

Risk Factors of Street Prostitution

Summary of Key Factors: Road design, Camouflage areas, Proximity to drug dealing areas; Transportation hubs; Budget motels, convention centers and hotels; Coffee shops and bars.

Aim: To assist analysts with the identification of risk factors for the production of risk terrain maps. Specifically, this brief provides an annotated review of the factors related to street prostitution and the settings and times for which some factors may be most relevant. This information should be especially useful to help choose a time period for creating risk terrain maps (i.e., Stepⁱ 3), to identify aggravating and mitigating risk factors to include in your risk terrain model (i.e., Steps 5 and 6), and to inform the operationalization of your risk factors to risk map layers (i.e., Step 7).

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Operational definition: Sex markets may take three forms regarding the geography of the market:

- *Street trade* - where the client locates the prostitute initially on the street
- *Off-street trade* - where the client locates the prostitute initially at specific facilities such as brothels, massage parlors, saunas, hostess clubs etc.
- *Mobile trade* - where the client locates the prostitute initially by responding to an ad on an online website, local paper, or a card left at a public location such as phone booths.

For the purposes of this research brief, street prostitution is defined as illicit sexual transactions in which the client locates the prostitute initially on the street; either face to face or by curb crawling.

Aggravating/Mitigating Risk Factors Based on a Review of Empirical Literature

Proximity to Drug Dealing Areas: Although many different factors are identified as pressures to enter prostitution, studies suggest that one of the main reasons for involving in prostitution is financing drug addictionⁱⁱ. Accordingly since many prostitutes use drugs, proximity to drug dealing areas may be a strong correlate for street prostitution.

Proximity to Transportation Hubs: Street prostitution areas are more common around train and bus stops.ⁱⁱⁱ

Proximity to Budget Motels, Convention Centers and Hotels: Since budget motels offer relatively lower rates, accept cash, and have a much more unrestricted environment due to layout and management features, budget motels attract prostitution activities.^{iv} Prostitution activities are also common around convention centers and hotels, “especially when mostly male conventions are held”.^v

Proximity to Coffee Shops and Bars: Prostitutes take breaks in these facilities.^{vi}

Camouflage Areas: Sexual transactions take place in dark, dimly lit, or abandoned areas such as parking lots, alleys^{vii} and abandoned buildings^{viii}

Road Design: More sexual transactions take place on roads “that allow drivers to slow down or stop, ideally where the driver’s side of the vehicle is closest to the curb”.^{ix}

Temporal Effects

Street prostitutes generally work six to eight hours a day, five to six days a week.^x The peak hours change from place to place.

Setting Effects

Street prostitution is more common in socially disorganized neighborhoods such as areas with weak communal ties, industrial areas or declining residential areas. Still these neighborhoods are not highly crime-ridden areas as clients will be afraid to seek transactions in such settings. Accordingly, street prostitution takes place in areas of transition rather than areas with high crime rates. Street prostitution areas mostly have a radius less than a mile, and it is possible to observe more than one prostitution area in large cities. ^{xi}

Recommended (Publically Available) Readings

American Prosecutors Research Institute (2004). *Unwelcome Guests: A Community Prosecution Approach to Street-Level Drug Dealing and Prostitution*. Alexandria (Virginia): American Prosecutors Research Institute, National Center for Community Prosecution.

- “This monograph addresses promising practices to abate street-level prostitution and drug dealing developed by community prosecutors in Kalamazoo County (Kalamazoo, MI), Multnomah County (Portland, OR), Marion County (Indianapolis, IN), and Denver, CO”. Available:

http://www.popcenter.org/problems/street_prostitution/PDFs/APRI_prostitution_2004.pdf

Scott, M., S. & Dedel, K. (2006). *Street Prostitution*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice.

- “The authors identify the problem of street prostitution by focusing on female prostitutes and male clients. They first identify the problem and factors contributing to it, then propose a series of questions for the reader to analyze their local problem and lastly evaluate the responses to the street prostitution problem from evaluative research and practice”. Available:

<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/pop/e10062633.pdf>

Maloney, P., and G. Mobley (2002). *Controlling Prostitution: A Multimodality Approach*. White Paper. Memphis (Tennessee): Memphis Shelby Crime Commission.

- “This White Paper, produced by the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission, is the culmination of a research effort focusing on the crime and public quality-of-life problems that seem to pivot about the prevalence of prostitution related activity. Literature reviews, original survey materials, and personal interviews are cited as providing the basis for the observations offered in this study. A general overview of the

“multi-modality approach” is provided, including responses to possible objections to prostitution control efforts and justifications for a shift in the application of resources to this problem. Finally, recommendations concerning prostitution enforcement and abatement strategies, specific to Memphis and Shelby County, are presented”. Available: http://www.popcenter.org/problems/street_prostitution/PDFs/Maloney&Mobley_2002.pdf

Endnotes

ⁱ For steps of risk terrain map production, download the RTM Manual at www.riskterrainmodeling.com

ⁱⁱ Benson, C & Matthews, R. (1995). Street Prostitution: Ten Facts in Search of a Policy. *International Journal of Sociology of Law*, 23:395-415

ⁱⁱⁱ Scott, M., S. & Dedel, K. (2006). *Street Prostitution*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice, p.9

^{iv} Schmerler, K (2005). . Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice, p.2

^v Scott, M., S. & Dedel, K. (2006). *Street Prostitution*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice, p.9

^{vi} Scott, M., S. & Dedel, K. (2006). *Street Prostitution*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice, p.10

^{vii} Portland Police Bureau and Campbell Resources Inc. (1991). *Crime Prevention in Overnight Lodging: A Guide to Preventing Drug Activity, Prostitution and Other Illegal Behavior in Hotels and Motels*. Portland, Ore.: City of Portland; Scott, M., S. & Dedel, K. (2006). *Street Prostitution*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice, p.10.

^{viii} Scott, M., S. & Dedel, K. (2006). *Street Prostitution*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice, p.10

^{ix} American Prosecutors Research Institute (2004). *Unwelcome Guests: A Community Prosecution Approach to Street-Level Drug Dealing and Prostitution*. Alexandria (Virginia): American Prosecutors Research Institute, National Center for Community Prosecution, p.3; Scott, M., S. & Dedel, K. (2006). *Street Prostitution*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice, p.10

^x Scott, M., S. & Dedel, K. (2006). *Street Prostitution*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice, p.6

^{xi} Scott, M., S. & Dedel, K. (2006). *Street Prostitution*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice, p.10