**Preventing Violence Against Women or Violence Work? -- The Swedish Model of Prostitution**

In 1999, Sweden was the first country to aim at abolishing the sex trade through criminalizing buying (rather than selling) of sex. Criminalizing the buying of sex has its roots in the Nordic feminist movement on violence against women and its understanding of prostitution as part of this violence. Versions of Swedish style sex trade legislation were passed soon after in Norway and Finland, and policies centred on criminalisation of sex buying have been adopted throughout Europe and North America. Through multi-sited fieldwork among sex workers in the Nordic region, including 210 interviews, this paper complicates the simplified image of this policy model. It examines how the Swedish model and the popularization of the understanding of commercial sex as a form of violence against women affects people who sell sex and asks, what kind of conceptions of justice does its feminist arguments of protection and care promote.

The study’s findings demonstrate that understanding of prostitution as violence that needs to be abolished has led to repressive and racialized practices that perpetuate violence and stigma towards people who sell sex. Relying on Ruth Wilson Gilmore's (2002) understanding of violence as production of vulnerability to "premature death," the paper argues that, despite its benevolent image, the Swedish approach by exacerbating the already precarious lives of sex workers serves in itself as a form of ‘violence against women.’ Following Gilmore's definition, the paper demonstrates how a wide range of people from the police to hotel receptionists and NGOs advancing increased policing of marginalized communities engage in what Micol Seigel (2018) calls “violence work,” production of vulnerabilities. The paper concludes with a demand for a different kind of feminism and justice that embraces the idea of the “intersectionality of struggles” (Davis 2016).