

A Comparison of the Male Customers of Female Street Prostitutes with National Samples of Men

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***Abstract:** Previous research on customers of prostitutes has relied on small samples and qualitative interviews. Conceptions of customers have tended toward either the “every man” perspective, which implies customers are no different than other men, or the “peculiar man” perspective, which implies customers are characterized by stark differences or psychological inadequacies. This study compares a large sample of men (N = 1672) arrested for trying to hire street prostitutes with nationally representative samples of men. Customers were less likely to be married, less likely to be happily married if married, and more likely to report being unhappy in general than men in the national samples. Customers also expressed greater sexual liberalism and reported thinking about sex, masturbating, and participating in other aspects of the sex industry more frequently than men in general. Most differences were small, indicating customers as a category differ from other men in degree rather than quality.*

Keywords: prostitution; customers; clients; sexual behavior

Research on prostitution mirrors public policy on prostitution by focusing attention on prostitutes instead of their customers (Alexander, 1987; Miller, Romenesko, & Wondolkowski, 1993). Recently, feminist antiprostitution activists have begun to address the asymmetry in public policy by focusing attention on customers, leading three Western cities, San Francisco, Las Vegas, and Portland (OR), to provide weekend educational interventions for men arrested while trying to hire street prostitutes (Monto, 1998). The current study compares the background characteristics, attitudes, and behavior of men attending these workshops with background characteristics, attitudes, and behavior of nationally representative samples of men. Although drawing conclusions based on these comparisons requires caution, the current study provides us with the best information available to date about the customers of female street prostitutes and allows us to move beyond conceptions of the customer based on theoretical assumptions, anecdotal accounts, and constructions of the popular media.

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Scholarly work on the customers of prostitutes, though limited, may be broadly characterized as having two contradictory conceptions of the prototypical customer. One, which we refer to as the every man perspective, implies that the customers of prostitutes are no different from men in general. A second, which we call the peculiar man perspective implies that customers of prostitutes are characterized by social or personal deficiencies, or other distinctive qualities. The findings elaborated in this article, as well as other findings, indicate problems with both of these perspectives and suggest an intermediate position.

The prevalence of prostitution, as well as the level of social acceptance it enjoys, vary historically and cross-nationally (Bullough & Bullough, 1987). In the United States, popular and scholarly attitudes toward prostitution were influenced by pioneering research on male sexuality conducted by Kinsey and colleagues (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948). Although it did not result in the widespread acceptance of prostitution itself, the research supported the idea that a majority of adult men in the United States patronized prostitutes. Kinsey and his colleagues collected an extremely large sample of about 18,000 and estimated that 69% of American men had patronized prostitutes (Kinsey et al., 1948). However, because it was a convenience sample rather than a probability sample, it did not provide a sound basis for generalizing about the behavior of U.S. men (Michael, Gagnon, Laumann, & Kolata, 1994) and very likely resulted in overestimation of the proportion of men who had visited prostitutes. Nevertheless, these findings serve as a basis for an estimate by Benjamin and Masters (1964), who combined Kinsey's data with their own impressions to estimate that closer to 80% of men visited prostitutes. These findings are consistent with the every man perspective toward customers. Prostitution is not a crime in many European countries and Canada, though all criminalize related offenses, such as soliciting, loitering, and/or lewd conduct. Prostitution, even when legal, remains a concern for law enforcement because it is sometimes associated with other crime, and prostitutes are disproportionately represented among victims of violence. The legal status of prostitution and the intensity of enforcement efforts reflect the degree to which prostitution is accepted in a given city or country.

Feminist antiprostitution arguments, though originating from a very different point of view also seem consistent with the every man perspective toward customers. Some feminist works even cite Kinsey's findings (Kinsey et al., 1948) to support the idea that purchasing sex is a conventional though negative aspect of the masculine sexual experience. Schrage (1992) argued against treating customers as deviant on the grounds that they are "acting in accordance with dominant social values and beliefs" (p. 43), a perspective echoed by Barry (1995). Dworkin's (1993) arguments support a conception of customers that is inseparable from men in general. Dworkin (1993) suggested the following:

He is everyone. I want you to take one hour, on Monday. I want you to walk through school, and I want you to look at every man. I want you to take his clothes off with

your eyes. I want you to see him with a stiff prick. I want you in your mind to put him on top of a woman with money on the table next to them. Everyone. The dean of this law school, the professors, the male students, everyone. (p. 8)

Although Dworkin later (1993) explained that “this is the world prostituted women live in,” the exercise in imagery that she advocates clearly implies that every man is a potential customer.

Qualitative researchers studying customers also tend to emphasize similarities between the customers of prostitutes and men in general. Studies, in the United States (Holzman & Pines, 1982) and other countries (McKeganey & Barnard, 1996), have rightfully argued against stereotyping customers as psychologically inadequate or deviant. According to Armstrong (1978), the qualities typical of customers in the massage parlor he studied were the same qualities typical of visitors to the West Coast city where the research was conducted. The efforts of these researchers to debunk misconceptions about customers imply, perhaps unintentionally, that customers are no different from men in general, thus supporting the every man perspective.

Alternatively, the customers of prostitutes may be characterized by background qualities, attitudes, or personal characteristics that distinguish them from men in general. For this to be true, there would have to be solid evidence that far fewer than 69% of men, as reported by Kinsey and colleagues in 1948, visit prostitutes. Reports based on the methodologically sound National Health and Social Life Survey (Michael et al., 1994) found that only about 16% of men in the United States had ever visited a prostitute, and that only about .6% of men in the United States had visited a prostitute during the previous year (Michael et al., 1994). Furthermore, the study found that the percentage of men whose first sexual experience was with a prostitute declined among men who came of age in the 1990s (1.5%) in comparison to men who came of age in the 1950s (7%). The small proportion of men who regularly patronize prostitutes allows for the possibility that this group may be distinct from the general population of men.

In its most extreme form, the peculiar man perspective implies that differences between customers and other men could be considerable. Holzman and Pines (1982) argued that customers have been depicted by the social scientific literature as having psychological, social, or physical inadequacies that drive them to seek out prostitutes. Indeed, Glover (1943) argued that customers of prostitutes have regressed to an infant stage of sexual development, and Ellis (1959) described the irrational attitudes and neuroses of customers. These conceptions imply that customers differ strikingly and qualitatively from other men.

What differences might one find between the customers of prostitutes and other men? Because most information regarding the customers of prostitutes is anecdotal, characterizations of this group of men vary widely. Some feminist characterizations, based on a conception of prostitution as the exploitation of women (e.g., Hunter, 1993) and supported by the accounts of prostitutes (McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; Silbert & Pines, 1983) imply that customers of

prostitutes may be disproportionately attracted to violence. Although Monto and Hoteling (2001) found customers no more likely than other samples of men to endorse so-called rape myths, attitudes believed to be associated with violence against women (Burt, 1980), they found a small proportion of the customers in their sample were attracted to violent sexuality, had negative attitudes toward prostitution, and endorsed rape myths.

Customers may include a disproportionate number of men who are unmarried and fulfill their desire for sexual relations or intimacy through prostitution (Bullough, 1970; Jordan, 1997). If married, they may be interested in sexual activities that their partner cannot or will not provide (Holzman & Pines, 1982; Jordan, 1997; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996). They may have fewer moral boundaries than other men (Holzman & Pines, 1982; Jordan, 1997) or have a habit of sexual relations with a large number of partners (Jordan, 1997; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; Polatin, 1970). Striking differences between customers and nationally representative samples of men would support the peculiar man perspective toward the customers of prostitutes.

HYPOTHESES

The San Francisco, Las Vegas, and Portland customer intervention programs allow for the first systematic comparison of the customers of street prostitutes with nationally representative samples of men. Although these comparisons are limited to a relatively small number of questions asked to customers and the nationally sampled men, they allow us to evaluate the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Customers are less likely to be married, and those married report less marital happiness than men in general.

Hypothesis 2: Customers report having more sexual partners during the past year and report having more sexual experiences than men in general.

Hypothesis 3: Customers are more likely to report using pornography than men in general.

Hypothesis 4: Customers express greater sexual liberalism than men in general.

Hypothesis 5: Customers are more likely to report having served in the military than men in general.

Should striking differences emerge and the peculiar man perspective be supported, a second issue emerges: Do the differences between regular customers and first-time offenders mirror the differences between arrested customers and the national samples of men? The question is theoretically and empirically interesting. If repeat users are more different from men in general than are first-time offenders, it could imply that differences between customers and other men are differences in degree rather than in quality, thereby weakening support for the peculiar man perspective. Men could be seen as falling along a continuum, with those who never consider prostitution on one end and men who are regular users

on the other. Men who consider visiting prostitutes and would patronize them in certain circumstances or if given the opportunity might fall in the middle, and first-time users might fall slightly farther toward the regular-users pole. Because about 42% of the offenders sampled for the current study reported being with a prostitute either never or not within the past 12 months, this second issue can be conveniently explored in a sixth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6: The differences between repeat users and first-time offenders will mirror the differences between arrested customers and the nationally sampled men, though differences will be less pronounced.

Should this hypothesis be supported, it would weaken support for the peculiar man perspective, implying that customers differ from noncustomers by degree rather than quality.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Customers of prostitutes were drawn from three programs designed to educate men arrested for trying to hire street prostitutes about the problematic nature of prostitution and its exploitation of women. Questionnaires were administered and returned anonymously while men were gathered together immediately prior to each workshop. The return rate was more than 80%, with late arrivals, language barriers, and refusals accounting for the remainder. Of the respondents, 1,169 attended Saturday workshops in San Francisco, California, called the First Offenders Prostitution Program (FOPP); 433 attended a similar program in Las Vegas; and 70 attended a weekend-long workshop in Portland, Oregon, administered by the now-defunct Sexual Exploitation Education Project (SEEP). Data was gathered in San Francisco from 1995 to 1999, in Portland from 1995 to 1997, and in Las Vegas from 1997 to 1999.

Participants in these workshops had all been arrested for trying to hire prostitutes. Nearly all had propositioned female police officers posing as decoys on the streets. Among the arrested customers, about 23% claimed that the unconsummated sexual proposal for which they were arrested was their only experience with prostitution. In other words, though they sought sex with a prostitute and offered money in exchange for sex, they claimed never to have had sex with a prostitute. Another 19% reported that they had not visited a prostitute during the past 12 months. The presence of these men offers the opportunity to evaluate whether there are differences between these first timers—men who claim never to have been with a prostitute or who have not been with a prostitute during the past 12 months—and repeat users.

Comparison groups were gathered drawn from two nationally representative data sets, the General Social Survey (GSS) of 1993, 1994 and 1996, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, and the National Health and Social Life Survey (NHSLs) of 1992, conducted by researchers based at the University of Chicago. Both of these surveys employed the same sampling frame (Davis & Smith, 1992; Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994) designed to yield nationally representative samples of U.S. households. Hence, they are not perfectly representative samples of men in particular. To make the samples more comparable, only men ages 18 through 55 years were included for analysis. Although there are a small number of older men arrested for trying to hire street prostitutes, the great majority of are younger than age 55 years. The NHSLs included men ages 18 through 59 years only, and the GSS included men from age 18 through 89 years. When men older than 55 are eliminated, the age distributions between the three samples have greater similarity.

VARIABLES

The comparisons provided in this article are limited to 26 items that were included on the customer survey and at least one of the national surveys. These items are displayed on each of the tables. Items included demographic characteristics including race, highest educational degree obtained, labor force status, marital status, sexual orientation, and age. Also compared are 10 items related to sexual behavior, including number of sexual partners during the past year, whether one of the partners was a regular partner, frequency of sex during the past year, gender of sexual partners during the past year, and frequency of masturbation. Five of these reflected participation in various aspects of the sex industry including use of pornographic magazines, use of pornographic videos, attending nude clubs, participating in nude gatherings, and having their picture taken nude (though the latter two items could include nonsexual activities). Four items measured sexual liberalism, asking respondents about the acceptability of sex before marriage, sex between teenagers, homosexual sex, and extramarital sex. Two other items asked how often respondents thought about sex and how often thinking about sex made them feel guilty. Additional items asked about whether the respondents had served in the military, whether they had been touched sexually by adults before puberty, and whether they had ever forced a woman to have sex; and married men were asked about the happiness of their marriages.

ANALYSIS

Simple comparisons of the response frequencies provide a relatively clear sense of the differences and similarities between groups. Because of the large sample sizes, chi-squared tests and other tests of ordinal data reveal a great many significant differences between the various groups available for comparison on these tables. The tables presented here employ Cramér's *V*, a chi-squared based

measure of the strength of association between two nominal variables (Healey, 1990), which yields values ranging from 0 (*no relationship*), to 1 (*a perfect relationship*). Cramér's V is a symmetric measure, meaning its value does not vary depending on which variable is identified as independent. Significance tests are not abandoned entirely, as tables indicate whether relationships between variables reached statistical significance based on Pearson's chi-squared statistic.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the response frequencies of the national samples and the customer sample, along with a measure of the strength of association between each pair. And Table 2 allows comparisons between (a) nationally sampled men who did not report having ever visited prostitutes, (b) nationally sampled men who reported having visited prostitutes at some time during their lives, (c) offenders who had not been with a prostitute during the past year, and (d) offenders who had visited prostitutes at least once during the past year.

In addition to allowing comparisons between the samples, Table 1 provides information about the data available for analysis. Blank spaces for the national samples represent variables that were not available for one of the samples, either because questions were not asked or because they were asked differently, making them noncomparable. The number of respondents for whom data was available also varied greatly from variable to variable. This was due to the fact that some of the questions were not asked of all respondents. On the GSS, some items were not included all 3 years or were asked only of a representative subsample of men. In addition, there were two versions of the questionnaire administered to offenders. Although many items appeared on both versions, some were included only on the original questionnaire, and some were included only on the more recent questionnaire.

The background variables included on the tables are more informative in providing insight into the sampling process than they are in identifying meaningful differences between groups. For example, differences in age between the NHSLs and the GSS partly reflect an artifact of the sampling and dating conventions of the GSS. And differences in racial composition of respondents making up the two national samples reflect a deliberate oversample of Blacks by the NHSLs. Otherwise, differences between the two national samples are generally small, as one would hope, given they aim to be nationally representative. Differences between the national and offender samples on these background variables likely reflect regional differences rather than meaningful differences between offenders and nonoffenders. For example, the high proportion of offenders who were neither Black nor White reflects the characteristics of these three Western cities, in particular San Francisco's large proportion of individuals of Asian descent (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990). The sexual preference variable, which shows a lower proportion of homosexuals among the offender sample, reflects the fact that

TABLE 1
COMPARISONS BETWEEN NATIONAL SAMPLES
AND OFFENDER SAMPLE (DATA IN PERCENTAGES)

	<i>I</i> <i>NHSLs</i>	<i>II</i> <i>GSS</i>	<i>III</i> <i>Offenders</i>	<i>Cramér's V</i>
Age of respondent	<i>N</i> = 1426	<i>N</i> = 2452	<i>N</i> = 1672	I, II = .10***
18 to 25 years	20.2	14.9	14.1	I, III = .09***
26 to 35 years	34.6	30.6	34.5	II, III = .08***
36 to 45 years	28.1	30.9	33.7	
46 to 55 years	17.1	23.6	17.7	
Race of respondent	<i>N</i> = 1426	<i>N</i> = 2452	<i>N</i> = 1645	I, II = .07***
White	82.7	83.7	73.2	I, III = .27***
Black	13.8	10.6	6.5	II, III = .23***
Other	3.4	5.7	20.3	
Labor force status	NA	<i>N</i> = 2452	<i>N</i> = 1633	I, II = NA
Full-time		77.8	83.0	I, III = NA
Part-time		7.6	5.0	II, III = .074***
In school		3.4	2.1	
Unemployed		5.2	3.9	
Retired		1.0	1.0	
Other		5.0	5.0	
Highest degree	<i>N</i> = 1418	<i>N</i> = 2446	<i>N</i> = 1666	I, II = .04
Less than high school	13.8	11.6	8.9	I, III = .13***
High school	61.4	60.7	55.2	II, III = .09***
Bachelors degree	16.8	18.5	25.0	
Graduate study	8.0	9.2	10.8	
Marital status	<i>N</i> = 1418	<i>N</i> = 2452	<i>N</i> = 1659	I, II = .07**
Married	49.9	53.2	39.8	I, III = .14***
Widowed	.6	1.1	.7	II, III = .15***
Divorced	12.6	13.1	15.1	
Separated	1.8	2.9	6.6	
Never married	35.2	29.8	37.8	
Happiness of marriage	NA	<i>N</i> = 1293	<i>N</i> = 621	I, II = NA
Very happy		60.7	37.7	I, III = NA
Pretty happy		36.6	40.7	II, III = .33***
Not too happy		2.7	21.6	
General happiness	NA	<i>N</i> = 2440	<i>N</i> = 441	I, II = NA
Very happy		28.1	27.3	I, III = NA
Pretty happy		60.5	49.1	II, III = .13***
Not too happy		11.4	23.6	
Served in military	<i>N</i> = 1426	<i>N</i> = 476	<i>N</i> = 1080	I, II = .01
Did not serve	74.5	75.0	77.7	I, III = .04
Served	25.5	25.0	22.3	II, III = .03

(continued)

TABLE 1 (continued)

	<i>I</i> <i>NHSLS</i>	<i>II</i> <i>GSS</i>	<i>III</i> <i>Offenders</i>	<i>Cramér's V</i>
Sexual identification	<i>N</i> = 1402	NA	<i>N</i> = 1613	I, II = NA
Heterosexual	97.3		99.1	I, III = .09***
Homosexual	1.9		.2	II, III = NA
Bisexual	.8		.7	
Attitude toward				
premarital sex	<i>N</i> = 1420	<i>N</i> = 1568	<i>N</i> = 1454	I, II = .06*
Always wrong	17.2	17.3	9.9	I, III = .15***
Almost always wrong	4.6	7.5	5.2	II, III = .16***
Wrong sometimes	21.6	21.3	15.6	
Not wrong at all	56.5	53.9	69.3	
teen sex	<i>N</i> = 1415	<i>N</i> = 1587	<i>N</i> = 1462	I, II = .11***
Always wrong	52.6	60.7	49.7	I, III = .06*
Almost always wrong	19.0	19.4	21.3	II, III = .14***
Wrong sometimes	17.6	13.7	15.5	
Not wrong at all	10.8	6.2	13.5	
Attitude toward				
extramarital sex	<i>N</i> = 1417	<i>N</i> = 1635	<i>N</i> = 1492	I, II = .05
Always wrong	72.4	74.6	52.8	I, III = .21***
Almost always wrong	16.2	15.8	24.5	II, III = .23***
Wrong sometimes	9.4	7.0	16.8	
Not wrong at all	2.0	2.6	5.9	
homosexuality	<i>N</i> = 1408	<i>N</i> = 1578	<i>N</i> = 1323	I, II = .07**
Always wrong	67.8	62.0	47.9	I, III = .21***
Almost always wrong	5.1	5.6	6.3	II, III = .14***
Wrong sometimes	7.2	7.4	9.9	
Not wrong at all	19.9	25.0	35.8	
How often thinks about sex	<i>N</i> = 1420	NA	<i>N</i> = 1600	I, II = NA
Never	1.0		2.2	I, III = .11***
Less than once a month	2.3		4.7	II, III = NA
One to a few times				
a month	8.0		10.6	
One to a few times				
a week	34.6		28.7	
Every day	36.3		32.9	
Several times a day	18.0		20.9	

(continued)

TABLE 1 (continued)

	<i>I</i> <i>NHSLS</i>	<i>II</i> <i>GSS</i>	<i>III</i> <i>Offenders</i>	<i>Cramér's V</i>
Feels guilty thinking				
about sex	<i>N</i> = 1407	NA	<i>N</i> = 1632	I, II = NA
Never	78.5		49.0	I, III = .32***
Rarely	13.0		23.7	II, III = NA
Occasionally	6.9		20.2	
Often	.6		5.0	
Nearly always	.9		2.0	
How often masturbates	<i>N</i> = 1335	NA	<i>N</i> = 522	I, II = NA
0 Times a year	36.3		27.0	I, III = .19***
Once a month	15.8		15.9	II, III = NA
1 to 3 times a month	20.7		19.3	
Once to a few times				
a week	24.1		25.9	
Every day	2.0		9.8	
Several times a day	1.1		2.1	
Number of sex partners				
had in past year	<i>N</i> = 1354	<i>N</i> = 2250	<i>N</i> = 1655	I, II = .03
0	10.6	9.5	8.8	I, III = .34***
1	67.1	69.5	37.0	II, III = .37***
2	10.0	8.8	16.4	
3 or 4	8.1	8.5	18.3	
5 to 10	3.2	2.8	12.8	
11 or more	1.0	.8	6.6	
One of sex partners				
was a regular partner	<i>N</i> = 1202	<i>N</i> = 2015	<i>N</i> = 1427	I, II = .03
No	13.8	12.1	20.4	I, III = .09***
Yes	86.2	87.9	79.6	II, III = .11***
How often had sex				
last year	<i>N</i> = 1343	<i>N</i> = 2208	<i>N</i> = 1578	I, II = .07*
Not at all	9.5	8.5	8.6	I, III = .17***
Once or twice	6.6	7.2	9.3	II, III = .13***
About once a month	10.3	10.1	15.1	
2 or 3 times a month	16.5	18.2	22.6	
About once a week	18.6	22.2	18.2	
2 or 3 times a week	30.1	25.3	17.7	
4 or more times a week	8.4	8.4	8.5	
Attended nude dancing				
during the past year	<i>N</i> = 1419	NA	<i>N</i> = 484	I, II = NA
No	76.6		47.5	I, III = .27***
Yes	23.4		52.5	II, III = NA

(continued)

TABLE 1 (continued)

	<i>I</i> <i>NHSLS</i>	<i>II</i> <i>GSS</i>	<i>III</i> <i>Offenders</i>	<i>Cramér's V</i>
Attended nude gathering				
during the past year	<i>N</i> = 1419	NA	<i>N</i> = 469	I, II = NA
No	98.7		93.8	I, III = .14***
Yes	1.3		6.2	II, III = NA
Had picture taken nude				
during the past year	<i>N</i> = 1418	NA	<i>N</i> = 473	I, II = NA
No	98.5		95.8	I, III = .08***
Yes	1.5		4.2	II, III = NA
Bought or rented X-				
rated videos during the				
past year	<i>N</i> = 1419	<i>N</i> = 1466	<i>N</i> = 1641	I, II = .13***
No	76.0	63.8	33.9	I, III = .42***
Yes	24.0	36.2	66.1	II, III = .30***
Bought any sexually				
explicit books during				
the past year	<i>N</i> = 1419	NA	<i>N</i> = 1640	I,II = NA
No	83.7		31.5	I, III = .52***
Yes	16.3		68.5	II, III = NA
Touched sexually by				
adult before puberty	<i>N</i> = 1425	NA	<i>N</i> = 1084	I, II = NA
No	83.7		87.3	I, III = .05**
Yes	16.3		12.7	II, III = NA
Has ever forced a				
woman into any sex	<i>N</i> = 1333	NA	<i>N</i> = 1079	I, II = NA
No	97.0		99.1	I, III = .07***
Yes	3.0		.9	II, III = NA

NHSLS = National Health and Social Life Survey; GSS = General Social Survey.

Levels of significance for Pearson Chi-squared test statistic. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

all were arrested for propositioning female police officers posing as prostitutes, a selection process that would exclude exclusively gay men.

One background variable that appears to reflect a meaningful difference between offenders and the nationally sampled men is marital status. While about 50% of men in the national samples were married, only about 40% of the offenders were married. Although one might expect a lower rate of marriage in San Francisco, a city often characterized as nontraditional, the marriage rate was even lower among offenders in Las Vegas and Portland. In addition, offenders who were married were less likely to report that their marriages were very happy and much more likely to report that their marriages were not too happy than were married men in the national samples.

TABLE 2
COMPARISON BETWEEN CLIENTS, NONCLIENTS,
OCCASIONAL CLIENTS, AND REPEAT CLIENTS

	<i>I</i> <i>Non-</i> <i>clients</i>	<i>II</i> <i>National</i> <i>Clients</i>	<i>III</i> <i>First</i> <i>Timers</i>	<i>IV</i> <i>Repeat</i> <i>Users</i>	<i>Cramér's V</i>
Age of respondent	<i>N</i> = 3269	<i>N</i> = 609	<i>N</i> = 696	<i>N</i> = 940	I, II = .18***
18 to 25	19.1	4.9	18.0	11.1	I, III = .05*
26 to 35	33.3	25.6	37.5	31.9	I, IV = .10***
36 to 45	28.6	36.5	29.7	37.2	II, III = .29***
46 to 55	19.0	33.0	14.8	19.8	II, IV = .17***
					III, IV = .13***
Race of respondent	<i>N</i> = 3269	<i>N</i> = 609	<i>N</i> = 687	<i>N</i> = 925	I, II = .05**
White	83.8	81.1	70.9	75.4	I, III = .24***
Black	11.2	15.3	6.7	6.4	I, IV = .21***
Other	5.1	3.6	22.4	18.3	II, III = .29***
					II, IV = .25***
					III, IV = .05
Labor force status	<i>N</i> = 2083	<i>N</i> = 369	<i>N</i> = 678	<i>N</i> = 923	I, II = .07*
Full-time	77.9	77.5	81.0	84.6	I, III = .06
Part-time	7.8	6.2	5.5	4.6	I, IV = .09***
In school	3.7	1.9	2.5	1.8	II, III = .07
Unemployed	4.8	7.3	4.6	3.6	II, IV = .11**
Retired	0.8	2.2	1.3	0.8	III, IV = .05
Other	5.0	4.9	5.2	4.7	
Highest degree	<i>N</i> = 3260	<i>N</i> = 604	<i>N</i> = 692	<i>N</i> = 939	I, II = .04
Less than high school	12.5	11.8	9.4	8.4	I, III = .06**
High school	60.1	65.6	57.5	53.6	I, IV = .10***
College graduate	18.3	15.7	23.1	26.6	II, III = .12**
Graduate degree	9.1	7.0	10.0	11.4	II, IV = .16***
					III, IV = .05
Marital status	<i>N</i> = 3264	<i>N</i> = 606	<i>N</i> = 692	<i>N</i> = 933	I, II = .12***
Married	52.3	50.5	42.8	38.0	I, III = .08***
Widowed	0.8	1.8	1.3	0.3	I, IV = .17***
Divorced	11.3	21.1	12.4	16.8	II, III = .19***
Separated	2.4	2.8	4.6	8.0	II, IV = .20***
Never married	33.2	23.8	38.9	36.8	III, IV = .11***
Happiness of marriage	<i>N</i> = 1110	<i>N</i> = 183	<i>N</i> = 274	<i>N</i> = 337	I, II = .04
Very happy	61.4	56.3	48.9	28.2	I, III = .23***
Pretty happy	35.8	41.5	35.4	46.0	I, IV = .40***
Not too happy	2.8	2.2	15.7	25.8	II, III = .22***
					II, IV = .35***
					III, IV = .22***

(continued)

TABLE 2 (continued)

	<i>I</i> <i>Non-</i> <i>clients</i>	<i>II</i> <i>National</i> <i>Clients</i>	<i>III</i> <i>First</i> <i>Timers</i>	<i>IV</i> <i>Repeat</i> <i>Users</i>	<i>Cramér's V</i>
General happiness	<i>N</i> = 2072	<i>N</i> = 368	<i>N</i> = 205	<i>N</i> = 229	I, II = .07**
Very happy	29.1	22.6	31.2	24.2	I, III = .09***
Pretty happy	60.2	62.2	48.5	49.3	I, IV = .14***
Not too happy	10.7	15.2	20.3	26.4	II, III = .13** II, IV = .15** III, IV = .09
Served in military	<i>N</i> = 1586	<i>N</i> = 316	<i>N</i> = 415	<i>N</i> = 653	I, II = .24***
Did not serve	79.3	51.6	78.8	77.0	I, III = .01
Served	20.7	48.4	21.2	23.0	I, IV = .03 II, III = .29*** II, IV = .26*** III, IV = .02
Sexual identification	<i>N</i> = 1164	<i>N</i> = 238	<i>N</i> = 666	<i>N</i> = 920	I, II = .05
Heterosexual	96.9	99.2	98.6	99.3	I, III = .07*
Homosexual	2.2	0.4	0.5		I, IV = .10***
Bisexual	0.9	0.4	0.9	0.7	II, III = .02 II, IV = .06 III, IV = .05
Attitude toward premarital sex	<i>N</i> = 2513	<i>N</i> = 475	<i>N</i> = 582	<i>N</i> = 849	I, II = .07**
Always wrong	17.5	15.6	11.3	8.8	I, III = .09***
Almost always wrong	6.6	4.0	5.5	5.1	I, IV = .16***
Wrong sometimes	22.0	18.3	17.9	14.0	II, III = .07
Not wrong at all	53.8	62.1	65.3	72.1	II, IV = .13*** III, IV = .07
Attitude toward teen sex	<i>N</i> = 2525	<i>N</i> = 477	<i>N</i> = 602	<i>N</i> = 835	I, II = .04
Always wrong	57.3	54.5	54.8	45.6	I, III = .05*
Almost always wrong	19.2	19.1	19.9	22.6	I, IV = .12***
Wrong sometimes	15.4	15.9	13.8	16.8	II, III = .03
Not wrong at all	8.0	10.5	11.5	15.0	II, IV = .09* III, IV = .09**
Attitude toward extramarital sex	<i>N</i> = 2571	<i>N</i> = 481	<i>N</i> = 613	<i>N</i> = 854	I, II = .11***
Always wrong	75.3	64.4	58.2	48.4	I, III = .16***
Almost always wrong	15.4	18.9	23.0	25.9	I, IV = .27***
Wrong sometimes	7.5	11.6	13.7	19.2	II, III = .07
Not wrong at all	1.8	5.0	5.1	6.6	II, IV = .16*** III, IV = .10**

(continued)

TABLE 2 (continued)

	<i>I</i> <i>Non-</i> <i>clients</i>	<i>II</i> <i>National</i> <i>Clients</i>	<i>III</i> <i>First</i> <i>Timers</i>	<i>IV</i> <i>Repeat</i> <i>Users</i>	<i>Cramér's V</i>
Attitude toward					
homosexuality	<i>N</i> = 2514	<i>N</i> = 472	<i>N</i> = 537	<i>N</i> = 763	I, II = .01
Always wrong	65.0	63.6	54.2	43.3	I, III = .10***
Almost always wrong	5.4	5.3	4.3	7.6	I, IV = .19***
Wrong sometimes	7.2	7.6	9.7	10.1	II, III = .11**
Not wrong at all	22.4	23.5	31.8	39.1	II, IV = .20*** III, IV = .12***
How often thinks					
about sex	<i>N</i> = 1180	<i>N</i> = 240	<i>N</i> = 666	<i>N</i> = 903	I, II = .06
Never	1.1	0.4	4.1	0.8	I, III = .17***
Less than once a month	2.5	1.3	6.6	3.3	I, IV = .13***
1 to a few times a month	8.0	7.9	12.6	9.0	II, III = .18***
1 to a few times a week	35.2	31.7	32.7	25.7	II, IV = .09
Every day	35.9	37.9	30.3	34.9	III, IV = .21***
Several times a day	17.4	20.8	13.7	26.4	
Feels guilty thinking					
about sex	<i>N</i> = 1168	<i>N</i> = 239	<i>N</i> = 673	<i>N</i> = 930	I, II = .06
Never	77.9	81.6	56.2	43.2	I, III = .24***
Rarely	13.1	12.6	21.4	25.7	I, IV = .37***
Occasionally	7.3	5.0	16.3	23.2	II, III = .24***
Often	0.6	0.8	3.9	5.9	II, IV = .32***
Nearly always	1.1	2.2	1.9		III, IV = .13***
How often masturbates					
	<i>N</i> = 1097	<i>N</i> = 238	<i>N</i> = 241	<i>N</i> = 271	I, II = .15***
0 times a year	39.4	21.8	38.2	17.3	I, III = .09
Once a month	15.3	18.1	17.8	13.3	I, IV = .30***
1 to 3 times a month	19.2	27.3	18.7	20.7	II, III = .20**
1 to few times a week	23.2	28.2	19.1	32.5	II, IV = .01***
Every day	1.6	3.8	4.6	14.0	III, IV = .29***
Several times a day	1.2	0.8	1.7	2.2	
Number of sex partners					
had in past year	<i>N</i> = 3000	<i>N</i> = 604	<i>N</i> = 691	<i>N</i> = 931	I, II = .13***
0	10.5	7.3	13.2	5.4	I, III = .13***
1	70.1	60.9	56.0	23.2	I, IV = .51***
2	8.4	13.4	12.7	18.9	II, III = .11*
3 or 4	7.6	12.1	11.3	23.4	II, IV = .42***
5-10	2.8	3.8	5.1	19.0	III, IV = .42***
11 or more	0.6	2.5	1.7	10.1	

(continued)

TABLE 2 (continued)

	<i>I</i> <i>Non-</i> <i>clients</i>	<i>II</i> <i>National</i> <i>Clients</i>	<i>III</i> <i>First</i> <i>Timers</i>	<i>IV</i> <i>Repeat</i> <i>Users</i>	<i>Cramér's V</i>
One of sex partners was a regular partner	<i>N</i> = 2664	<i>N</i> = 553	<i>N</i> = 570	<i>N</i> = 833	I, II = .04* I, III = .01
No	12.2	15.4	13.2	24.8	I, IV = .15*** II, III = .03
Yes	87.8	84.6	86.8	75.2	II, IV = .11*** III, IV = .14***
How often had sex last year	<i>N</i> = 2951	<i>N</i> = 600	<i>N</i> = 655	<i>N</i> = 896	I, II = .07**
Not at all	9.4	6.3	13.1	5.0	I, III = .11***
Once or twice	6.7	8.5	9.5	9.2	I, IV = .16***
About once a month	9.7	12.8	13.3	16.4	II, III = .14**
2 or 3 times a month	17.6	17.3	19.2	25.2	II, IV = .13**
About once a week	20.5	22.3	17.7	18.5	III, IV = .16***
2 or 3 times a Week	27.9	23.2	18.0	17.9	
4 or more times a week	8.2	9.5	9.2	7.8	
Attended nude dancing during past year	<i>N</i> = 1179	<i>N</i> = 240	<i>N</i> = 234	<i>N</i> = 244	I, II = .07**
No	77.9	70.0	53.4	41.4	I, III = .21***
Yes	22.1	30.0	46.6	58.6	I, IV = .31*** II, III = .17*** II, IV = .29*** III, IV = .12**
Attended nude gathering during past year	<i>N</i> = 1179	<i>N</i> = 240	<i>N</i> = 232	<i>N</i> = 231	I, II = .00
No	98.7	98.8	95.7	91.8	I, III = .09**
Yes	1.3	1.3	4.3	8.2	I, IV = .17*** II, III = .09* II, IV = .17*** III, IV = .08
Had picture taken nude during past year	<i>N</i> = 1178	<i>N</i> = 240	<i>N</i> = 233	<i>N</i> = 234	I, II = .02
No	98.6	97.9	96.1	95.7	I, III = .07**
Yes	1.4	2.1	3.9	4.3	I, IV = .08** II, III = .05 II, IV = .06 III, IV = .01

(continued)

TABLE 2 (continued)

	<i>I</i> <i>Non-</i> <i>clients</i>	<i>II</i> <i>National</i> <i>Clients</i>	<i>III</i> <i>First</i> <i>Timers</i>	<i>IV</i> <i>Repeat</i> <i>Users</i>	<i>Cramér's V</i>
Bought or rented X-rated videos during past year	<i>N</i> = 2430	<i>N</i> = 455	<i>N</i> = 681	<i>N</i> = 927	I, II = .08***
No	71.3	61.8	44.2	26.0	I, III = .24***
Yes	28.7	38.2	55.8	74.0	I, IV = .41*** II, III = .17*** II, IV = .35*** III, IV = .19***
Bought any sexually explicit books during past year	<i>N</i> = 1179	<i>N</i> = 240	<i>N</i> = 679	<i>N</i> = 929	I, II = .08**
No	85.0	77.5	39.0	25.7	I, III = .48***
Yes	15.0	22.5	61.0	74.3	I, IV = .60*** II, III = .34*** II, IV = .44*** III, IV = .14***
Touched sexually by adult	<i>N</i> = 1185	<i>N</i> = 240	<i>N</i> = 417	<i>N</i> = 655	I, II = .10***
No	85.4	75.4	89.7	86.0	I, III = .06*
Yes	14.6	24.6	10.3	14.0	I, IV = .01 II, III = .19*** II, IV = .13*** III, IV = .06
Ever forced a woman into any sex	<i>N</i> = 1093	<i>N</i> = 240	<i>N</i> = 413	<i>N</i> = 653	I, II = .16***
No	98.3	91.3	100	98.6	I, III = .07**
Yes	1.7	8.8	1.4	I, IV = .01	II, III = .24*** II, IV = .18*** III, IV = .07*

NOTE: Levels of significance for Pearson chi-squared test statistic: * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Offenders were consistently more sexually liberal than men in the national samples and reported that they thought about sex, felt guilty when thinking about sex, and masturbated more frequently than men in the national samples. They were also much more likely to report having had more than two sexual partners during the past year, and were slightly less likely to identify one as a regular partner than men in the national samples. Nevertheless, they were slightly less likely to report having had sex twice or more per month during the past year. Men in the

customer sample were also much more likely to report having participated in other aspects of the sex industry, such as attending nude establishments, and viewing X-rated magazines and videos. The offenders were no more likely than the nationally sampled men to report having served in the military, having been touched sexually by an adult while they were children, or having forced women to have sex. The significant differences between customers and nationally sampled men are made more persuasive by the fact that the differences were consistent no matter which national sample was used (with the exception of age as explained earlier). In addition, with only one exception (attitude toward teen sex), the differences between the offender sample and each national sample were larger than the differences between the two national samples.

Similarities and differences between the samples for each of the three cities were also evaluated, though they will not be reported in detail here. Responses from the offenders in each city were similar to one another and demonstrated similar contrasts with the national samples, strengthening the conclusion that differences between offenders and the nationally sampled men reflect differences between customers and noncustomers rather than differences between regions or sampling strategies. The few differences that were found appear to reflect differences in the demographic makeup of the three cities.

Table 2 presents the most useful and informative contrasts. Here, nationally sampled men were separated depending on whether they reported having ever patronized prostitutes, and offenders were split based on whether they reported having patronized prostitutes once or more during the previous year. These comparisons allow us greater precision in comparing men who patronize prostitutes with men who have not done so. Consistent with the central focus of this article, the contrast between men who patronize prostitutes and men who do not, we concentrate primarily on the contrasts between noncustomers and repeat users. As explained earlier, contrasts in the background characteristics of customers and noncustomers likely reflect regional differences and sampling strategies rather than meaningful differences, and these will not be elaborated.

Marital status again emerges as an important discriminator between customers and noncustomers, with repeat users much less likely to be married than noncustomers, a contrast that does not likely reflect mere regional variation. In addition, repeat users were no younger than noncustomers meaning that differences in marital status were not due to differences in age. Repeat users who were married were less than one half as likely to report that their marriages were very happy and 9 times more likely to report that their marriages were not too happy than were noncustomers.

Repeat users were much more likely to report that they were generally not too happy than were noncustomers. They were, however, no more likely than noncustomers to report having served in the military, having been touched sexually by an adult while children, or having forced a woman to have sex. Repeat users consistently expressed greater sexual liberalism than noncustomers. Specifically, they were less likely to identify premarital sex, sex between teenagers,

extramarital sex, and homosexuality as always wrong and more likely to describe them as not wrong at all. They also reported thinking about sex and feeling guilty when thinking about sex more frequently than did noncustomers.

With regard to sexual behavior, repeat users reported having many more sexual partners during the past year than noncustomers. Whereas 80% of noncustomers had one or zero partners, more than 70% of repeat users reported having more than one partner. Repeat users were also less likely to report that one of their partners was a regular partner. Despite having had more partners, repeat users were somewhat less likely than noncustomers to report having sex once a week or more during the past year. Repeat users also reported more frequent masturbation than noncustomers.

Repeat users reported greater participation in all aspects of the sex industry than did noncustomers. They were much more likely to report having purchased sexually explicit magazines or videos, and they were more than twice as likely to have visited nude establishments. They were more than 6 times as likely to have attended nude gatherings, and 3 times more likely to have had their pictures taken in the nude than were noncustomers. These latter two items are ambiguous. However, the fact that these men reported greater participation in other aspects of the sex industry leads us to believe that their participation in nude gatherings and nude photography may have been primarily sexual and commercial.

For the most part, differences between offenders classified as repeat users and first timers mirrored the differences between repeat users and noncustomers, although the differences between the two groups of offenders were smaller. First timers were slightly more likely to be married, and those married reported greater marital happiness than repeat users. First timers expressed less sexual liberalism and less frequent participation in other aspects of the sex industry than did repeat users, something we would expect given their claims not to be regular customers. These findings tend to argue against the idea that regional differences or sampling strategies account for the differences between men who visit prostitutes and men who do not. The two groups of offenders were drawn from the same region through the same sampling strategy; yet findings confirm a set of distinctions between men who visit prostitutes and men who claim to have seldom or never visited prostitutes.

Of particular note is the high percentage of first timers who reported having had no sexual partners and no sex during the past year, a higher proportion than either the repeat users or the nationally sampled men. This may suggest that some first timers seek out prostitutes out of sexual frustration in what may be an isolated episode rather than a long-term pattern of behavior.

The men in the national sample who reported having been with a prostitute at some time represent an interesting contrast to the other groups. Their responses to many of the questions fall between the noncustomers and the offenders. However, they were older, more likely to have served in the military, and more likely to have been touched sexually by an adult while they were children than any of the other groups. They were also much more likely to report having forced a woman to have

sex. In addition, they reported thinking about sex and masturbating more than first-timer offenders. Many of these men appear to represent a different cohort of prostitution users than the current offenders, men who patronized prostitutes in the past, perhaps while serving in the military. Few are currently involved in sex with prostitutes (Sullivan & Simon, 1998). The issues that predicted their involvement in prostitution may be different than the issues that predict involvement today. For an elaboration of the contrasts between men taking the NHSLs who reported having patronized prostitutes at some time and men who did not, see Sullivan and Simon (1998).

Supporting Hypothesis 1, customers of prostitutes were less likely than other men to be married. Of those who were married, customers had less happy marriages. Hypothesis 2, that customers would have more sexual partners and more frequent sexual experiences than the nationally sampled men, received mixed support. Although customers had more partners, they did not have sex more frequently. Hypothesis 3 was clearly supported, as customers were also much more likely to report having watched pornographic movies or purchased adult magazines during the past year than the nationally sampled men. Customers were significantly less likely to describe premarital sex, homosexuality, teen sex, and extramarital sex as always wrong and more likely to describe them as not at all wrong. These results are completely consistent with Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 5 was not supported, as customers were no more likely than the national sample to report having served in the military. Finally, Hypothesis 6 received mixed support. Responses of first timers were significantly different from repeat users on most variables, and they did mirror differences between customers and the national sample on most of these variables. However, first timers were more likely than either repeat users or noncustomers to report having had no sexual partners and no sex during the past year.

DISCUSSION

In the introduction to the current study, we identified two divergent perspectives toward the customers of prostitutes, the every man perspective, which tends to normalize the customer or emphasize his similarities with other men, and the peculiar man perspective, which tends to see customers as having various deficiencies or other unique qualities. Atchison, Fraser, and Lowman (1998) identified similar divergences in social science accounts of customers. Although we acknowledge that this way of framing the issue tends to imply an either/or approach to the problem, existing research has also lacked balance and tended toward oversimplification and overgeneralization (Weitzer, 2000). In fact, the results of the current study do not support either of these divergent perspectives.

Although we have discussed statistically significant differences at length, it is important to note that the differences between customers and noncustomers presented here are modest. In addition, the NHSLs indicates that only a minority of

men have ever visited prostitutes, and a very small proportion have visited prostitutes within the past year. Of course, it would be a leap to reject the every man perspective based solely on these findings. However, it is reasonable to question the assumption that prostitution is a normal part of masculine activity or that most men would patronize prostitutes given the opportunity.

On the other hand, research that has pathologized the customer by emphasizing his personal deficiencies or negative qualities tends to marginalize offenders, rather than recognizing larger cultural and situational factors that may lead men to pursue prostitutes. Although differences exist between customers and other men, and undoubtedly some psychopaths gravitate toward prostitution, there is a great deal of overlap in the characteristics of customers and other men across the variables examined here. In addition, comparisons between first timers and regular users indicate that, although first timers have some unique qualities as a category, they generally fall in between regular users and the national sample of men. This would tend to weaken support for the peculiar man perspective, indicating that the customers of prostitutes in general are different from other men in degree rather than quality.

The findings presented here indicate that there are meaningful differences between the arrested customers of female street prostitutes and nationally representative samples of men. In particular, the male customers of female street prostitutes are less likely to be married, less likely to be happily married if married, and more likely to report being not too happy in general than men in the national samples. Customers reported thinking about sex, masturbating, and feeling guilty about thinking about sex more frequently than men in general. Customers were less likely to find a variety of somewhat controversial sexual activities as wrong than were other men. Most striking, customers were much more likely to participate in other aspects of the sex industry than are men in general. The findings are made more persuasive by the fact that the differences between the offender sample and each national sample were larger than the differences between the two national samples. In addition, the variations between the offender subsamples were generally smaller than the differences between offenders and the nationally sampled men. The differences emerge most powerfully when the responses of repeat users—men who had visited prostitutes at least once during the past year were compared with men in the national sample who had never done so. Although the measure of strength of association used in this article, Cramér's V , cannot be interpreted in terms of proportional reduction of error or the amount of variance explained, the coefficients appear modest for the most part, indicating modest relationships between the variables under consideration here.

The lower rate of marriage and the diminished marital happiness of customers in comparison to the national sample are more clear and meaningful than the other background comparisons. Davis (1937), in his classic article on the topic, argued that prostitution exists to fill the gap between men's sexual needs and their opportunities to fulfill them through socially acceptable means, a perspective echoed by Polatin (1970) and many others. Relationships with prostitutes could also reflect

attempts by men to meet their emotional needs, such as the need for intimacy and companionship. For some men, prostitution may be a temporary outlet when they are not involved in a sexual relationship or are experiencing difficulties in their intimate relationships. For these men, prostitution may be an isolated behavior rather than a habit. For others, difficulty in finding a marriage partner because of shyness, awkwardness, or unattractiveness could lead to sexual relations with prostitutes as a more regular part of their lifestyle. However, it is also possible that the relationship between marital status and prostitution use could be causally reversed. Involvement with prostitutes could make a man less appealing as a marriage partner, either because his offenses are known or because he has come to respond to women differently as a result of his liaisons with prostitutes. In addition, involvement with prostitutes might reduce some men's marital happiness, either because they develop unrealistic expectations of their marriage partner or because they have reduced capacities to contribute to a satisfying partnership. Despite the strength and consistency of the relationship between marital status, marital happiness, and involvement in prostitution, these explanations are clearly not applicable to all customers of prostitutes, as 40% were married, and 38% of married customers reported that their marriages were very happy (38%) or pretty happy (40%).

The sexual liberalism of customers revealed by this study is consistent with the orientation of several firsthand accounts (Diana, 1985; Korn, 1998; Loebner, 1998). For example, Loebner (1998) took an explicit public stand against defining prostitution as immoral or exploitative. It is not surprising that arrested customers of female street prostitutes are less judgmental about sexuality than the national sample, less likely to agree that sexuality outside the traditional marital relationship is wrong. More worrisome are the minority of customers who are extremely judgmental about sexual morality but violate their beliefs by engaging in prostitution anyway. In these cases, prostitutes, as sexually provocative women, could be blamed for the moral failings of their customers and become targets for violence (Davis, 1993; Monto & Hotaling, 2001).

The findings regarding frequency of sex and number of sexual partners during the past year suggest that there may be different categories of prostitution users. On one end of the spectrum are first timers who have not had any sexual partners nor any sexual experiences during the past 12 months and are arrested while making a failed attempt to secure the sexual services of a prostitute by propositioning a police decoy. For this group, prostitution may never become a regular aspect of their lives. On the other end of the spectrum are regular users who have high numbers of partners and regularly have sex with prostitutes. For these men, prostitution may reflect a pattern of promiscuity that may include sexual relations with nonprostitutes as well.

The greater frequency with which arrested customers reported thinking about sex and masturbating appears to reflect a greater focus on sex among these men. It is also consistent with customers' greater participation in all aspects of the sex industry. For some customers, their experience of the world may revolve around

sex. It is interesting to note, arrested customers also reported feeling guilty when thinking about sex more frequently than other men. This guilt could be due to cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) especially among men with sexually conservative attitudes. Response frequencies point to the existence of a substantial proportion of customers who are sexually conservative but participate in the sex industry anyway, a seemingly uncomfortable combination of responses.

Arrested customers were not more likely than other men to report having been touched sexually by an adult while they were children. This suggests that prostitution offenses may be very different from other types of sexual offenses, which are strongly associated with childhood sexual abuse (Graham, 1996; Kendall-Tackett, Williams, & Finkelhor, 1993). Findings also do not show arrested customers to be more likely to report having forced a woman to have sex. This is consistent with other research on this population (Monto & Hoteling, 2001) that shows customers to be no more likely to endorse rape myths than other samples of men. This does not, however, contradict the widely accepted knowledge that prostitutes are frequent victims of violent crime. Rather, it suggests that a relatively small proportion of customers may be responsible for these crimes.

The results of the current study diverge somewhat from Sullivan and Simon's (1998) comparison of customers and noncustomers who took part in the National Health and Social Life Survey. As described earlier, that study distinguished customers from noncustomers based on whether they reported having paid a woman for sex. Sullivan and Simon (1998) reported that there were no differences between men who had paid for sex and men who had not, in terms of marital or cohabitation status at the time of the survey. However, this leaves open the possibility that there were differences in marital status at the time of the prostitution encounter. They also reported that men who reported having paid for sex were more likely to report having served in the military than other men, in contrast to the current study's finding that the customer sample was no more likely than the national sample to report military service. Although men serving in the military may be more likely to engage in prostitution than other men, they may not be substantially more likely to visit prostitutes or to be arrested for prostitution after having left the service. Finally, Sullivan and Simon (1998) reported that customers were no more likely to be sexually liberal than noncustomers, while the data from the current study consistently show customers to be more sexually liberal than the national sample, and repeat users are more sexually liberal than first timers. It may be that the NHSLS sample of customers was not be large enough for these differences to emerge or that the relationship between prostitution and sexual liberalism is stronger among men who have recently or repeatedly been involved with prostitutes than among men whose experiences may have been some time ago, perhaps during military service.

Although the current study is an improvement over the small convenience samples, anecdotal and clinical accounts, and media-generated stereotypes that have characterized most conceptions of the customers of female prostitutes, it is important to recognize its limitations. The participants had all been arrested and

were gathered for workshops designed to persuade them not to reoffend. As such, their responses may have been shaped by having their prostitution seeking labeled as wrong and illegal. Although the effects of this official labeling and sanctioning are beyond measurement given the methods of the current study, we would likely see greater bias in responses to socially undesirable behaviors, such as reported use of prostitutes and pornography, and fewer differences in demographic items, such as marital status. In addition, the participants were all arrested while trying to hire female street prostitutes. Men who patronize escort services or brothels, men who patronize male prostitutes, and so-called regulars who have longer term relationships with prostitutes they know personally may differ significantly from the participants in the current study.

The findings reported here do not contradict most of the popular conceptions of the customers of prostitutes—the shy, awkward, or ugly individual who has difficulty establishing a conventional relationship with a woman; the dissatisfied husband who wants a little danger and excitement or whose partner will not or cannot meet his perceived needs; the highly sexed individual with few moral limitations regarding sexuality and an interest in immediate satisfaction and multiple partners; the individual who has been socialized to see prostitution as normal and acceptable; the individual interested in dominating women and/or participating in sexual activities that most nonprostitutes would find objectionable (McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; Monto, 2000). More research is needed to identify whether there are distinctive causal constellations, distinctive categories of customers, or instead, a small number of characteristics customers share in common that differentiate them from noncustomers. Although the current study did not provide an answer to these questions, it does indicate that customers differ in meaningful ways from men in general.

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