser and Lowman, 1998
Netherlands	14%	1989	Leridon, Zesson and Hubert, 1998
Norway	13%	1989	Prieur and Taksdal, 1989
Norway	11%	1992	Leridon, Zesson and Hubert, 1998
Puerto Rico <sup>9</sup>	61%	1998	Santos Ortiz, Lao-Melendez and Torres Sanchez, 1998
Russia <sup>10</sup>	10%	1996	Haavio-Mannila and Rotkirch, 2000
Spain	39%	1992	Leridon, Zesson and Hubert, 1998
Sweden	13%	1996	Lewin, 1998
Switzerland	19%	1992	Leridon, Zesson and Hubert, 1998
United States	16%	1992	Michael, Gagnon, Laumann and Kolata, 1994

*Source:* Elaboration of extant literature data

marital status emerged between the interviewees and the US population. In fact, only 41% of clients were married, compared to 56% of US males. Moreover, 22% of married clients defined their marriages as “not too happy”, compared to 2% in the overall population (Monto, 1999: 29–30).

Another significant detail to emerge from Monto’s study is that only around 10% of the respondents declared that they used prostitutes more than once a month (1999: 31–32). In this regard, the author pointed out that “men arrested for trying to hire prostitutes may represent the less experienced prostitution client, with more experienced clients better able to avoid arrest, either due to the knowledge of police procedures, familiarity with prostitutes themselves, or participating in off-street prostitution” (1999: 32).

As regards age, the survey reported that 24 was the mean age for the first encounter with a prostitute, while habitual clients were more likely to have their first encounter at a younger age (*ibid.*).

The interviewees were also asked about their use of condoms: 73% declared that they “always” used one, 12% “often” and 6% asked for manual masturbation, which did not require the use of a condom (*ibid.*).

Finally, Monto also investigated sexual activities with prostitutes, highlighting that fellatio was the most frequent act (51.7% of the cases), followed by vaginal

<sup>8</sup> The survey was conducted through an internet questionnaire in which 77 percent of the respondents were from USA; 13 percent from Canada; 5 percent from Australia and New Zealand and 5 percent from British Isles (Atchinson, Fraser and Lowman, 1998: 197). Final results were not disaggregated per country, for this reason one has chosen the indication “Multicountry”.

<sup>9</sup> In this case the survey was conducted only on a group of males between 60 and 93.

<sup>10</sup> The data from Russia only concerns St. Petersburg.

sex (12%), oral and vaginal sex (10%), manual masturbation (5.7%), anal sex (0.9%), other activities (2.5%), while 17.3% of the interviewees reported two or more of the “most common” sexual activities with prostitutes (1999: 32–32).<sup>11</sup>

Finally, in 2003, Anne-Maria Marttila carried out research on Finnish clients purchasing sexual services from Baltic and Russian prostitutes (Marttila, 2003). The author relied on the specialist literature and interviews with a number of men in order to determine their features and motives (2003: 3–4). She also visited specialized Finnish Internet forums in order to learn the jargon of clients and to monitor the use of this medium in the demand dynamics.

Although Marttila’s sample was not representative and homogeneous, it yielded some details on the habits of Finnish prostitute users. It was found that the majority of them were sexual tourists who purchased sex in Tallinn or St. Petersburg. Furthermore, they used adult prostitutes, although some of them stated that they had had sex with minors, above all when abroad (2003: 4).

### **2.1.1.2 Why do Men Buy Sexual Services? Attitudes Towards Prostitution and Motives for Purchasing Sexual Services**

#### **Motives That Push Men to Look for Commercial Sex**

Since the earliest studies (e.g. Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin 1948), attempts have been made to explain why clients purchase sexual acts. Of course, as far as this early research is concerned, it should be borne in mind that it was conducted in the USA of the first half of the twentieth century, when sexuality was generally a taboo. For this reason, its conclusions must be regarded in light of its historical context. Those authors pointed out that prostitution was mainly sought to satisfy *sexual perversions* (such as fellatio)<sup>12</sup> that could not be obtained from regular partners.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, they tried to explain clients’ motivations by pointing out that prostitutes were regarded as an easy, cheap and certain way to get sex (Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin, 1948: 607).

In this regard, the growing sexual freedom that has characterized Western societies since the 1960s should be borne in mind when considering the different approaches adopted by researchers in more recent studies. In particular, since the 1960s, many American psychological studies have focused on the motives and possible mental illnesses that induce men to buy sexual acts from prostitutes. Among these, to be mentioned in particular, is the research by Charles Winick, who analysed 732 men and sought to explain their purchase of sex as a form of

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<sup>11</sup> The above-illustrated research was also re-published for *Violence against women* (Busch, Bell, Hotelling and Monto, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> At that time, fellatio was considered a sexual perversion, and in some of the states of the Union it was also a criminal offence.

<sup>13</sup> Sullivan and Simon (1998: 135), citing Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin (1948), reported that 48 percent of white men with a college education, 49 percent of white men with less than a college education, and 37 percent of African-American men with a college education asked for oral sex from prostitutes.

psychopathology (Winick, 1962). His theories were then developed during the 1970s by Janus, Bess and Saltus (1977), and above all by Stoller (1976). According to the latter, the purchase of sex is “a habitual, preferred aberration necessary for one’s full satisfaction, primarily motivated by hostility” (1976: 4).

These works were followed in the 1980s and 1990s by other important psychological research studies which sought to determine the motives for hiring prostitutes, arguing that customers were essentially “common men” and not particularly deviant (McLeod, 1982; Holzman and Pines, 1982; Diana, 1985; Kinnell, 1989; Høigard and Finstad, 1992; McKeganey and Barnard, 1996; Campbell, 1997; Monto, 2000).

In this regard, McKeganey and Barnard (1996) distinguished five main reasons for purchasing sex:

- the chance to buy particular sex acts
- the opportunity to approach a large number of women
- the chance to have women with specific characteristics
- the contact with prostitutes can be minimal
- the element of thrill involved in paying for sex

In two surveys conducted in Britain in 1993 and 1994,<sup>14</sup> Campbell (1998) noted that motives largely corresponded to those identified by McKeganey and Barnard (1998: 163–166).

Another important definition was put forward by Blanchard (1994), who identified the concept of “McSex” i.e. the search by men for variety, control and the immediate satisfaction of sexual urges. According to Blanchard, prostitution responds to these needs.

A similar set of motives for purchasing sexual services were identified by Grubman Black (2003). In this case, the reasons were divided into six categories:

- Loneliness, shyness, awkwardness: men look for long-term relationships with prostitutes and consider sex to be an intimate and secret practice
- Need for uncommon sexual acts: the motivation is the chance to experiment with something new
- Thrill of the hunt: men seek out prostitutes to enjoy the power of choosing a woman
- Changing the rules: men force women to perform acts against their will and/or engage in some form of violence
- Roughing her up: men vent their frustrations on prostitutes, assaulting and despising them
- Ultimate control: this is another kind of need for dominance, because men use prostitutes to exercise total power over them, treating them as mere commodities

Another attempt to classify customers’ motives was made in the survey by Bouamama (2004: 35–77), who interviewed 63 French prostitute clients in order to profile them.

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<sup>14</sup> Knox, MacArther and Simons, 1993; Wellings, Field, Johnson and Wadsworth, 1994.



A section of Bouamama's study analyses the first time that the subjects had been clients of prostitutes (i.e. not necessarily their first sexual experience). In this case, the researcher found a significant role of the peer group in hiring a prostitute, this being an act considered normal by the others. In addition, the frequent purchase of sex by friends seemed to induce the men to introject this "norm" so as to be accepted by the group (2004: 56–57). Another set of interviewees reported, by contrast, solitary entrance into the world of prostitution, sometimes hiding it from their friends (2004: 59–60). The research also found that some respondents became clients following an unsuccessful affective relationship (2004: 60–61). Finally, Bouamama identified some further reasons for purchasing sex: relaxation, as a consequence of drug/alcohol use and because of a lack of self-confidence (2004: 61–62).

After this analysis, Bouamama also focused on clients' sexual lives. The results indicated widespread dissatisfaction due to a decrease in the partner's libido, or lack of pleasure with the habitual partner (2004: 63–65). Moreover, the experience with prostitutes was often considered unpleasant, and it aroused feelings of shame, guilt and self-ridicule (2004: 65–67). In this regard, the survey highlighted the need of some customers to obtain affection from prostitutes, so that some of them explained their sexual dissatisfaction as being due to the lack of dialogue and tenderness given by prostitutes (2004: 69–70). This aspect was also stressed by the "impossible kiss" (*le baiser impossible*) that some men reported: They stated that they fell in love with prostitutes and tried to kiss them on the mouth but were rejected and that their illusions were frustrated (2004: 71–73).

But Bouamama also found some clients who, on the contrary, declared themselves happy with their relations with prostitutes. The author indicated four main reasons for this satisfaction:

1. Relief: the interviewees purchased sexual services because they gave relief from the difficulties of daily life
2. Need for domination and feeling of power: the men exerted the power of money (*le pouvoir de l'argent*), which gave them a sense of dominance over women, who were mere commodities for them
3. Therapy: customers used prostitutes as a kind of therapy for their depressions and personal troubles
4. Improve self-confidence: this category comprised men who were satisfied with their encounters, because through prostitution they were able to regain trust in themselves and their capabilities (2004: 74–76)

Interestingly, in this case too, some features of prostitute clients resembled those found by Månsson and Proveyer Cervantes and are described below.

As said, another attempt to categorize client motives has been made by Månsson and Proveyer Cervantes (2005), who built the five-type scheme presented in Table 2.2 by drawing on the literature and in-depth interviews with clients.

In the dirty whore fantasy, clients are attracted by prostitutes regarded as "sexual animals" ready to satisfy their urges. Besides this attractive aspect, there is also contempt for the "whore" as a lost and deviant woman, as opposed to the "Madonna", who should be respected.



**Table 2.2** Clients' motivations for purchasing sexual services

Motivation	Description
The dirty whore fantasy	Expressions of contradictory feelings of curiosity, excitement and contempt
Another kind of sex	Images of a certain kind of sex which cannot be experienced with a non-prostitute woman
No other women	Referring to shyness, fear, advanced age, physical and mental disabilities: "there are no other women for me"
Shopping for sex	Images of sex as a consumer product
Another kind of woman	Images of a true and natural femininity. Expression of strong anti-feminist notions

Source: Månsson and Proveyer Cervantes (2005)

In the another-kind-of-sex category, men use prostitutes in order to engage in sexual practices not possible with wives or regular partners. As seen above, in this regard Monto (2001) found that 51.7% of the men interviewed in Portland, San Francisco and Las Vegas asked for fellatio from the prostitutes they used.

The no-other-women category comprises clients with great difficulties in contacting women in general because of physical and/or psychological obstacles. For this reason, they turn to prostitutes in order to satisfy their sexual desires; otherwise, "there is no other woman for me". In this case, too, Monto found that out of 700 interviewed clients, 42% agreed they were "shy and awkward" when trying to meet women, 23% felt unattractive physically and 23% "had difficulties meeting women who were not nude dancers and prostitutes" (Monto, 2000: 80).

Månsson and Proveyer Cervantes include in the shopping-for-sex category those men who regard prostitution as a commodity, relying on the above "McSex" expression coined by Blanchard (1994). They also point out the role of pornography and "sex commodification" in Western society as push factors behind the view of prostitution as a kind of "shopping".

Finally, the another-kind-of-woman group comprises clients who seek out prostitutes in order to re-establish the supremacy that men have lost in Western society. In this regard, O'Connell Davidson (2001) points out that, for example, sexual tourists consider the prostitutes that they meet abroad to be women who have accepted their "role" of subjugated beings who must satisfy men's sexual needs (2001: 13).

An important attempt to systematize the various approaches to the possible motives inducing clients to buy commercial sex has been made by Ben-Israel and Levenkron (2005: 18–25) drawing on the extant literature. These authors focused on three macro-categories of motives inducing men to seek commercial sex: first, biological reasons connected to the "inner" nature of men; then, individual psychological factors and finally, social and supra-individual elements. These are now described in detail.

### *Biological Theory*

This theory postulates that, "the male sexual impulse is an instinct as uncontrollable as the need for food or drink. [...] Women, on the other hand, have a weak sexual impulse". According to this theory, "sex in exchange for payment answers the need

of many men for a sexual outlet” (Ben-Israel and Levenkron 2005: 18; Sion, 1977: 24–29). The authors maintain that this theory is now outdated, because more recent studies have stressed both the “controllability” of the sexual impulse and the important role of social and cultural factors in characterizing this male “need” (Ben-Israel and Levenkron, 2005: 18; McIntosh, 1978).

### *Psychological-personality Theories*

This cluster of theories seeks to give a psychological explanation to the need for commercial sex, relying above all on “childhood traumas, education, and world views that developed over time regarding concepts such as sex, eroticism, and power” (2005: 18). Ben-Israel and Levenkron include within this framework the results of research by several authors,<sup>15</sup> and they elaborate six categories:

- The dirty whore fantasy (Ben-Israel and Levenkron, 2005: 18–19)
- The need for a “degraded sexual object devoid of human qualities” (2005: 19–20)
- The need for a “real” manhood where women are subjugated to the male (2005: 20)
- The need for different sex not obtainable from regular partners (2005: 20–21)
- The need for a compassionate prostitute (2005: 21)
- The need not to be considered a client, especially for “sex tourists” sensitive to the social blame of this label (ibid.)

### *Social Theories*

Here too, the classification is based on examination of the literature.<sup>16</sup> It shifts attention to the social level, pointing out that: “the mechanism of the sex industry [...] is not driven by independently acting individuals; it is both a product and a shaper of surrounding social and cultural context” (ibid.). In this case, the authors identify four main categories:

- The feminist theory that focuses on the “power relationships between men and women” and the need for domination over women by clients (2005: 22)
- The commodification of sex by the mass media and cultural models of sexuality (2005: 22–23)
- The role of the peer group and the demand for prostitution as a “means of male bonding” (2005: 23)
- The need to return to “the old good days” when male dominance was unchallenged: This category is an adaptation of the first one linked to trafficking. In fact, the above-illustrated need for dominance induces men to seek out prostitutes from developing countries, where women are still strongly subservient to men. This belief is reinforced by such colonial stereotypes as: “African women are ‘wild’, Asian women mix ‘exotica’ and ‘obedience’, Latin American women are ‘hot’ and so on” (2005: 23–24).

<sup>15</sup>E.g. McKeganey and Barnard, 1996; O’Connell Davidson, 2001; Grubman Black, 2003; Bouamama, 2004; Månsson and Proveyer Cervantes, 2005.

<sup>16</sup>E.g. Funari, 1997; MacKinnon, 1989; O’Connell Davidson, 1996; Pendelton, 1997; Sheiner, 1997.

After this examination of studies investigating the possible reasons for buying sexual services, Table 2.3 synthesizes the most salient ones identified, also taking into account the three macro-categories developed by Ben-Israel and Levenkron.

## 2.2 Clients of Trafficked Prostitution

As said above, despite the extent of trafficking for the exploitation of prostitution, few researchers have focused on the demand side of the overall sex market. Now presented are the most salient studies on this matter, their research methods and conclusions.

### 2.2.1 *Extant Literature on Clients of Trafficked Prostitution*

Raymond, Hughes and Gomez (2001) conducted one of the first research studies on trafficked prostitution in the USA. They interviewed 128 persons connected to the sex industry, police officers, social service/healthcare workers and academics (2001: 28–29). Their results highlighted that trafficked prostitution in the USA was generally organized along ethnic lines (e.g. Chinese and Vietnamese massage parlours and Mexican brothels) with different prices and access policies for non-members of the ethnic group concerned. In regard to Chinese brothels, a client stated: “Japanese and foreigners (Whites and Latinos) generally start at least \$20 more than Chinese and Korean” (2001: 69). Furthermore, “If you happen to be Black, sometimes the Korean [sic] places just won’t let you in” (ibid.).

It emerged from interviews with prostitutes that the majority of their clients were Caucasians, mainly aged 30–50 and married. In addition, men from the US military were frequently reported as customers. To be noted in this regard is that strip bars and brothels are frequent around US military bases, and Asian trafficked women are often exploited there as prostitutes (2001: 69–70). As far as clients’ occupations were concerned, the research identified various types: workers, professionals, politicians, academics, etc. (2001: 70).

The study also focused on the attitude of clients towards trafficked prostitutes, finding that they mainly wanted young girls (sometimes under-age) and would complain if the women tried to set limits on their requests (2001: 71–72).<sup>17</sup> As regards the use of condoms, the results show that the men often expected not to use them and would pay more to have unprotected sex (2001: 72–73). Finally, the research stressed various forms of violence perpetrated against women by customers: physical violence, sexual assault, sadistic sex and the use of weapons (2001: 75–77).

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<sup>17</sup> An interviewed prostitute indicated some sexual acts and relative prices: “*Sitting naked: \$10; verbally abusing men: \$10 - \$20; masturbation: \$20; homosexual fantasy: \$20; using a dildo: \$30; anal sex with dildo: \$40; pee in a glass: \$100; sniff shoes, pop balloons with my high heels, hotdog man-put ketchup and mustard on his penis, tie a string on his penis and tug*” (Raymond and Hughes, 2001: 72).

**Table 2.3** Principal motivations for purchasing sexual services as emerged by literature

Motivation	Description	Macro-category	Source
Physiological need for sex	"Men are men" and because of their nature they need sex (e.g. McSex and shopping for sex)	Biological theory	Blanchard, 1994; McKeganey and Barnard, 1996; Månsson and Proveyer Cervantes, 2005; Ben-Israel and Levenkron, 2005
Impossibility of getting non-commercial sex	The only way to obtain sex is buying it (e.g. because of shyness, awkwardness, "no other woman")	Psychological theories	Grubman Black, 2003; Bouamama, 2004; Månsson and Proveyer Cervantes, 2005; Ben-Israel and Levenkron, 2005
Need for affection and comprehension	The prostitute is someone to talk with and not only a "sexual object". She gives the affection that is normally denied by regular partners	Psychological theories	Bouamama, 2004; Ben-Israel and Levenkron, 2005
Particular sexual acts and/or chance to have many sexual partners	Chance of getting unusual sexual performances not obtainable by regular partners (e.g. fellatio or anal sex), also for the influence of pornography and sex commodification in the media	Psychological/social theories	Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin, 1948; McKeganey and Barnard, 1996; Grubman Black, 2003; Bouamama, 2004; Månsson and Proveyer Cervantes, 2005; Ben-Israel and Levenkron, 2005
Need for dominion	Power exercise over a woman who is completely subjugated because she is paid (i.e. re-establishment of the role of the man, the power of money)	Social theories	McKeganey and Barnard, 1996; O'Connell Davidson, 2001; Grubman Black, 2003; Bouamama, 2004; Månsson and Proveyer Cervantes, 2005; Ben-Israel and Levenkron, 2005
Peer group	Meeting prostitutes is seen as something normal by the peer group and consequently introjected as a social norm. Meeting prostitutes is important to be accepted by the group	Social theories	Bouamama, 2004; Ben-Israel and Levenkron, 2005

*Source:* Elaboration of the extant literature

In 2002, Raymond et al. published a detailed analysis of trafficking for sexual exploitation in five countries, i.e. Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Venezuela and the United States. The research focused inter alia on the “buyers” of sexual services, using for the purpose in-depth interviews with trafficking victims who had received assistance in four out of the five states examined. The most significant results are summarized below.

### *Indonesia*

Twenty-five interviewed trafficked prostitutes reported that their clients were mainly Malaysians, Singaporeans and Indonesians; followed by Chinese, Arabs, Bruneians, Indians, Taiwanese and Westerners (Europe and USA). Ages ranged between 18 and 60 and the mean was 39 (Dzuhayatin and Silawati, 2002: 81). The study also highlighted that a large group of clients was made up of old Chinese men who bought the time of prostitutes in order to receive care and attention (ibid.). Moreover, a significant number of customers were Western sex tourists who exploited the low costs of services: “Buying women for sexual activity was considered cheap and exotic entertainment, not affordable in their countries of origin. Respondents said that for the amount of US\$100, these men could afford to pay travel costs, stay in 3-star hotels, take all meals in restaurants and book young women for 2 nights” (2002: 82). Finally, as far as violence by clients was concerned, the interviewed women reported some cases (mainly linked to demands for oral or anal sex), but they generally indicated their pimps as the principal “source of violence” (2002: 82–85).

### *The Philippines*

Forty-four trafficked prostitutes were interviewed for the report (Santos, Belarmino and Ignacio, 2002: 91). They were mainly exploited in Japan, where they catered to customers aged 30–50, who sometimes asked them for “a good time together” and “normal” sex. However, the women reported several cases of clients who wanted “perverse or sadistic sex” (2002: 107). Some of the women interviewed had been trafficked to Nigeria, where they serviced Filipino seamen, Taiwanese and Japanese businessmen, and some locals. They reported that regular clients were not generally violent, and that some of them had become their boyfriends (ibid.). Finally, as far as sexual services were concerned, the women reported that many men asked for oral sex, which disgusted them (2002: 108).

### *Venezuela*

In this case, the research team interviewed forty-one women trafficked to Venezuela for the purposes of prostitution (Ramirez Rodriguez and Linares Gonzales, 2002: 161). They reported that their clients’ ages ranged between 18 and 80, and that they belonged to all social classes, occupations and ethnic groups (2002: 166). As seen above for other countries, in Venezuela also the women were asked to engage in all kinds of sexual practices “including oral, anal and sadistic sex” (2002: 167).

As regards the use of condoms, the interviewees stated that only a small percentage of clients used them regularly, while others tried to have sex without them, assuming that the women were healthy or because they found unprotected sex more pleasurable. In addition, clients offered more money or alcohol so as not to use condoms (2002: 168). Finally, the survey found that the great majority of ex-prostitutes had undergone episodes of violence by clients: in particular, beatings, strangling, and threatening with firearms (*ibid.*).

### *The United States*

For this section, thirty-four victims of trafficking to the US, mainly from Russia, were contacted (Hynes, Gomez and Rusakova, 2002: 188). In this case, too, the results indicated that clients were mostly men aged 20–70, of all social classes, ethnic groups, mostly married and with many different occupations (2002: 195). As far as sexual acts were concerned, the interviewed women were often forced to engage in anal or oral sex and sometimes sadomasochistic acts (2002: 196).

A few other reports (in particular ILO, 2005; Belser, de Cock and Mehran, 2005; Anderson and O'Connell Davidson, 2003) have sought to improve data collection methods and have shifted their attention to trafficking in human beings and its features. Special mention should be made of the IOM Report by Bridget Anderson and Julia O'Connell Davidson (2003), which examined the relationship between the demand for trafficked prostitution and/or domestic labour and the extent of trafficking in human beings in six pilot countries (India, Thailand, Italy, Sweden, Denmark and Japan). The importance of this survey arises from its close concern with the role of demand in the dynamics of human trafficking. The survey was based on interviews with clients of prostitution and/or forced domestic labour, as well as with trafficking victims assisted by the IOM.

The results showed that clients generally know that traffickers exploit prostitutes (2003: 23), but this is not decisive in changing their attitude to prostitution. In addition, some interviews highlighted the use of “neutralization techniques”<sup>18</sup> to justify client violence. According to some of the men interviewed, violence was merely a reaction against “substandard services” or the “forced use of condoms” (2003: 24). This commodification of prostitutes was summed up by a client who said: “she is a commodity offering a service and she should accept that” (2003: 25). The exploratory nature of the survey warrants further research because, on the basis of the data collected, the authors argue: “[one] could almost say that supply generates demand rather than the other way round” (2003: 41).

A 2005 study on the clients of trafficked prostitutes in Israel was based on interviews with trafficking victims who had received assistance from the Hotline for Migrant Workers in the period 2000–2003 (Ben-Israel and Levenkron, 2005: 17). As in other surveys, the results revealed that the Israeli clients of trafficked prostitutes were from all social classes, with diverse occupations and that they were sometimes

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<sup>18</sup> For a definition of neutralization techniques, see Sykes and Matza, 1957.

very young adolescents (13–14 years old) who had sex with prostitutes in performance of some sort of initiation rite (*ibid.*).

### 2.3 Limits of the Extant Literature

As seen above, although quantitative data on the extent of human trafficking indicate an increase in the number of victims,<sup>19</sup> studies on the demand for trafficked prostitutes are almost non-existent. It is therefore unclear whether and how demand affects the phenomenon, whether clients are aware that they are using trafficking victims, and above all whether and how they differ from the clients of common prostitutes.

Indeed, “from a theoretical point of view, the client is central to the study of prostitution. Without him, there is no sex trade. Politically, the client is central because prostitution is held out to be the quintessential instance of the male sexualization, commodification, and exploitation of women. From the point of view of policymakers the client is central because he represents an obvious site of social intervention, be it in the name of protecting neighborhoods and preventing nuisance and/or preventing sexual exploitation of children and violence against women who prostitute. And yet we know very little about the client” (Atchinson, Fraser and Lowman, 1998: 172). This sentence is the introduction to a study carried out ten years ago. However, as pointed out at the outset, since then knowledge about the phenomenon has progressed only little.

As seen above, the majority of studies focus almost exclusively on the demand for common prostitution. This is clearly the main weakness in studies on the topic, for the attention paid to profiling the client of common prostitution leaves some core questions unanswered: Is the user of a trafficked prostitute different from a “common” client? Why does he choose trafficked prostitutes? Is he aware of the exploitation? These and other issues must be examined in consequence of the great changes in Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Today, the sex market has a globalized dimension in which trafficked women account for large part of the overall prostitution supply.

Another limitation to current research is the impossibility of collecting reliable quantitative data due to the covert and intimate nature of prostitute use. Monto (2004: 165) has also underlined the difficulty of collecting information from clients often reluctant to divulge personal details. It should also be pointed out that even where prostitution is not criminalized it is nevertheless often regarded as deviant. This hampers sampling procedures and consequently the production of reliable statistics.

Various qualitative approaches have been developed to remedy this lack of information and to profile the customers of prostitution. One notes in particular the widespread use of semi-structured interviews with prostitutes as means to collect

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<sup>19</sup>See Di Nicola, Orfano, Cauduro, Conci, 2005; Di Nicola, 2004; ILO, 2005.



details on clients. This approach has the advantage of yielding reliable information on clients: their age, education, social background, etc. In addition, it is best able to detect client violence on prostitutes. Furthermore, as far as the motives for purchasing sex are concerned, direct contact with prostitute clients seems to be the most efficient method, given the obviously more precise information that it yields.

From the methodological point of view, however, interviews raise the problem of comparability, because questions and data collecting criteria tend to differ greatly from one study to another. However, at the current stage of research, these qualitative methods seem most effective because they enable the researcher to “enter” the intimate sphere of prostitute clients (e.g. through semi-structured interviews or life stories). In this regard, the results available appear promising, above all in order to understand prostitute client motives in general and they seem best suited for extension to the clients (or possible clients) of trafficked prostitutes in particular. This category of prostitute clients, in fact, is likely to be more reluctant to share their choices because of public blame and possible criminalization.

Of course, although direct contact with clients is a key instrument with which to improve overall knowledge about this population, the difficulty of meeting them should be stressed. In this regard, a part of the extant literature relies mainly on clients convicted for kerb-crawling and attending re-education programs (e.g. Atchinson, Fraser and Lowman, 1998; Monto, 1999). However, the data collected may be affected by the attempt to gratify the interviewers in order to prove a “good will” of re-socialization. For this reason, it is important to extend the range by contacting “active” customers unaffected by the bias of convictions or State programs.

### ***2.3.1 Need for Exploring Who Clients of Trafficked Prostitution Are***

Who is the client of trafficked prostitution? After the above survey on the most salient studies, the question is still unanswered. Some research studies have proposed hypotheses, and some similarities have been found; nevertheless, a definitive answer is far from forthcoming at the moment. Further analysis is required to improve knowledge about this actor of the sex market: his age, social class, work, marital status and so on. In addition, precise information on this side of trafficking would give researchers better understanding about the dynamics of the phenomenon and possible influences on it by clients.

In this regard, there has been much debate in recent years between two opposite, and often ideologically driven, points of view. On the one side stands the regulationist approach adopted in the Netherlands, which aims to “manage” prostitution by considering it a profession and thus remove it from illegality. In this scenario, men are “regular” clients who purchase a legal “good”. On the other side is the prohibitionist approach adopted in Sweden with its firm stance against prostitute clients, who are criminally liable for purchasing sex (Di Nicola, Cauduro, Conci and Orfano, 2006).

For the time being it is not possible to say if there is a better model on prostitution than another in tackling human trade, and these questions should be answered only after deeper analysis has been made of the world of clients, so that a clearer picture of the overall scenario provides the basis for measures to tackle the criminal organizations that manage the process.

### ***2.3.2 Need for Exploring Pushing Factors for the Choice of Trafficked Prostitution***

For complete understanding, besides constructing the profile of the client, it is necessary also to determine the reasons that induce him to seek out sexual services. As the literature shows, there is a wide range of motives; but which of them are the most significant for clients of trafficked prostitutes? Are there concrete differences between a client who chooses common prostitutes and one who chooses trafficked ones? Is there a real choice, or is the sex market made up only of trafficked women? None of these questions has been answered by the studies conducted to date. For this reason, to “complete the puzzle” it is essential also to improve knowledge of these factors, also for the purpose of refining the above-mentioned tackling strategies.

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