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Sex purchase law

“A person who, obtains casual sexual relations in return for payment, shall be convicted of purchasing a sexual service and sentenced to a fine or a prison term of at most 1 year.

The provision of the first paragraph also applies if the payment was promised or given by another person.”

(Swedish Penal Code, chapter 6, section 11)



Background

Perspective 1: Equality

-It is not acceptable that women and children can be bought and sold in a modern, equal society. Buying sex is considered as a part of mens violence against women

Perspective 2: Victim

”...it is unreasonable to also criminalize the one who, at least in most cases, is the weaker party who is exploited by others who want to satisfy their own sexual desires“ (Swedish government proposition 1997/98:55)

Perspective 3: Demand

-Focus on the root cause. With no demand for sexual services there will be no market for sexual services



Arresting a sexbuyer

- Arrested when leaving
- Cellphone confiscated
- Interrogation on the spot
- Admits: fine
- Denying: possible trial
- DNA sample taken on all persons arrested for buying sex
- Prostitution unit works very close with Stockholm Social Services. All sexbuyers offered optional therapy after arrest.
- All persons encountered in prostitution informed about Swedish legislation and the possibility to help and support. Always offered to be taken to a shelter. Contact information to Prostitution unit always given.



Result - 1 day case

- 1 sexbuyer arrested
- 1 pimp arrested
- 1 victim taken to shelter

- The pimp sentenced to 14 months imprisonment and 5 years of deportation

- Surveillance time: 2 hours
- Law enforcement personnel needed: 2 police officers + 1 social worker



Criticism

- Prostitution will go underground and authorities will not be able to find it
- Men with disabilities will no longer be able to have a sexlife
- The sex purchase law will drive sexbuyers to other countries



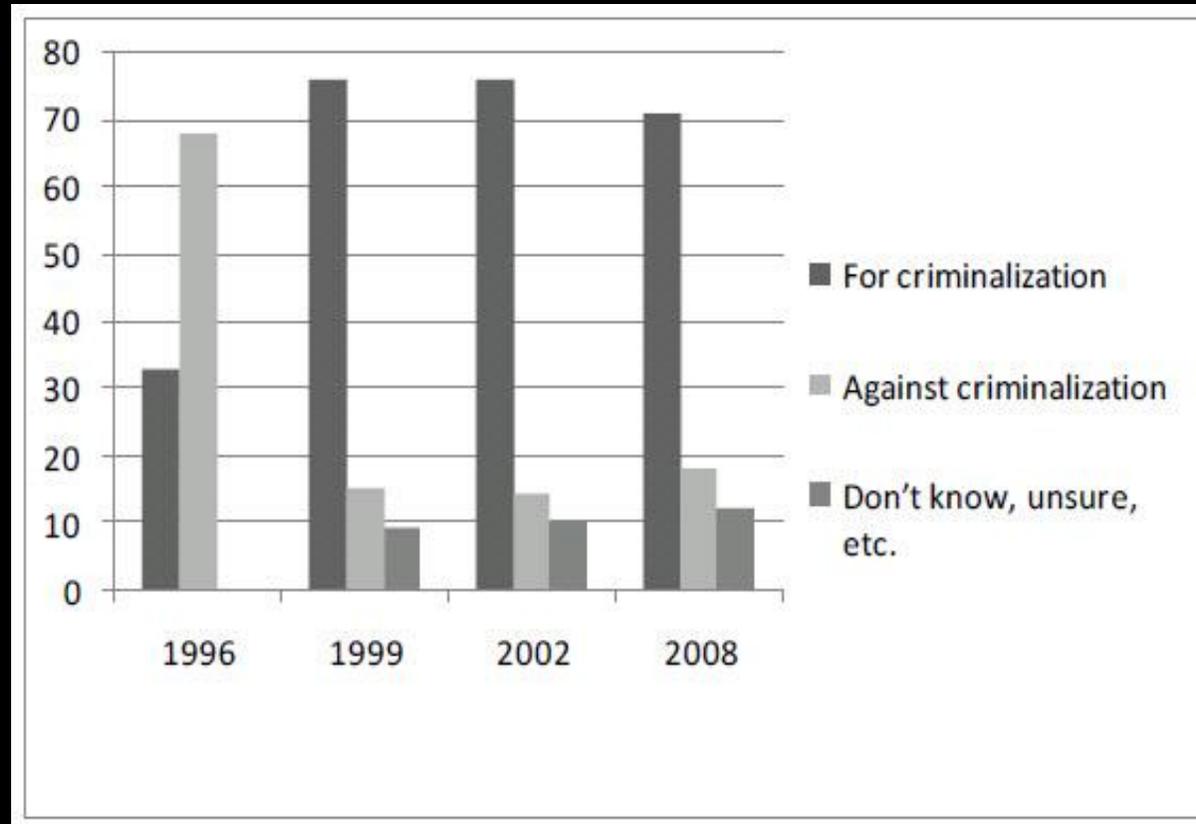
Criticism

- The violence will increase against women in prostitution
- Women in prostitution will not speak to authorities and they will not dare to report violent clients
- Women in prostitution will not use condoms anymore due to competition
- Prostitution will not decrease



Public support

Four official opinion polls made since 1996.



(Swedish government commission SOU 2010:49)



Strong public support

Polls are showing that the support of the law is particularly strong among young people.

1999 poll showed 84% of people aged 15-29 in support of the law

2002 poll showed 87% of people aged 15-29 in support of the law

2008 poll showed 78% of people aged 18-28 in support of the law

(Swedish government commission SOU 2010:49)



Results

According to academic research, the legislation has direct impact on Swedish men's prostitution behaviour - the number of Swedish men who have bought someone for the purpose of prostitution has decreased from 13.6 % in 1996 to only 7.9% in 2008.

(Prostitution i Norden, Kuosmanen 2008 & Nordic Gender Institute)



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