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Declaration

I, Pernian Shafiei Ranjbar, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

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Date 22.12.2014

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Abstract

This thesis is a discourse analysis of the Norwegian prostitution debates from 2009 to 2013. The study is conducted through text analyses of news articles presented in the three Norwegian national newspapers *Dagbladet*, *Aftenposten* and *Klassekampen*. By drawing on Lene Hansen's framework presented in her work *Security as Practice*, the thesis focuses on identity constructions in the media debates on prostitution. The main analytical research question of this thesis is “*What identity constructions are articulated in the Norwegian media debates on prostitution policy after the 2009 ban against purchase of sexual services was introduced?*” The 2009 ban against purchase of sexual services is a contested and highly disputed issue in Norway. By investigating identity constructions through the articulation of Self-identity, difference and Otherness in Norwegian newspapers, this thesis seeks to provide an extensive analysis of the Norwegian debates as a response to the introduction of the 2009 ban against purchase of sexual services. I found that the dominant representations within the Norwegian media debates on prostitution seem to be blooming from an object/subject dichotomy. While foreign women in prostitution were described as victims, Norwegian women in prostitution were described as individual agents with freedom to choose. The dichotomy also produced a contrast between the Norwegian Self and the foreign Other at the state level. Norway's national identity became particularly evident through implicit identity constructions: What is *not* considered Norwegian. Through a differentiation process, foreign prostitution was represented in terms of criminal networks, organized crime and uncivilized anarchy. Overall, I note how foreign prostitution is described as both radically different from and a threat to Norway's national Self-identity.

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1.0 Introduction

On January 1st 2009, the Norwegian parliament criminalized the purchase of sexual services. The 2009 ban states that it is illegal to buy sex, while selling sex still remains legal¹.

Following in the footsteps of neighboring country Sweden, the new law represents what has become known as the “Nordic model” of prostitution legislation.

The 2009 ban on the purchase of sexual services is broadly understood as a landmark in the Norwegian prostitution policy. This thesis studies articulated identity constructions in the Norwegian media debates on prostitution in the post-criminalization period from 2009 to 2013. I wish to explore the post-criminalization period because the 2009 ban against the purchase of sexual services signifies a major shift in the 30-year-old Norwegian debates on how to deal with prostitution (Skilbrei, 2012, 243). Since the law was passed, it has received considerable national and international attention, and is frequently brought up whenever the politics of prostitution is discussed. Although Sweden has received most international attention for their ban against purchase of sexual services (Ask, 2011), BBC NEWS is one of the major media actors that have made reports concerning the Norwegian prostitution legislation since 2009 (BBC, 2009).

Following 2009, much has been written about Norwegian prostitution and the effects of the new law. But few analyses have explored how the Norwegian national identity was part of this debate – and how the Norwegian debate has constructed prostitution as a threat stemming from outside Norway’s borders. By mapping the dominant representations of prostitution in the Norwegian media, that is where this thesis adds value.

In theoretical terms, I want to demonstrate how discourse analysis can be applied to provide useful insight into the relationship between policy and identity. This is because discourse analysis is about studying meaning from where it is constructed, namely through language (Neumann, 2002, 18). I consider the Norwegian prostitution policy from 2009 to be a contested question that has led to a great diversity of representations. The political parties in

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”In 2009, the Norwegian parliament changed the Norwegian criminal law paragraph § 202 by making it illegal in general to buy sexual services” (Ot.prp.nr. 48 (2007-2008)).

power in Norway today, The Conservative Party² and The Progress Party³ together with the supporting Liberal Party⁴, have a majority to remove the ban against purchase of sexual services. The Christian Democrats however, highly support the ban against purchase of sexual services. The conflicting opinion on prostitution policy in Norway provides a significant opportunity to analyze the prostitution discourses in the Norwegian media.

1.1 Research question and relevance for international relations

Debates on prostitution policy is not a new phenomenon in Norway. However, the potential danger with prostitution has been described differently at different times (Skilbrei, 2012, 255). Skilbrei (2012) has examined the articulated threats assigned to prostitution from 1970 until the 2009 ban in Norway. Briefly put, prostitution was represented as a problem confined to troubled youth in the 1970s, while in the 1980s it was described as a gender issue. The following decade, prostitution was linked to public space and order, which changed into a problem of migration and human trafficking in the 2000s (Ibid, 255).

Foreign prostitution stood central in the Norwegian media debates on prostitution prior to the implementation of the 2009 ban (Jahnsen, 2007). Already at the beginning of the 2000s, Stenvoll (2002) argued that Russian prostitutes in Northern Norway in the 1990s represented a menace to the Norwegian Self by threatening public order, health and moral. Through his research, Stenvoll (2002) showed that Russian prostitution was constructed as a sociopolitical problem associated with social definitions of what was normal and deviant. Stenvoll (2002, 154) argued that “the Finnmark prostitution” was represented as a “symbolic issue used to legitimize stricter border controls”.

During the 2000s, Nigerian women in prostitution have been described as radically different from Norwegian women in prostitution (Skilbrei, 2009, 182). Jahnsen’s (2007) master thesis highlights that the media coverage of Nigerian women in prostitution is constructed as an Other to the Norwegian Self in the Norwegian media.

2

Høyre

3

Fremskrittspartiet

4

Venstre

Drawing on Lene Hansen's⁵ framework (2006), this research project is grounded on the belief that the making of policies depends on the relationship between identity and policy. In national security discourses, a radical difference is constructed between national community and international anarchy (Hansen, 2006, 38). In "*Security as Practice*" (2006), Lene Hansen (2006) concentrates on understanding the creation of foreign policy. Still, her framework can be used to understand policy creation in general.

In order to provide an extensive analysis of the Norwegian debates as a response to the introduction of the 2009 ban, this thesis investigates identity constructions in Norwegian newspapers. As stated above, previous research on the Norwegian prostitution debates prior to the 2009 ban has shown that foreign prostitution has been represented in the Norwegian media as something Other to the Norwegian Self-identity (Skilbrei (2009), Stenvoll (2002) and Jahnsen (2007)).

The main analytical research question of this thesis is "*What identity constructions are articulated in the Norwegian media debates on prostitution policy after the 2009 ban against purchase of sexual services was introduced?*" The analytical research question is based on a hypothesis that builds on previous research of the Norwegian prostitution debates prior to the implementation of the ban against purchase of sexual services. My hypothesis is that foreign prostitution is constructed as something Other to Norwegian Self-identity in the Norwegian media debates on prostitution in the post-criminalization period from 2009-2013.

2.0 Theoretical framework: Identity and prostitution policy

Drawing on Lene Hansen (2006), the theoretical framework will discuss the relationship between Self, Other, and policy, as well as its relevance for the Norwegian media debate on prostitution. While all theories on policy creation seeks to explain the way states understand and responds to the world around them (Hansen, 2006, 17), ontological security theorists hold that identity should be the main study object to understand the behavior of states (Steele, 2008). The identity/policy nexus is ontologically constructed, because policies need a description for the problems and concerns they are created to solve.

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Although Lene Hansen (2006) focuses on the study of foreign policy, she provides a theoretical and methodological framework for studying identity constructions in order to understand policy creations in general.

The field of international relations (IR) has traditionally been occupied with realist assumptions about power relations to understand the behavior of states. However, within the field of IR, it is also argued that state behavior can be studied through the way states seek to ensure their perceived identity. On the individual level, Jenkins (2008, 3) notes that “who we are *seen* to be” have an enormous effect. Jenkins describes identity as the human capacity – rooted in language – to know who is who (and hence ‘what’s what’) (ibid, 2008, 5). Identity is therefore a process rather than something that one can have, and “involves knowing who we are, knowing who others are, them knowing who we are, us knowing who they think we are” (ibid, 2008, 5).

Identity seems to be connected with behavior (ibid, 2008, 6). On the state level, the ontological security theorist Mitzen (2006) explains state behavior as stemming from an ontological need to protect its self-identity. According to Mitzen (2006), it is not only the physical Self that the state needs to protect, it also needs to protect the idea of whom they consider themselves to be. Hence, the social actions of states, such as creating policies, are efforts to fulfill the ideas they have about themselves.

In the same way as on the individual level, state behavior is not only a consequence of self-concepts, but also a result of how states want to be perceived by others. Sometimes, these ontological drives can be so strong that states will pursue them even in situations where their actions can seem non-strategic. However, the behavior of states are not irrational, according to Steele (2008, 2), since they act as to fulfill the ontological need to act in line with their self-identity. The way states perceive their own state identity, as well as the way states wants to be understood by others are therefore important study objects for understanding the creation of policies, but also for understanding how the creation of policies affect or change state identity.

Prior to the implementation of the 2009 ban against purchase of sexual services, the Norwegian researcher Synnøve Jahnsen (2007) argued in her master thesis that foreign female sex-sellers stood central in Norwegian prostitution debates. The way prostitution is articulated as a problem for society plays an important role in deciding which political solutions seems to be the best problem-solver (Skilbrei, 2009, 169). The following will continue the elaboration on why this thesis considers identity constructions to be a central study object for understanding Norway’s media debate on prostitution after the 2009 ban against purchase of sexual services was implemented in Norway. Drawing on Lene Hansen’s (2006) framework,

the next section of the theory will explain how the relationship between Self and Other is interlinked to policy.

2.1 Self-identity, difference, and the Other

Post-structuralism has the concept of identity in its center of analysis, and it highlights the importance of language and the dynamic character of social and cultural life (Dunn, 1997). Discourse analysis is rooted in post-structuralism. Post-structuralists consider language to have an ontological significance, because it is language that gives objects and subjects meaning (Hansen, 2006, 18).

Language is a social system that has logic of its own (Neumann, 2002, 18). The way language gives objects and subjects meaning is visible in the prostitution debate. Without constructions in language, the labels “Norway”, “prostitution” or “foreign” could not structure knowledge into manageable terms. Although categories and labels are important tools that help us understand the world around us, they also bear the possibility of simplifying complex issues.

The importance of identity is constituted in all parts of policy, since political decisions both construct and create identity (Hansen, 2006, 1). Post-structuralism sees the relationship between identity and policy as a dual process that cannot be separated. Post-structuralism does not discuss the relationship between identity and policy as a causal relationship. Rather, policy and identity are mutually constructed and strengthened, and together they create discourse (Hansen, 2006, xvi).

Hansen (2006, 24-25) argues that all identities are created through a differentiation process. Gender equality could in this sense not have been a part of Norway’s self-understanding and discourse, if it were not for the possibility of stating that some states are gender-unequal. In classical security discourse, a radical difference between national community and international anarchy is constructed (Hansen, 2006, 38).

The ability to make decisions testifies freedom (Bauman, 1990, 20). The analysis of this thesis will show how foreign women in prostitution are described as lacking the ability to take free decisions as a contrast to Norwegian women in prostitution that are rather described as individual actors. This contrast reflects the agent-structure debate on human behavior (Giddens, 1991). Agency is the ability to reflect on what consequences to which an action will lead, and to predict the directions of our actions and decisions. On the other side, structure is comprised of social constructions that influence or limit human choices (Erskine, 2003, 6).

What is different from what may be considered as normal in a society, can be turned into something Other because of the state's drive for ontological security (Campbell, 1998). States need to articulate threats and Others because of their ontological need to turn subjects that are considered to be deviant from the normal, into Otherness. Connelly (1991, 209-210) argues that this is a process that represents a range of differences as "evil, irrational, abnormal, mad, sick, primitive, monstrous, dangerous, or anarchical – as other". Hansen (2006, 38) argues that this is not a new phenomenon. Historically, "political leaders have legitimized their security policies by constructing other countries, immigrants or homosexuals as Others who are threatening the security and social fabric of the national Self" (Hansen, 2006, 38).

The Danish researcher, Spanger (2011, 535) argues that human trafficking has been used as a lever for feminist voices in order to push forward a stricter prostitution policy. However, discussions about whether or not to ban sexual services, can be considered as related to more than gender issues. Skilbrei (2009, 169) explains that discussions about a ban have been on the Norwegian agenda since the 1980s. The long lasting discussion can be explained by the last ten years' transformation of the Norwegian prostitution market. Skilbrei & Holmström (2013) have argued that prostitution also can be used to legitimize stricter immigration control and as a lever for sanitizing public spaces.

The following text will describe the relationship between policy and security. It will do so by focusing on how threats and dangers are constructed in policy discourses.

2.2 Security and policy

The traditional entrance to security policy in international relations stems from the realist approach. Walt (1991) argues that policy discourses can only be discussed as security issues as long as material factors and military capabilities are evident. Based on Walt's (1991) perspective, prostitution policy is not traditionally a securitized policy domain. During the 1980s, the concept of security was moved from a strict focus on national state security to the security of people (Wæver, 1995, 46).

Post-structuralism has a broader perspective on security within policy discourses. According to the post-structuralist view, prostitution policy can be securitized as long as it is "represented as such by the securitizing actors" (Uddin, 2013, 67). Policy discourses are moved by whom is considered to be the threatening Other against the Self. The Other can also involve threats from the social and political sphere that represents non-military aspects. However, a constituted threatening Other within a policy discourse does not establish a

security dimension within a discourse alone. The threatening Other must also be accepted by a relevant audience as something that bears the potential of exposing the Self for fatal consequences (Hansen, 2006, 34).

The analysis of this thesis is grounded on the belief that there is a link between policy and identity. Since states' creation of policy needs legitimacy by its relevant audience, and since the media is a place where politicians and debaters state their arguments, the discourse on prostitution can be investigated through media debates. Therefore, the media debate about policy becomes crucial for understanding the security dimension of prostitution policies.

Stenvoll (2002) has argued that the Norwegian media present the prostitution of Russian women in Norway as a threat against the Norwegian Self. Stenvoll (ibid, 144) argues that the discourse on Russian sex-sellers legitimized a stricter control of Norwegian borders. Russian prostitution in Norway in 1990-2001 was associated with post-Communist Russia, and it involved threats such as organized crime, disease and immorality (ibid, 144). Stenvoll (ibid, 151) argues that the media used contrasts and labeling to describe how Russian prostitution represented a danger against the Norwegian Self.

In 2000, Norway signed the UN trafficking (Palermo) protocol (Jahnsen, 2013). The result of signing this protocol was that throughout the 2000s, trafficking became a natural part of the debates. While post-Communist threats against the Norwegian Self dominated the prostitution debate in the late 1990s, the 2000s placed human trafficking at the top of the agenda of the prostitution debate in the media. Jahnsen (2008, 272) has shown how the media presents prostitution as a problem related to human trafficking, in her analysis of the Norwegian media coverage of the prostitution and criminalization debate from 2006 to 2007. According to Jahnsen (2008), it was widely argued that the long-term effects of a ban would limit trafficking and prostitution.

The Danish researcher Marlene Spanger (2011) has argued that human trafficking functions as a lever for women's movements in the political debate on prohibitions of buying sex in Denmark. Spanger's argument highlights the security dimension of the prostitution debate. According to Spanger (ibid, 535), the use of power by untraditional forces is legitimized in the prostitution debate. These forces seek to draw upon the classical discourse of security and move it beyond the classical realist military security of the state (Hansen, 2006, 35). The analysis of this thesis will show an explicit articulation of security threats in the media debate on prostitution. It will show that foreign prostitution is articulated as an uncivilized

phenomenon that through both criminal organizations and traffickers endangers the safety of the Norwegian society.

One of the main arguments in favor of introducing the 2009 ban was that a ban against the purchase of sexual services would be a crucial tool in fighting human trafficking (Andersen, 2013). Human trafficking as part of the prostitution discourse must be regarded as something that is articulated as a security issue. The move from state security to human security within the international society is a debated issue in IR. In particular the ethical implications of using the “security label” on a range non-military issues, such as human trafficking is a challenged issue (Roe, 2014, 116). In particular Aradau (2008) has argued that securitization lead to negative consequences in the sense that it produce excluding categories related to human trafficking. Aradau (2008) highlights how people’s living conditions are presented and explained through categorization and labeling. In her discussion on the label “human trafficking”, Aradau (2008) argues that the use of labels simplify the complexity of the category “illegal migrants”. Those considered to be illegal migrants are divided into different categories, such as “victims of human trafficking”. “Human trafficking” is presented as a security issue that, according to Aradau (2008, 48), mainly concerns migration and gender. She holds that the identity “trafficked women” is used to differentiate between “illegal migrants” and prostitutes in general.

Social and cultural context affects policy discourses and makes discourse a continuously changing phenomenon (Fairclough, 1998, 142). In the analysis of this thesis, the “threat at the gate” representation articulates foreign prostitution as a threat against Norway’s national security. In this chapter it is argued that foreign prostitution poses a threat to Norway’s national ontological Self, and the relationship between security and policy is elaborated. It describes the articulated security threats presented in previous studies of the Norwegian media debates on prostitution, prior to the implementation of the 2009 ban, to show the centrality of the security dimension in these debates.

2.3 Stability in identity constructions

The theoretical understanding of policy discourse is that it concentrates on establishing a stable link between policy and identity. It is this link that makes identity and policy appear in line with each other (Hansen, 2006, 29).

Stability is when policy is presented in a way that seems legitimate for its relevant audience (Hansen, 2006, 28). Hansen (2006, 37) argues that understanding identity as produced

through processes of linking and differentiation, provides a theoretical account in which discourses seek to establish stability. As with ontological security, Hansen (2006, 29) argues that in situations where policy and identity are not in balance, they try to get back into balance through a recreation process where one of them has to adjust. Since policies are not a closed system, it cannot be studied in isolation. Therefore, to study the stability of identity within policy discourses, the broader social and political context must be taken into account (Hansen, 2006, 29).

Policy discourses construct problems, objects, and subjects. However at the same time, discourses articulate policies to solve these problems (Shapiro, 1988, 21). The policy that is chosen to solve the problems around prostitution must be read through a present as well as a historical context (Skilbrei, 2012, 255). This is because changes in political discourse depend on present and historical factors (Fairclough (1998, 142).

Skilbrei & Holmström (2013) have argued that the empirical context is ignored in the articulated discourse of the “Nordic prostitution model”. They argue that prostitution policies must be understood as a product of history and national and Nordic debates, as well as influenced by international commitments. Or else, the complexity of the Nordic prostitution policies will be simplified. The empirical contexts bear elements that can destabilize a particular discourse (Hansen, 2006, 21). This is because parts of information are highlighted while other parts are being ignored.

Although discourses always seek to construct themselves to be stable, they consist of unstable elements (Hansen, 2006, 21). A term can be negatively valued in one discourse, and at the same time be positively valued in another. An important unstable factor in language is therefore the juxtaposition of meaning (ibid, 21). Other unstable factors stem from the social and political processes of language. Language is social because it functions as a collective code that people need in order to feel complete. Language is also political in the manner that it both creates and recreates specific identities, while at the same time certain identities are excluded (Hansen, 2006, 18-19). For instance, the term “trafficked” related to illegal migration, is a negative term, while in some situation the same term can provide assistance which the label “illegal migrant” can not provide. Aradau (2008, 6) argues that those who are identified as trafficked women receive, at least apparently, more security than those who are identified as belonging to other categories of illegal migrants.

Hansen (2006, 21) explains policies to be particular directions for action, whereas the construction of identity in discourse is seen more broadly as a political practice. Following this argument, the Norwegian 2009 ban against the purchase of sexual services is a direction for action, while the Nordic prostitution model is rather a construction of identity that is related to a political practice. The articulation of the term “Nordic prostitution policy” can be seen as the production of one particular identity, while other identities are being ignored.

The theoretical framework stands so far as a background for why this thesis studies the Norwegian identity and the articulated threat against the Norwegian Self presented in the media, in order to understand the Norwegian prostitution policy. It has been stated theory behind why discourse analysis is a method that helps reveal identity constructions in the media debate on prostitution. Before moving to the Drawing on Lene Hansen’s framework, the analytical framework will introduce three dimensions of identity construction – the spatial, temporal and ethical – used in this thesis as an analytical lens on the Norwegian media debate on prostitution.

The method of this paper will describe the methodological steps used to detect the basic discourses that this thesis leans on. Before going on to the methodological steps, the following section of the theory will explain how we can perceive knowledge about identity constructions within the prostitution debate, investigated through the spatial, temporal and ethical dimensions.

2.4 Three dimensions of identity construction – spatial, temporal and ethical

The following text will explain how we can reveal different dimensions of identity constructions. Drawing on Hansen (2006) identity constructions in the Norwegian media debate on prostitution policy are investigated through the identification of spatial, temporal and ethical identity constructions. Space, time and responsibility are concepts that can help us trace identity constructions in media debates. Thus, with the help of these identity constructions, we can investigate the analytical substance behind the explicitly articulated symptoms, variations and expressions of discourse (Hansen, 2006, 41, 51).

The spatial identity construction deals with where Self and Other are located in space. Although the spatial identity construction concentrates on boundaries, and has historically been focused on the nation state, spatial identity regards more than just the construction of territorial borders. Spatial identity constructions involve the construction of other states, peoples and regions (Hansen, 2006, 47).

Spatial identity constructions are about where Self and Other are located in space, and deal with the construction of other states, people and regions (Hansen, 2006, 47). In the already mentioned research prior to the implementation of the 2009 ban, Stenvoll (2002), Jahnsen (2007) and Skilbrei (2009) all detected spatial identity constructions through the construction of other states such as “Nigeria” and “Russia”, but also through regional constructions such as “Africa” and “East-Europe”, and people, such as “Russian” or “Nigerian” female prostitutes.

The analysis of this paper gives examples of spatial identity constructions as abstract political spaces. For instance, “Nigerian” is an identity in the Norwegian debates on prostitution that is geographical connected with Nigeria, but at the same time it is also “a political subject in its own right” (Huntington, 2004 in Hansen, 2006, 47). Abstract political identity constructions revolve around the constructions of political subjects, such as “traffickers”, “voodoo-priests”, “tribes”, “women”, “civilization” and “the people”, identities often described as a mixture of the territorially bounded and the abstract political.

Identity constructions can also be *temporal*. In addition to spatial identity constructions, the Other is sometimes presented as someone who is temporally progressing toward the Self.

Development, transformation and change are among temporal themes that Hansen (2006, 48) argues play a significant role for understanding and detecting identity constructions. The process of linking and differentiation stands central in this dimension. Sometimes the Other is described as linked to progress, meaning that the Other has the ability to change and become closer to the Self. Other times the Other is articulated as so different that change or transformation are regarded to be impossible (Hansen, 2006, 48). The temporal dimension of identity construction has been detected in traditional debates about gender roles. For instance, the researcher Bell (1994) has highlighted how groups of women have traditionally been constructed as in relation to other women. These constructions are established through the division of groups of women that are regarded as decent and normal, and those who are regarded to be deviant and different. Skilbrei (2009) explain this differentiation process between women to be a process of Othering because of the articulated contrast between the Other and Us, or the Self.

A linking and differentiation process also appeared in my data material. Sometimes the Other was constructed with a temporal identity similar to the Norwegian Self. For instance, West-European countries that have not criminalized the purchase of sexual services, was in the data

material often described as states that wanted to adopt a prostitution policy similar to Norway. In these articles, the Other was described as agents with the ability to change closer to the Norwegian Self. Other times, differentiation processes appeared in the data material, such as in articles about the supply side within the market dimension. Chapter five on the analysis will present how the people supplying prostitution was presented as coming from countries so weak that no other alternative than prostitution appeared possible. These countries were described as radically different from the Self, and unable to change because of the structure of poverty.

Sometimes, the Other is constructed with a temporal identity that is similar to the Self (Hansen, 2006, 48). Skilbrei (2009, 169) has argued that the social category “prostitute” is a category that involves differentiations between female sex sellers, since it is highlighted that female sex sellers have different living conditions and degrees of freedom. By doing so, the category “prostitute” is divided into different sub-categories, where the Norwegian sex seller is temporally constituted as someone who are closer to the Self, in contrast to the “new Other”, that is not regarded as capable of transformation.

Prior to the implementation of the 2009 ban, the “new Other”, such as the prostitution made by Nigerian women in Norway, was described as “backward”, “tribal”, “violent”, “barbarian” or “primitive” in the media coverage of prostitution (see Jahnsen, 2007). The analysis of the media debate on prostitution policy will show that while West-European women in prostitution is described as people searching for wealth, women in prostitution from the Global South is described as unable to liberate from the backward identity of their home countries.

Moreover, ethical identity constructions are understood as the allocation of responsibility (Hansen, 2006, 50). The ethical identity constructions involve moral force. In foreign policy, the moral force of particular ethical identity constructions become visible when, for instance, a war is framed as to “protect human security”. Moral forces are also evident in domestic policy. As mentioned earlier, Spanger (2011, 535) has argued that the problem with human trafficking has been used as a lever for women’s movements in the political debate on criminalization of sexual services in Denmark. Particular moral forces call upon actions both among those involved, but also among those who are called upon to intervene (Hansen, 2006, 50).

Hansen (2006, 50) claim that problems constructed with moral force and articulated Others, legitimize the creation of policies as driven by something “morally good” (Hansen, 2006, 50). Examples from arguments that are used to legitimize actions in foreign polices are the “war against terror” or “to liberate women”. However, moral forces are powerful discursive moves also in domestic policies because it articulates an explicit responsibility that legitimate particular actions. When policies are argued to be important solutions to solve problems that affects moral, the policy is no longer understood as a “selfish national” need, but an important instrument to protect something superiorly morally good.

The theoretical framework has focused on the relationship between discursive identity constructions and policy. It has also described how we can perceive knowledge about identity constructions through the spatial, temporal and ethical dimensions. However, what has not yet been established is how to detect and identify explicit expressions, symptoms and representations of discourses in media debates. Drawing on Lene Hansen (2006) and Carol Bacchi (2009), the next chapter will describe the methodological steps that this thesis leans on.

3.0 Method

“The principle in discourse analysis is to identify the signs most frequently articulated, the relationship between Self and Other, the policy that is coupled thereto, and the articulations of spatial, temporal, ethical identity” (Hansen, 2006, 52).

While the field of IR might have a particular interests in official policy discourse, the ambition of discourse analysis is not only to understand official discourse. Hansen (2006, 63) notes that discourse analysis is also about analyzing how discourses are presented as legitimate in relations to the larger public. This thesis is an analysis of the Norwegian debate on prostitution policy and represents an effort to map out identity constructions articulated within the political genre of media debates. The following will present the method of this paper, and it will describe the methodological steps by which the analysis of this thesis was conducted.

3.1 Data Collection

The analysis of this thesis is built upon the raw material of texts published in the national newspapers *Aftenposten*⁶, *Klassekampen* and *Dagbladet*. My goal has been to detect articles that explicitly articulate identity constructions through the framing of threats against the Norwegian national Self. To collect the data I used the media archive ATEXT Retriever, screening published articles from the period January 1st, 2009 to December 31st, 2013 that use the term “prostitution”.

I have chosen to study national newspapers, because I consider the media’s informational role to be a supplier of conditions in debates. I consider *Aftenposten*, *Klassekampen* and *Dagbladet* to be the national newspapers that have the power in Norway to define what is considered socially accepted, and to tell a version on a subject that is regarded as mainstream and official. The selected newspapers also cover a broad political specter in Norway.

TNS Gallup have measured that 65% of the Norwegian population reads at least one newspaper in paper on an average day, while 69% reads at least one newspaper on a weekday. The Norwegian population reads on average 1.1 newspapers daily. The specific newspapers were chosen based on a wish to include a broad specter of different political stands. I also wanted to focus on central news media that produce and attract a huge number of different texts about prostitution in the relevant period, in order to gather many different expressions.

A search in ATEXT Retriever on the term “prostitution” in the period January 1st, 2009 to December 31st, 2013 yielded 1190 hits. Among these texts, prostitution is not always the main subject. Sometimes it is used as a metaphor, or it is briefly mentioned in a text where the main part of the articles concerns for instance history, literature or popular culture. In other texts, prostitution is mentioned in connection with other subjects such as begging, stripping, drugs or surrogacy. These are all topics that are tightly linked to discussions about prostitution, but that I had to filter out in order to handle the amount of data, and to limit the analysis to the topic and research questions of this thesis. Although I examined approximately 1190 articles in ATEXT, only a handful of the data is presented in the analysis. I have chosen to analyze articles that consider different parts of foreign prostitution to be the main problem with

⁶ Both the “Morgen” and “Aften” editions of the newspaper *Aftenposten* was included in the data material until 01.01.2013. ”Morgen” is the morning edition of *Aftenposten*, and is distributed nationally. The last edition of “Aften” was distributed Thursday 20. December 2012. “Aften” was the evening edition that was primarily distributed locally in the Oslo area.

prostitution. I have also selected articles that reflect the Norwegian identity in the debates on prostitution policy.

Hansen (2006, 32) argues in her recommendations for discourse analysis that debates should be mapped around key events. Key events on media debates are situations where “important facts” become visible on the media agenda. This analysis concentrates on the mapping out of the main characterizations of foreign prostitution in the post-criminalization period.

As mentioned earlier, the change of the Norwegian prostitution policy by the 2009 ban is a crucial key event in the history of Norway’s regulation of prostitution. Since this thesis is investigating a limited period of the media debate on prostitution, its analysis is not constructed as a timeline. Instead it analyzes the link between identity and policy in the period as a whole. The starting point is still a key event that signifies a major shift in the 30-year old Norwegian prostitution debate (Skilbrei, 2012, 243), and this starting point was used when the empirical material was selected.

3.2 ATEXT Retriever

I used ATEXT Retriever, a digital media archive that covers all media channels: printed press, online news, broadcast news and social media⁷. ATEXT Retriever provides search techniques that can be used to analyze long-term changes in a discourse.

Nafstad & Brakar (2006, 273) highlight that changes in the language can be used as empiric indicators on ideological changes in society. However, finding the right combination of search queries is a big challenge. The goal is to find key words that identify or invalidate assumed ideological changes.

Finding the right keywords was not an easy task. I started with the presumption that “criminalization” is a central keyword that can identify changes in the Norwegian debates on prostitution. A quick search in Retriever showed that it was a clear decline in articles that mentioned “criminalization” in combination with “prostitution” after 2009. However, I did not consider that to be related to the ban from 2009. Although “criminalization” can function as a relevant search query before the ban came into force, it might not detect identity constructions in Norwegian prostitution debates post 2009.

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Retriever media informs on their website, that more than 23.000 news articles is added into the portal every day (retriever-info)

According to Hansen (2006, 30), “Politically contextualized discourse analysis combines the analysis of how text seeks to create stability with analysis of whether these constructions are being accepted or contested within the political and public domain”. Therefore, to detect basic discourses in policy requires that a topic must be studied from different angles, since groups will always have conflicting views on an issue and thus have different basic discourses. This is because a fundamental ideological change, will most likely release counterforces. These counterforces can be used to confirm that it has been a change in the society, that it is more than one basic discourse, or there are variations of the discourse.

For instance, the term “sex worker⁸” was registered for the first time in ATEXT in 1992. While the term was used 60 times from 2004 till the end of 2008, from 2008 till the end of 2013 it was used 106 times. The term “sex worker” can be an expression of lobbyism; a symbol of negative attitudes, a response and a criticism to the 2009 ban. Thus, it can be interpreted as an effort to change connotations about prostitution in order to remove stigma and normalize prostitution as a profession.

Another example is the representation of the articulated threat of human trafficking. If human trafficking has affected the Norwegian prostitution debates in the media, it will be reflected in the language. Nafstad & Brakar (2006, 280) argue that if an ideology has been approved, critical minority perspectives are uncovered through critical words and expressions.

3.3 Selection of texts

The method of the research project is inspired by Hansen’s (2006) methodological framework. However, drawing on Bacchi’s (2009) “*What’s the problem represented to be?*” my opening question for text selection in the data material has been this. With the use of this question as a starting point in the analysis, my goal is to detect articulated problem representations with prostitution that is used as legitimized factors in the data material. In this analysis, the debaters are understood as “agenda setters” that formulates problems, rather than actors that operate as objective problem solvers.

With Bacchi’s question in mind, I started to read roughly through the material, and I removed all text that could not be considered as a relevant response to the Norwegian prostitution policy. Based on the structuring question “*What’s the problem represented to be?*” I started to

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sort the texts into different categories in order to present the problem representations that were most frequent in the material.

3.4 From text to basic discourses

Hansen (2006, 30) notes that “Politically contextualized discourse analysis combines the analysis of how texts seek to create stability with analysis of whether these constructions are being accepted or contested within the political and public domain”, to detect explicit objects of basic discourses. “Policy discourse is identified as the construction of identity, policy, and the link between them.”

Hansen (2006, 42) notes that identity constructions are detected not merely through the description of one particular sign for the Other or the Self, but rather through the location of these signs within a larger system (Hansen, 2006, 38). I therefore started to look after sets of shared issues that I considered were holding together the prostitution debate. After reading considerable amounts of the data material, I started to define two basic discourses that structured the debate.

However, it is not necessarily the case that all texts articulate both identities and policy explicitly. As not all texts will explicitly articulate constructions of identity, not all texts will explicitly address policy (Hansen, 2006, 53). It is basic discourse that indicates the main structural position and crucial questions within a debate, therefore a larger number of texts should be examined in order to identify it. While studying this material, I attempted to detect and identify basic discourses that articulated very different constructions pertaining to identity and problem, thus considering different policies as a solution to what they considered to be the problem (see Hansen (2006, 52) and Bacchi (2009)).

I have also paid attention to the choices made in the articles regarding terminology and comparisons. Terminology and comparison choices are more than the creation of the individual journalist. Skilbrei (2012, 245)⁹ notes that the choices made in terminology and comparison in articles are also expressions of how prostitution is thought of at different times. I therefore understand terminology and comparison choices to be an expression of what society considers to be the problem. However, Skilbrei (2012, 245) also notes that

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Skilbrei, May-Len (2012) The Development of Norwegian Prostitution Policies: A Marriage of Convenience Between Pragmatism and Principles *in Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 9, 244-257.

terminology and comparisons used in articles also shows how journalists take part in the transformation process of how a phenomenon is thought about, by how they engage with the subject.

I thereby started to identify explicit construction of the Other, such as “slave”, “uncivilized” “trafficker”, “voodoo-priest”, or of the Self, such as “good”, “wealthy”, civilized”, “peaceful” and “gender equal” (Hansen, 2006, 41-42).

The quotes presented in the analysis are my translations of the original data material. I have tried to present the quotes as true to the original material as possible. However, because of differences of the languages some of the original meaning might get lost. Therefore, I have included the original Norwegian quotes in footnotes.

3.5 Organization of analysis

The analysis discusses the empirical identity constructions in the media debate on prostitution policy. The following chapters, respectively concerning “the actors”, and “the threat at the gate”, represent the empirical analysis of the media debate in the post-criminalization period, and they constitute my effort to map out dominant identity constructions in the data material.

Chapter 4 (“the actors”) explores the individual level, discussing dominant representations of women in prostitution in the debate. Chapter 5 (“Prostitution as the threat at the gate”) deals with the inside/outside dimension of the media debate on prostitution policy and discusses the various constructions of the dangerous “outside” of Norway's borders.

Chapter 6, “the Norwegian National Self and the Object/Subject discourse”, discusses how the discursive representations in the previous chapters together construct the Norwegian National Self, by asking how the Norwegian national identity has been a part of the debate. This chapter goes back to the analytical research question and hypothesis of this thesis. Chapter 6 will also summarize main findings in chapter 4, 5 and 6. Based on the findings, I argue that a tension between the prostitute as an object and as a subject is revealed. The subject/object dichotomy represents the basic discourse that I deem apparent as a red thread in the Norwegian prostitution debate. It is in this chapter argued that the various representations in chapter 4, 5 and 6 are variations, symptoms and expressions of the underlying basic object/subject discourse that produces “Self” and “Other” in the media debates on prostitution policy. Chapter 7 consists of concluding remarks, and will also discuss the relationship between discourse and political change.

4.0 “The actors”

I have studied different variations of how “the actors” are represented in the Norwegian debate on prostitution through the post-criminalization period. The following chapter will map out the main expressions of the actor in the media debate on prostitution policy, describing three layers of identity constructions as observed empirically in the data material.

4.1 Survivor and agent

The first layer of identity constructions within the actor representation is the articulated *survivor* and *agent*. This layer was dominant in the media debate and was explicitly articulated in the data material. Both *the survivor* and *the agent* have radically different approaches to the actor identity in the debate, they highlight very different issues to be the problem of prostitution, and have very different ideas about what should be the proper prostitution policy to address the problems.

“SURVIVOR: Rachel Moran managed to find her own way out of prostitution. She is now working to spread the Nordic legislation against purchase of sexual services”¹⁰
(Folkvord in *Klassekampen*, 12.06.2013)

In the above quote, prostitution is described as a forced condition that few manage to escape from. Women who manage to escape the sex industry are in this representation described as *survivors*. The term *survivor* is a strong term with moral weight. Helping the *survivor* out of prostitution implies something superiorly good, which also indicates that protecting women in prostitution by law is something more than a selfish national need. Actually, it becomes the opposite of a selfish national need. The survivor representation is described in the media as a movement that favors prostitution laws, such as the Norwegian, which bans the purchase of sex while selling sex remains legal (Folkvord in *Klassekampen*, 12.06.2013).

In articles offering the *survivor* representation, “the Nordic legislation” becomes a natural solution, since the problem with prostitution is articulated as captivity and violence against women. To captive or exploit another person is a criminal act that the state is responsible to prevent. The *survivor* representation also appears in the following quote:

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OVERLEVENDE: Rachel Moran greide å finne sin egen vei ut av prostitusjonen. Nå arbeider hun for å spre den nordiske loven mot sexkjøp.

The sex industry took half of Stephanie's life. Today, she has started a new life, using her strength to fight prostitution in Canada"¹¹ (...) (Henriksen in *Klassekampen*, 05.07.2011).

The quotes above show how the *survivor* representation describes women in prostitution as sufferers of exploitation and violence. On the other hand, women who have managed to leave, or *survive* prostitution are described as heroes that demonstrate enormous strength and courage (equalitynow, 2014), since life in prostitution is described as so destructive that the only way to get your life back is to survive and escape.

The *survivor* representation is concerned with integrating women who sell sex, back into society. Women who have managed to leave prostitution should not be looked upon as deviant or having low morals. Prostitution is rather described as a forced action made by women who do not have physical or psychological freedom. In this representation, women in prostitution become closer to Us, since they cannot be considered responsible for their actions. The identity construction of the prostitute as a *survivor* makes it impossible to imagine that someone would choose to sell sex out of free will.

"I refuse to believe in stories about happy prostitutes. Any happy prostitute should bring her money to a doctor to find out what is wrong"¹² (...) (interview with Rachel Moran in *Klassekampen*) (Folkvord, in *Klassekampen* 12.06.2013).

The above quote indicates that selling sex is against an integral part of the female nature. This identity construction describes the female as part of a homogeneous group. In this group, women have the same needs and reactions. Female prostitutes that disagree with this identity construction is understood as irrational actors. In the above quote, it is argued that there must be something fundamentally wrong with women who explain that they sell sex out of free will. However, for this representation it is important to highlight that although women who argue that they sell sex out of free will are understood as irrational, they are not considered to

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Sexindustrien tok halve livet til Stephanie (37). Nå har hun startet et nytt liv, og bruker kreftene på å bekjempe prostitusjon i Canada.

12

Jeg nekter å tro på historier om lykkelige prostituerte. Den eventuelle lykkelige prostituerte bør ta med seg pengene sine og gå til en lege og få gjort en undersøkelse av hva som er galt.

be deviant or dirty. They are rather considered to be victims of something else that pressures them, or makes them wrongly believe that they want to sell sex. An example of this view appeared explicitly in an interview in Klassekampen with the Cambodian author and human rights advocate Somaly Malm,

“Even women who say that they sell sex out of free will always do it because of something else. They are either addicted to drugs, poor, or mentally ill”¹³ (...) (Syberg in *Klassekampen* 02.06.2009).

The above quote implies that female sex sellers cannot be held responsible for their actions. Prostitutes who argue that they sell sex out of free will, are in this representation not considered “different” or “deviant” as compared to other women. Rather, it is the state that should be held responsible, and the state is considered an actor that can solve the problem of prostitution. The individual actor, the prostitute, is described as being dependant on a *rescuer*, the state, that criminalizes the purchase of sexual services.

The reaction to the *survivor* representation is the *agent* representation. The *agent* representation appears as a critic to the *survivor* representation. While the *survivor* representation describes female sex sellers as trapped in prostitution, the *agent* representation describes women in prostitution as people who have agency and a free will to choose to work in the sex industry.

“(...) The possibility that sex workers may have a physical and mental freedom must be respected. This argument is supported by well-known academics and in *Aftenposten*, who claim that European prostitution laws make it harder for sex migrants. In addition, it is highlighted that women have begun to speak out, and they must be respected for the choices they make on behalf of their own bodies (Wang-Naveen in *Aftenposten*, 17.06.2013).

In contrast to the identity construction of the actor as a *survivor*, the identity construction of the *agent* highlights women in prostitution as having agency in their own life. While the *survivor* representation argues that prostitution always is a forced condition, the *agent*

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Selv de kvinnene som sier de gjør det av fri vilje gjør det alltid på grunn av noe annet. De er narkomane, fattige eller psykisk syke.

representation argues that women in prostitution are rational actors with voices to define what should be the best solution to problems related to prostitution.

The following quote shows an example of how prostitution is described as a free choice made by a rational actor:

“I like money, and believe that prostitution is a nice way to earn it¹⁴” (interview with “Michelle” in *Dagbladet*, 04.07.2010).

In regard to the articulation of the prostitute as a “rational actor”, the *agent* representation appears to be a supporter of very different prostitution policies than what is found within the *survivor* representation. The following quote shows how the *agent* representation presents different attitudes toward what is considered to be the problem with prostitution, than does the *survivor*:

“The ban against the purchase of sexual services takes away the source of income from the sex worker. Money provides possibilities, as is known, among them the freedom of action. Basic possibilities are therefore taken away from the sex worker¹⁵” (Lekanger & Sortodden in *Dagbladet*, 09.07.2010).

In the above quote, the state is no longer a *rescuer*, rather it enforces a restriction on individual freedom. State regulation and control becomes the problem. With the criminalization of sexual services the state has, according to the *agent* representation, gone too far on limiting individual freedom.

From the perspectives represented in the above quotes, the prostitute as an actor is constructed along two dimensions: Within the *agent* construction, the prostitute is considered to be one with the power of definition to find the best solution to the problem of prostitution. It is considered irrational to instate a law to protect someone in a way that does not fit with the idea of how the group themselves want to be protected. The *agent* representation argues that women in prostitution are agents with the ability to create and define discourse, and therefore,

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”Jeg liker penger og synes prostitusjon er en grei måte å tjene dem på.”

15

Sexkjøpsloven sikter på å ta fra sexarbeiderne deres inntektskilde. Penger gir som kjent muligheter, blant dem handlefrihet, som dermed tas fra sexarbeiderne.

they should be important actors with the power to define solutions to the problems with prostitution.

4.2 Passive/active

In the following text I will take a look at the second dominant layer of identity construction concerning the actor, as identified from the data material.

The media debate described women in prostitution as both described *passive* and *active* actors. In the data material, I observed that the *passive/active* dichotomy was very often expressed through an articulated differentiation of women in prostitution from the Global South, versus women in prostitution from Western Europe.

“However, an important aspect here is overlooked: The fact that Grostad and her weapon girders speaks on behalf of free sex workers that represent a completely different social class than the Nigerian or Eastern European women” (...) (Wang-Naveen in *Aftenposten*, 17.06.2013¹⁶).

In the above quote it is drawn a line between free women in prostitution and forced women in prostitution. We can see that foreign women in prostitution are described differently than free sex workers. Throughout the data material, it becomes very clear that the identity of foreign prostitutes is constructed as highly passive, often expressed as victims of human trafficking.

“Foreign girls exposed to human trafficking dominates prostitution in Oslo”¹⁷ (...) (*Dagbladet*, 08.05.2011a).

We see how the above quote clearly articulates a connection between human trafficking and foreign women in prostitution. In doing so, the quote highlights an additional visible

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Filosofen Ole Martin Moen viser for eksempel i *Journal of Medical Ethics* til at det kan være en fysisk og psykisk frivillighet i bildet for sexarbeiderne, og at den må respekteres. Han får støtte av velkjente akademikere og analytikere i *Aftenposten* som hevder at det er mye ved europeiske sexkjøpslover som ser ut til å gjøre situasjonen for sexmigranter verre. I tillegg hevdes det at kvinnene nå selv har begynt å snakke ut, og at de må respekteres for valgene de gjør på vegne av egne kropp. Men her overses et viktig aspekt: Det at Grostad og hennes våpendragere taler på vegne av et sjikt med frivillig kroppsarbeidere med en helt annet klassetilhørighet enn de nigerianske eller øst europeiske kvinnene det her handler om.

17

”Utenlandske jenter utsatt for menneskehandel dominerer prostitusjonen i Oslo.”
Marit Nybakk, *Dagbladet* 08.05.2011

phenomenon in the data material: Namely that foreign women in prostitution are often referred to as *girls*. Describing women as *girls* involves an infantilization of the female actor in the prostitution debate. The infantilization appears to be a means used to create sympathy, and to highlight the naivety or passivity of the actor.

The quote also implies the construction of political subjects such as “human trafficking” and “girls”. These identities are constructed as a mixture of the territorially bounded and the politically abstract (Hansen, 2006, 47). The “girls” are political objects and victims that the Self is responsible to protect. This can be regarded as an active choice aiming to affect the understanding of prostitution in society¹⁸.

The following quote is from a chronicle written by Ragnar Næss from the board of the “Man’s Forum¹⁹”:

(...) Young women who travel to Norway from poor countries in order to sell sex can be considered to be a lower class that delivers an indisputable good, but that has gone into a “risky business”. (...) The society should definitely do something about this situation. But I don’t think that increasing stigma with prostitution, or to ban the purchase of sex, is the solution (Næss in *Klassekampen* 23.11.2013).

The foreign women in prostitution represent the weak part that needs society’s protection. This creates a situation which deals with two different types of sex sellers: The *passive* sex seller who needs help from the state, and the *active* sex seller, who has a voice and can be a supplier of conditions:

“The 30-year-old (West-European woman) does not only finance her five-year long university degree – she is also securing economic freedom and a lot of spare time²⁰“ (..) (Schjerve et al. in *Dagbladet* 06.03.2010).

18

Although not shown in the analysis, the use of infantilization is also evident in the data material in other places where the goal is to highlight passivity, for instance when male customers are described as victims or vulnerable actors that need protection.

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Mannsforum

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The analysis of the actor representation has so far shown foreign women in prostitution presented as both different and representing a contrast to West-European women in prostitution. The analysis shows a correlation between the actor representation articulated in the media and in the agent/structure debate.

West-European women in prostitution are described as having the ability to reflect on the consequences of their decisions and actions. They are described as both rational and active actors concerned with economical freedom, and not being afraid of using unconventional methods to reach their economical goals. However, the foreign prostitute, in particular articulated as coming from the Global South, are passive sufferers that society needs to protect from state level, as they are described as lacking in the ability to be subjects in their own right.

The next section will further show how this contrast is expressed through the differentiation between the constructed identity of the *victim* and the *worker*.

4.3 Victim/worker

“The majority of those in prostitution in Oslo come from countries where they have no real alternative than prostitution in order to provide for themselves and their family.”
(*Dagbladet*, 10.05.2011b).

Discussed through the lens of a spatial identity construction, identity is recognized as a concept that involves boundaries (Hansen, 2006, 47). The Self is in the above quote articulated as the capital of Norway, “Oslo”, which is described as a contrast to the foreign Other.

The spatial identity construction is described through territorial borders. The majority of prostitutes in Oslo are in the above quote an expression of underdevelopment, since they come from countries “where there are no other alternative than prostitution”. Their only option is to go to countries such as Norway, to provide for themselves and their families. They are victims of their home countries’ underdevelopment, and since they have no real alternatives, they cannot be held responsible for their own actions. Again, here it is highlighted that the foreign women in prostitution are victims of structure, and so they

30-åringen finansierer ikke bare sitt fem år lange universitetsstudium – hun sikrer seg også økonomisk frihet og mye fritid. Alt takket være det nye markedet som har oppstått i kjølvannet av sexkjøpsloven som trådte i kraft for drøyt et år siden. (Schjerve et al., 2010, p.16)) (*Dagbladet*, 06.03.2010)

represent something different than Us. The quote indicates that it is necessary and rational to criminalize only the purchase of sexual services. This view is further highlighted in the following quote:

“Norway has taken a step in the right direction by prohibiting Norwegians from exploiting women through sex trade.²¹” (Størset in *Klassekampen*, 21.01.2009).

Throughout the data material and texts regarding the identity construction of the victim, it appeared that differences between the concept of “prostitution” and “human trafficking” was wiped out. This is exemplified by both the above and the following quote:

“Prostitution is seldom about girls that choose their own path, but about rough human trafficking, violence and slavery”²² (...) (Interview with Nybakk in *Dagbladet*, 08.05.2011a).

We note how prostitution is represented as a contradiction between actions that are done out of free will, and out of force. Since human trafficking is considered to be dominating prostitution, decriminalization and legal brothels become an irrational solution. In this problem representation, the 2009 ban is considered to be an essential tool to limit or end prostitution/human trafficking and a “step in the right direction” (Nybakk in *Aftenposten*, 19.01.2009).

Moreover, the victim identity construction was also present in the data material expressed through extreme exoticization, such as in the following quote:

“Nigerian women must deliver heat, nails, panties and menstruation blood to an indigenous witch doctor before they can travel out of the country. Through voodoo, the women are bound to prostitution in Norway” (Midtskogen & Sandli in *Dagbladet* 07.03.2009).

21

Norge har tatt et skritt i riktig retning ved å forby at norske menn utnytter kvinner gjennom sexkjøp.

22

Prostitusjon handler sjelden om jenter som velger sin egen vei, men om grov menneskehandel, vold og slaveri.

In the above quote, we see a form of victim representation where the articulated Other is unable to break with its backward identity (see Hansen, 2006, 49). The exoticification that appears in the quote is particularly visible in the prostitution debate prior to the 2009 ban. In her thesis, Jahnsen (2007) demonstrates how the discourse on Nigerian female prostitutes constituted of an extreme exoticification based on voodoo related explanations (Skilbrei 2009, 182).

The Other is constructed as something radically different from the Norwegian Self in the above quote. Again, the Other is articulated as impossible to change. The Nigerian Other is unable to move towards the Norwegian Self because of its articulated “backwardness”. Prostitution that stems from the global South is in the prostitution debate constructed as an Other that is less developed in contrast to the Self.

Furthermore, this type of victim representation articulates a clear demonstration of Nigerian women in prostitution as not having any other opportunities than selling sex. With the help of voodoo priests, traffickers have bound these women to the sex industry (Midtskogen & Sandli in *Dagbladet*, 07.03.2009). This identity construction was also visible in the following quote from an interview:

“In the same way as the majority of Nigerian women who prostitute themselves in Europe, she has taken part of a voodoo ritual before departure, and has put herself in deep debt that is demanded of her by the traffickers before she can become free from the sex slavery. She is afraid that if she does not pay her debt, a voodoo specialist will curse her and her family”²³ (Brandvold in *Klassekampen*, 28.08.2010).

The discussion above shows that victim representation in the prostitution debate is a demonstration of Othering. The media plays a huge role here, and the following quote shows how the police functions as a good helper to the victim representation in the media:

“If you want to fight human trafficking of women, described by *Dagbladet* in important articles over the last weekend, the most important initiative now will be that

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I likhet med de fleste nigerianske kvinnene som prostituerer seg i Europa, har hun inngått et voodoo-ritual før avreise og satt seg i dyp gjeld, som menneskehandlerne krever av henne for at hun skal bli fri fra sexslaveriet. Hvis hun ikke betaler gjelden frykter hun at hun at voodoospesialister skal føre ulykke over henne og familien. (Interview with “Prech” from Nigeria, *Klassekampen* 28.08.2010)

the police gets legal authority to demand that it is criminal to advertise sex on the internet, says Jan Bøhler²⁴ (Krokvjord in *Dagbladet* 13.02.2013a).

The basic discourse of victim/object is also present in articles about social work towards “foreign” prostitution in Norway, such as the article “The fight against human traffickers” (*Klassekampen*, 23.08.2013a). In this article the leader of the ROSA-project, Mildrid Mikkelsen says:

“The most difficult part of my job is meeting small children with their prostitute mothers. They have at an early age developed a very sexual behavior... By all means – not that the women are bad mothers – The traffickers use the children as control mechanisms – but these small children have no rights – explains Mikkelsen²⁵ (*Klassekampen* in 23.08.2013a).

The quote can be considered typical of our description of foreign female prostitutes. Foreign prostitutes are seen as so controlled by the traffickers that we cannot hold her responsible as a parent. This picture was also given in *Aftenposten* (Strømme, 05.02.2009), where Helga Strømme writes in a chronicle in favor of the 2009 law:

“(...) We have to stop romanticizing prostitution. It is our responsibility to help women and children to have worthy life (*Aftenposten*, 05.02.2009). She also notes: “The purchase of sex and trafficking is rough human trafficking with women” (*Aftenposten*, 05.02.2009).

Although it is a contrast to the identity construction of the *victim*, the sex worker’s identity is not so much visible in the data material. This implies that the sex worker is a minority perspective in the media debate on prostitution policy. Also, it can imply that West-European

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Om man ønsker å bekjempe menneskehandel med kvinner, slik *Dagbladet* har beskrevet i viktige artikler denne siste helga, er det viktigste nye tiltaket nå at politiet får hjemmel til å kreve at det er straffbart å annonsere sex på nettet, sier Jan Bøhler til *Dagbladet*.
25

Det vanskeligste med jobben min er møtene med små barn, i følge med prostituerte mødre. De har tidlig en så seksualisert atferd.. for all del – ikke at kvinnene er dårlige mødre, for bakmennene bruker barna som kontrollmekanismer – men disse små har ingen rettigheter, forteller Mikkelsen.

prostitution is not considered to be the problem with prostitution. Therefore, it becomes a *silence* in the debate, or a minority perspective that very few advocate.

The following quote is from an interview with Astrid Renland, one of the active debaters who highlight the identity of the sex worker in the media debate. The quote articulates how the 2009 ban became a problem for the sex workers:

“Where the police see a means to fight traffickers and criminal networks, Renland sees a hinder for sex workers’ rights to advertise their own legal services”²⁶ (Selmer-Anderssen in *Aftenposten*, 02.08.2013).

However, this argument is struck down by what appears in the data material to be the “initial position” of the media debate on prostitution policy:

“Since its beginnings in the 1980s, the Pro Center has worked to spread the message that prostitution is a choice that must be respected. They want to secure that which they like to call the rights of “sex workers”, and break with myths and prejudices on prostitution, that is normalize prostitution. (...) Yet, the Pro Center did not manage to hinder the womens’ movement, the labor union and the grassroots (activists) at the center and left parties from pushing through the understanding that prostitution is incompatible with the right to worth and dignity, and that to buy access to the body of others is violence”²⁷ (...) (Stø & Kalvig in *Klassekampen*, 07.03.2012).

Although the purchase of sexual services has been criminalized, the actor representation continues to be a hotheaded topic and a dominant representation within the media debate on prostitution policy. The sex worker identity construction wants to normalize prostitution and remove the stigma, while the victim identity construction explains prostitution to be men’s violence against women. Both sides can be understood as efforts to make prostitutes closer to

26

Der politiet ser et middel for å bli kvitt bakmenn og kriminelle nettverk, ser Renland en hindring for sexarbeidere som vil annonsere for sine lovlige tjenester (*Aftenposten*, 02.08.2013)

27

Pro Senteret har siden oppstarten på 1980-tallet arbeidet for å spre budskapet om at prostitusjon er et valg som skal respekteres. De vil sikre det de helst omtaler som «sexarbeidere»s rettigheter og bryte med myter og fordommer mot prostitusjon – det vil si normalisere prostitusjon

Us. While the “sex worker” side wants to normalize prostitution to be a job, not so different from other types of jobs, the “survivor” side does not accept that sex work is a job. Instead of presenting prostitutes themselves as disgraceful, they describe the action to be forced, and explain it to be a result of men’s violence against women.

5.0 Prostitution as a “threat at the gate”

The topic of this chapter is the problem with prostitution as described in the media, concerning international threats against Norway. I will discuss the articulated dominating threats against the Norwegian borders and against the Norwegian Self, as identified in the data material.

5.1 International organized crime

One evident representation in the media debate on prostitution policy is international organized crime. One of the dominant expressions of this threat in the data material is the argument that foreign prostitutes in Norway are a part of an international network of organized crime. The fear that international organized criminals threaten Norway by way of prostitution is described in an interview with Marit Nybakk in *Dagbladet* (08.05.2011):

“Norway is not supposed to be a free place for international mafia and organized crime. Fewer prostitutes have been sent to Norway after the law came into force”²⁸
(...) (*Dagbladet*, 08.05.2011b).

Not only highlighting that the international society outside of Norway’s borders is a free place for international crime, the quote also indicates that *fewer prostitutes in Norway* is synonymous with *less organized international crime*. The problem representation takes for granted that foreign women in prostitution are not individual actors, but part of well-organized and dangerous international criminal organizations.

In the following quote, the presence of foreign prostitutes in Norway is presented as evidence of an important international security threat:

“The court draws a picture of a well organized network where women are transported from Nigeria to Europe to be prostituted²⁹” (Nygaard in *Aftenposten*, 23.10.2010).

28

Norge skal ikke være frihavn for internasjonal mafia og organisert kriminalitet. Etter at loven ble innført sendes færre prostituerte til Norge.

Foreign prostitutes in Norway are not only described as exploited by organized criminal networks in the way that they have to sell sex. Also, organized crime is dominantly explained to be a threat against Norway in that they have the power to force the women to do criminal acts in addition to selling sex. This is described in the following quote:

“There are many indications, according to Kripos, that these women also have, or will get, roles in connection with whitewashing and transport of profit from drugs trade or prostitution³⁰” (Krokvjord in *Dagbladet* 10.03.2013b).

The above quote shows how criminal networks are described as having so much power that we can expect foreign women in prostitution to become criminals on their behalf. Even if the women have not yet done any criminal acts, they are described as potential criminals due to the power of the criminal organizations. “The Nigerian prostitutes in Norway are part of a network that involves drugs trade, human trafficking and voodoo pacts³¹” (...) (Johansen in *Dagbladet* 26.12.2012).

The above quote shows an articulated connection between the international sphere and Nigerian prostitutes. Nigerian prostitution in Norway is considered to be rooted in criminality. Because of this, changing or stopping criminality related to foreign prostitution is understood as impossible.

In the following quote, criminal organizations are described as being responsible for upholding the prostitution market in Norway. However, it is implied that the criminal networks are unstoppable, since they will continue to send new “supplies of women” to Norway. It is considered impossible to do something about the supply side of foreign prostitution:

29

I dommen mot de tre kvinnene tegner retten et bilde av et velorganisert nettverk der kvinner fraktes fra Nigeria til Europa for å prostituere seg.

30

Mye tyder på, i følge Kripos, at disse kvinnene også har eller får roller i forbindelse med hvitvasking og transport av utbytte fra narkotikaomsetning og prostitusjonsvirksomhet.

31

De nigerianske prostituerte er en del av et nettverk som involverer narkotikasalg, menneskehandel og voodooopakter.

“We believe that the prostitution in Oslo is part of a huge European market, there is always a rotation of women”³² (...) (interview with Harald Böhler, leader of the STOP Project in the Oslo police (*Dagbladet*, 10.05.2009a).

As previously described in the theory of this thesis, organized crime is not articulated as a new threat within the discourse on prostitution. Stenvoll (2002) demonstrates how the Norwegian media associated organized crime with post-Communist Russia in the 1990s, while Jahnsen (2008) demonstrates how organized crime was associated with human trafficking prior to the implementation of the ban.

What is evident in my data material is that organized crime in the post-criminalization period was associated with the financial crisis. The following quote is from a chronicle written by Ane Stø from the women’s group Ottar:

“There is no basis for saying that the prohibition of buying sexual services does not work, we can only imagine how well-organized criminals exploit the economic crisis to sell more and more women to a willing-to-pay male audience, if it had not been prohibited³³”(Stø in *Klassekampen*, 25.10. 2012).

In this quote, Norway is described as an economically strong country with a market that is desired by international criminal organizations. It is implied that due to the economic crisis in Europe, criminal networks are desperate for Norwegian costumers. The articulated solution is to prevent Norwegian men from buying sexual services. The criminal networks are explained to be so strong and desperate that they are unstoppable. The only solution is to continue criminalizing the purchase of sexual services.

Prior to the introduction of the ban, Jahnsen (2007) argued that one of the main threats with prostitution as articulated in the media, was the visible street prostitution of Nigerian women. In the first period after the law was introduced, a main representation in the media was that the ban had managed to change the prostitution market in Norway:

32

Vi mener at prostitusjonen i Oslo er en del av et stort europeisk marked, og det er hele tiden rotasjon av kvinnene. De som tjener penger på prostitusjonen er avhengig av utskifting.
33

Det er ingen grunnlag for å si at sexkjøpsloven ikke virker, vi kan bare forstille oss hvordan godt organiserte kriminelle kunne utnytte den økonomiske krisa til å selge stadig flere kvinner til et betalingsvillig mannlig publikum, hvis det bare ikke hadde vært forbudt.

(...) “Our impression is that the law has already contributed to a strong reduction (of the sex market, ed.), The reduction is observable in the streets. It is also observable in the decrease in sex advertisement. Besides, we also know that many of the³⁴”
(Ringheim & Haug in *Dagbladet*, 16.01.09).

Organized crime related to prostitution continued to be associated with human trafficking in the post-criminalization period. The threat of organized crime was explained to be reduced because of the criminalization of purchasing sexual services. Norway was explained to be a less attractive market for criminal organizations:

(...) “The police thinks that there have been fewer prostitutes in total (after the 2009 ban came into force), which makes it easier to fight human trafficking³⁵” (...) (*Aftenposten*, 22.04.2009a).

However, in the data material the criminalization of purchasing sexual services appears as a force that is not strong enough on its own to prevent international crime from crossing the borders into Norway. With the police as a good helper, a dominant view was explicitly articulated in the data material where stronger control and tighter regulation of foreign prostitutes is a necessary means to stop international crime from crossing Norway’s borders:

(...) “We want to change the law as a measure in the extensive fight against human trafficking. The escort pages are contributing to maintain today’s prostitution market³⁶ (...)” (Interview with Pål Lønseth, *Aftenposten* 02.08.2013).

Dagbladet (26.12.2012) describes how foreign prostitutes are considered as having a “key role” in money whitewashing procedures. The *Dagbladet* article (26.12.2012) articulates a

34

Vårt inntrykk er at loven allerede har bidratt til en kraftig reduksjon. Det viser seg på gatene. Dessuten vet vi at mange av de prostituerte har reist hjem (Øyvind Norgaren from the Oslo police district).

35

Politiet mener at det har blitt færre prostituerte totalt sett, noe som gjør kampen mot menneskehandel enklere.

36

Vi ønsker å endre loven som et tiltak i den brede kampen mot menneskehandel. Eskortesidene bidrar til å opprettholde et prostitusjonsmarked, og dagens lovhjæmmel strekker ikke til, sier statssekretær i Justisdepartementet, Pål Lønseth.

problem with prostitution that arose after the introduction of the ban. By banning only the purchase of sexual services, while selling sex remains legal, a new threat is explained to be established against the Norwegian borders from international criminal organizations. In the article it is argued that since selling sexual services is not criminal, criminal organizations have given foreign prostitutes a key role. Moreover, foreign prostitutes are suspected of telling false stories to the police, claiming their income from prostitution. These stories are described as a cover for money whitewashing, which again are used as an argument for legitimizing stronger regulation and tighter control of foreign women in prostitution in Norway.

“The Norwegian prostitution law has resulted in prostitutes having been given a key role as money couriers for the criminal networks”³⁷ (Johansen in *Dagbladet*, 26.12.2012).

So far, this chapter has shown that organized crime continues to be the main threat with foreign prostitution in the post-criminalization period. There has been a tendency to use organized crime as an argument to prevent foreign women from selling sexual services in Norway. Although selling sexual services is not a criminal act in Norway, it is repeatedly argued that prostitution by foreign women involves organized crime and other criminal activities, such as whitewashing of money and dealing drugs (*Dagbladet*, 2012). While the ban has been described as a successful means to reduce human trafficking, the other aspects of threats associated with organized crime have been used as a lever in the media for stronger regulation and control of foreign women in prostitution in Norway.

5.2 A threat against the Norwegian Self

The text above shows how prostitution-related international organized crime represents a threat to the Norwegian borders. But threats associated with prostitution are also articulated as a social and cultural degradation of Norwegian society in the data material. Another dominant representation was the description of foreign prostitution as a danger against important Norwegian values. The following quote describes foreign prostitution to be a threat against the Norwegian civilization:

37

Den norske prostitusjonslovgivningen har gjort at prostitusjon har fått en nøkkelrolle som pengekurere for de kriminelle nettverkene.

“Shocking report from Slave-Norway – the Norwegian Labor Inspection³⁸”
(Thorenfeldt, 2013, p. 16) (...) “As a civilized society we cannot, under any
circumstances, accept that we have got a new lower class in our midst, a lower class
that must be regarded as the slaves of our time, with us not being willing to take the
necessary action to stop this development³⁹” (Interview with Geir Gamborg-Nielsen,
district secretary of The Norwegian Union of General Workers in *Dagbladet*,
11.10.2013).

As stated in the theory chapter, Hansen (2006) notes that there cannot be an understanding of
the important values that that is considered to be an essential part of the Norwegian identity
without a description of those who lack this identity (Hansen, 2006, xvi). According to
Hansen (2006), this description does not only present some states as radically different from
Us, it also strengthens the ideas that We have about our own Self. The following article is an
explicit example of how the “threat at the gate” representation articulates a temporal identity
by defining the boundaries to one of Norway’s most important Others: Russia. “The police in
East Finnmark worry that a more open border will lead to more crime, prostitution and
commotion⁴⁰” (Rapp in *Aftenposten*, 13.02.2009).

The quote from the article presented above relates to the disclosed fact that Police
Commissioner Håkon Skulstad sent a secret letter to the National Police Directorate, where he
evaluates the consequences of a border pass⁴¹. The Police Commissioner was later criticized
for reproducing old prejudices:

38

Arbeidstilsynet

39

Som et sivilisert samfunn kan vi på ingen måte leve med at vi har fått en ny
underklasse midt iblant oss, som nærmest må betraktes som den nye tids slaver, uten at vi er
villig til å sette inn de tiltak som er nødvendig for å stoppe denne utviklingen, sier Gamborg-
Nielsen, som selv sitter i arbeidsgruppa.

40

Politiet i Øst-Finnmark er redd for at en åpnere grense vil føre til mer kriminalitet,
prostitusjon og uro.

41

(...) The Police Commissioner wants to remind us of the big difference in standards of living between Kirkenes and the Russian villages along the borders. He points out that liquor and tobacco is cheap on the Russian side, and that a more open border can lead to more prostitution and burglary in Finnmark⁴² (Rapp in *Aftenposten*, 13.02.2009).

The above quotes reveal a spatial identity construction. It explicitly articulates a “Russian” threat against the Norwegian society in Finnmark. It also wants to remind us of the “big differences in standards of living” between the two neighboring societies. The Russian society is constructed as less developed than the Self (see Hansen, 2006, 48), and those who are part of the Other, is constructed as objects that mirror this construction and therefore represent a threat to Us in their search for growth and wealth.

The “threat at the gate” representation includes variants of representations that involve threats against the national security and pose a threat against the identity of the national Self. According to David Campbell (1998), threats and Otherness are constructed as tools to build state identity. Another clear illustration of the radical difference between Us and the Other, is an article written in *Dagbladet* (Krøger in *Dagbladet*, 23.01.2012) reviewing a book about prostitution in India. The article notes that the book is based on true facts about human trafficking, violence and prostitution in India:

“The men are raised to beat their mothers, sisters and daughters, and force them into prostitution. the women are condemned to a life in violence and sex sale. And they realize that giving birth to a daughter means condemning the child to the same fate⁴³” (Krøger in *Dagbladet*, 23.01.12).

The goal is that the inhabitants who live 30 kilometers from the border on each side shall be given permission to cross the border without a visa.

42

Politmesteren minner om at forskjellen er stor mellom Kirkenes og de russiske bygdene langs grensen. Han påpeker at sprit og tobakk er billig på russisk side, og at en åpnere grense kan føre til mer prostitusjon og flere innbrudd i Finnmark.

43

Mennene blir oppdratt til å denge mødre, søstre og døtre, og tvinge dem til prostitusjon. Kvinner er dømt til et liv med vold og salg av sex. Samt vissheten om at å føde en datter betyr å dømme barnet til samme skjebne (About the novel «Kjærlighetsgata» described to be based on facts about trafficking, violence and prostitution in India) (*Dagbladet*, 23.01.2012.)

(...) “Østby knows India. She writes in a clear and unsentimental way. However in some passages, it becomes difficult to distinguish between some of the fates (...) Also, the thoughts and reflections of the women can sometimes seem like the reflections of a well-educated, white writer (...) DEGRADING: Around 1.2 million women are so-called sex workers in India⁴⁴ (...) (Krøger in *Dagbladet*. 23.01.12).

The quote presents the Indian prostitutes to lack agency. They even lack the ability to have any interesting reflections about their own situation. The description of the Indian women raises questions related to humanity and international human rights. The representation of the Indian prostitutes creates a relational Other, in the sense that it describes a society that is a radical contrast to values that is important to the Self. What is particularly relevant here is that the quote is constructing a difference between the countries that have adopted universal rights, and those who have failed in doing so. And in constructing these identities, the “threat at the gate” representation clearly constructs a difference between Norway and the countries on the “outside”.

Foreign prostitution is seen as disgraceful and a contrast to the articulated Norwegian civilized society. The 2009 ban appears in the data material as having become an important part of the Norwegian identity as a civilized and humane society. The 2009 ban is described as a “natural” option, which sets Norway on the right track to becoming the society Norwegians, wants to represent. The following quote presents Norway as an internationally admired protector of gender equality:

“Norway is internationally admired for its strong gender equality politics. Especially the criminalization of whoremongers lightens up. The politicians have sent a clear signal: Prostitution is a social and gender equality problem, women and men have the same value and the sexuality of humans is not for sale⁴⁵” (...) Helth in *Dagbladet*, 08.03.2012).

44

Østby kjenner India. Hun skriver greit og usentimentalt. Men det blir i passasjer nokså vanskelig å skille de ulike skjebnene fra hverandre (...) Dessuten kan tankene og refleksjonene til kvinnene av og til likne refleksjonene til en velutdannet, hvit forfatter (...) Rundt 1,2 millioner kvinner er såkalte sexarbeidere i India, i følge beregninger gjort av den nasjonale AIDS-kontrollorganisasjonen.

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6.0 The Norwegian Self and the Object/Subject discourse

In the previous two chapters, we noted how Norwegian identity is constructed in the media debate on prostitution policy through the articulation of threats such as organized crime and degradation of society. The debate makes an implication of the “Norway” identity as something that is constructed through what Norway *is not* rather than what Norway *is*. Therefore, the description of threats and Others gives insight into how the Norwegian identity is articulated in this debate.

Through the differentiation process described in the previous chapters, gender equality appears as a central value within Norway’s self-understanding. By describing how other countries are gender unequal, a radical difference between Norway and the international is constructed. I have also analyzed articles in the media debate that explicitly articulates what Norway *is*. In the following quote, prostitution is indicated as a problem of gender equality:

(...) “We believe that there is no room for prostitution in an equal society, and consider the sex buyer law to be an important instrument” (Ørstavik in *Klassekampen*, 02.10.2013).

The data material also shows that prostitution is described as violence against women, and the law has been described as an important vehicle in women rights movements’ fight for anti-prostitution laws.

“The law accepted in 2008 that criminalized the purchase of sexual services was a great victory for the women’s movement, and those who have worked for women’s rights and a right to a life without violence”⁴⁶ (...) (Skranefjell in *Klassekampen*, 14.10.2009).

«Norge beundres internasjonalt for sin sterke likestillingspolitikk. Særlig kriminaliseringen av horekunder lyser opp. Politikerne har sendt et klart signal: Prostitusjon er et sosialt og likestillingsproblem, kvinner og menn har samme verdi og menneskets seksualitet er ikke en salgsvare. Prostitusjonsprosjektets viktigste oppgave er derfor å støtte mennesker i å forlate prostitusjon»

46

Det var en stor seier for kvinnebevegelsen og alle som har arbeidet for kvinners rettigheter og retten til et liv uten vold at loven om kriminalisering av kjøp av seksuelle tjenester ble vedtatt i 2008.

The Norwegian identity in the prostitution debate also presents Norway as a part of something greater, namely the Nordic model:

“More and more countries, like Ireland, United Kingdom, and France look to the Nordic model when they want to fight human trafficking and prostitution, because they do not trust the German/Dutch model⁴⁷” (Håland in *Klassekampen*, 08.07.2013).

Hansens (2006) argument about linking was was is a well-suited point for describing the Norwegian media debate on prostitution. In the above quote, countries with liberal prostitution policies are described as partners that want to transform and become more similar to the Norwegian prostitution policy. This difference can be seen as the temporal dimension of Hansen’s (2006) framework of identity, where we can also find a space where countries that are not viewed as “gender equal”, can develop to become more like Norway.

In the debate, the “Nordic model” is described as being built on feminist values. The “Nordic Model” is presented to be the best practice, and Norway, being described as an important part of the model, is not only described as a women friendly entity, but a part of something greater, namely a progressive, gender equal and civilized area of the world. The representation portrays Norway as a country that attracts international attention, together with the rest of the Nordic region, for making an example and “leading the way”.

“Feminists and humanists in other countries are now looking toward Sweden, Iceland and Norway for help to change the laws in their own country, and it is realistic that the “Scandinavian model” is approved in Denmark, France and United Kingdom within a short time⁴⁸” (Stø & Kalvig in *Klassekampen*, 07.03.2012).

47

Stadig flere land som Irland, Frankrike, Storbritannia og Frankrike ser til den nordiske modellen når de vil bekjempe menneskehandel og prostitusjon, fordi de ikke har noen tillit til den tysk/nederlandske modellen

48

Feminister og humanister i andre land ser nå til Sverige, Island og Norge for å få dra hjelp til å endre lovene i eget land, og både i Danmark, Frankrike og Storbritannia er det realistisk å få gjennomslag for «den skandinaviske modellen» innen kort tid

The Nordic model is very often portrayed as an essential tool against human trafficking and for reducing prostitution. It is also presented as women friendly, since it is targeting the customer rather than the person (woman) that sells sex. In the media, the Nordic prostitution laws are often referred to as the “Nordic model”, and described as an effective approach to prevent trafficking and exploitation. This description often presents the Nordic model as a device to restrict the demand for commercial sex that fuels sex trafficking, and to promote equality between men and women⁴⁹.

My findings show that in the media, Norway is treated as a representative for a “Nordic model” of prostitution policies. The description provides a picture of something static that follows a straight track, which again produces an identity of “Us” being a part a model other countries want to copy. According to Hansen (2006, xvii), policy requires identities, but identities do not exist as “objective accounts of what people and places “really are”, but as continuously restated, negotiated, and reshaped subjects and objects” (Hansen, 2006, xvi). This is because the prostitution debate can be linked to what Hansen (2006, xvii) calls “to invoke constructions of the proper family”, as opposed to the “non-nuclear subversive one”. Following this argument, the identity as part of a Nordic model is getting constructed through the Norwegian prostitution policy, as well as a part of Norwegian politics. We cannot explain identity to have caused the Norwegian prostitution policy, but rather being reproduced through the way we choose to talk about the prostitution policy.

The articulated danger with prostitution as associated with organized crime, was already highlighted in research on the media debate prior to the implementation of the ban. This was a

49

(...) “SPACE (Survivors of Prostitution Abuse Calling for Enlightenment), is an international organization that works to spread a ban of buying sexual services after the Nordic model” (12.06.2013).

“Raymond has paid close attention to how different countries have dealt with questions about prostitution over a long time, and strongly supports the Nordic model, the ban against buying sexual services, that first was introduced in Sweden, and later in Norway and Iceland. She thinks that the Nordic model has been a powerful model for countries like France and Ireland” (*Klassekampen*, 28.08.2013) “Raymond argues that the Nordic law also have impacted the way a ban against prostitution is dealt with in the different states in America” (*Klassekampen*, 28.08.2013)

problem representation that continued to be evident in my data material. Chapter five revealed how threats from the “outside” were described as both physical threats against Norwegian borders, and as ontological threats against the Norwegian self-identity. The description of the international in the national media debate as a contrast to the Norwegian national Self, implies a differentiation process that constructs Norwegian identity in relation to those on the “outside”.

My findings show that the consequences of the threats represented in the debate are described as potentially fatal to Norwegian society. Foreign women in prostitution are described as victims that need to be protected and that cannot be held responsible for their actions. Therefore, criminal networks, organized crime and social degradation of the Norwegian society are threats that are used to legitimize arguments about stricter control of foreign women in prostitution. Norwegian women in prostitution, on the other hand, are described as individual actors, not parts of organized criminal activities, and are therefore not considered to be threats in the same way as the foreign prostitutes. This problem representation became a legitimizing argument in favor of the law. Furthermore, this problem representation suggests stricter control of Norwegian borders than the law itself already has introduced. An important argument in favor of the 2009 ban was that the law would change the focus from the seller to the buyer. By criminalizing only the purchase of sexual services, the attention turns to the customer. However, my analysis shows that identity construction related to *women in prostitution* still stands central in the media debate. In particular, the representations of prostitution link a decreased level of foreign prostitution in Norway with less organized crime. A tendency in the data material was that articles that started with stating that “the law works” followed with statements such as “the prostitutes have gone home” (Ringheim & Haug in *Dagbladet*, 16.01.09). Also, articles that stated “fewer Norwegian men buy sexual services” followed up with “the police report less visible street prostitution” (*Aftenposten*, 22.04.2009a). My findings show that an object/subject dichotomy produces identity representations in the media debate on prostitution policy, which leads us to the last topic to be summarized.

6.1 The object/subject dichotomy:

To paraphrase Hansen (2006, 42) once more, identity constructions in media debates are located through the sign of Other and Self within a larger system. After reading and analyzing a larger amount of articles, I identified two basic discourses in the data material:

The object/subject dichotomy managed to produce a Norwegian Self in contrast to the foreign Other. The dichotomy was evident at different levels of the debate. First, it produced a contrast between the dominant actors at the individual level. The Norwegian prostitutes were described as subjects with agency in contrast to the foreign prostitutes described as objects without agency. Second, the dichotomy also produced a contrast between the Norwegian Self and the foreign Other at the state level. While Norway was presented as the active subject with the ability to protect its own Self from threats such as organized crime, uncivilized behavior and gender inequality, the foreign Other was explained as a passive object, impossible to transform from its “violent, backward, poor and unequal” environment.

The different representations of the Other, and of the threats described in this analysis, are different variations, expressions and symptoms of the underlying basic object/subject dichotomy. These basic discourses are not necessarily empirically observable objects in the data material. They are rather the analytical lens that helps locating the relationship between identities and policy (Hansen, 2006, 53). A basic discourse implies that when I in the analysis study the dominant identity constructions in the data material, I am able to indicate a main structural position in the debate. The subject/object dichotomy is traced in the data material as a binary couple that stands against each other as oppositions in the prostitution debate.

The object/subject dichotomy helped me trace how the articulations of certain identities are interlinked to the suggested policies. It helped me trace a link between the survivor representation and the supporting arguments in favor of the 2009 ban. It also helped me see the connection between the agent and worker representation and the critic against the ban against purchase of sexual services.

Making it criminal to buy sexual services relies on the idea that the buyer, in contrast to the prostitute, is a subject that can be held responsible. In this view, it would be unethical to give the prostitute the responsibility for actions they are forced to do, and therefore cannot control. The subject is also articulated within the *object* discourse. The male buyer represents the subject that can be held responsible and that must be punished for its actions. The male buyer also represents the agent that has the possibility to change. This is not to say that the object discourses describe women in general as objects. It is rather to say that object discourse in the prostitution debate, often highlighted by feminist movements, criticize prostitution to be a situation that constructs women in it to be objects. The view that prostitution is a forced condition that takes away women’s possibility to be subjects in their own life, is an argument

often articulated by feminist voices. The following quote is from an interview in *Klassekampen* with the British feminist Julie Bindel from the activist group *Justice for Women*⁵⁰:

“(...) We believe it is completely wrong to distinguish between voluntary and forced prostitution. All prostitution are human rights violations (...)” (Henriksen in *Klassekampen* 29.03.2010).

The above quote implies that women in prostitution are objects that have lost autonomy. The only way to get autonomy back is to escape prostitution. In this view, prostitution is not regarded as a free choice, but as abuse, often presented as a result of direct force or related to abuse having taken place in the past.

The second articulation of the subject in the prostitution debate is within the *subject* discourse. The subject discourse can be regarded as a response and a critic against the initial *object* discourse. The subject discourse articulates the female prostitute as the subject that has autonomy over its own body. Therefore, to criminalize the act of the buyer becomes wrong when the arguments in favor of the law are to protect the female prostitute. This is because the subject discourse considers the prostitute to have the ability to make choices, which implies that it is rather the stigma that must be changed in order for the prostitute to come closer to society. “Sex work is a rational choice when it is a means to increase the standard of living in the situation that many live in⁵¹” (Pro Senteret in *Dagbladet*, 09.07.2010).

According to the subject perspective presented in the quote above, the prostitute must be the subject of the prostitution discourse, since it presents sex work to be a rational choice made by a rational actor. Here, it is implied that the prostitute herself should be the definer and subject of the prostitution discourse.

50

Vi mener det er helt feil å skille mellom frivillig og tvungen prostitusjon. All prostitusjon er menneskerettighetsbrudd.

51

“Sexarbeid som et middel for å øke sin levestandard er et rasjonelt valg innenfor de rammene mange lever innenfor” (Pro Senteret (de prostituerte interesseorganisasjon i Norge) in *Dagbladet*, 09.07.2010)

7.0 Concluding remarks

“Woman is the other of man, animal is the other of human, stranger is the other of native, abnormality the other of norm, deviation the other of law-abiding, illness the other of health, insanity the other of reason, lay public the other of the expert, foreigner the other of state subject, enemy the other of friend” (Bauman 1991, 8)

This final quote illustrates the findings of this thesis, namely the tension between how identity is constructed through the articulation of threats, Others and Self in the media debate on prostitution policy in Norway. Prior to the implementation of the 2009 ban against the purchase of sexual services, foreign women in prostitution stood central in the Norwegian media coverage of prostitution (Jahnsen, 2008). Foreign prostitution and the women within it have continued to be the dominant representation and issue with prostitution described in the media debate on prostitution policy within the criminalization period from 2009 until 2013.

This thesis considers the Norwegian domestic media debate on prostitution to be another form of politics, than foreign policy, where “the constitutive importance of identities” is significant (Hansen, 2006, xvii). Policies need a description of the problems and concerns they are created to solve. Therefore, the dominant problem representations of prostitution in the media provide insights into the relationship between policy and identity.

I will in the following concluding remarks summarize the main findings of this thesis. Based on my analysis I will also suggested further research on the media debate on prostitution policy in Norway.

The 2009 prostitution law is a contested and highly disputed issue in Norway. The focus of this thesis has been the articulated identity constructions in the Norwegian debate on prostitution policy, after the 2009 ban against the purchase of sexual services was introduced. By investigating identity constructions through the articulation of Self-identity, difference and Otherness in Norwegian newspapers, this thesis have been an effort to provide an extensive analysis of the Norwegian debate as a response to the introduction of the 2009 ban.

In the media debate on prostitution policy, Norway’s national identity is a part of the post-criminalization debate, and it is articulated as a “civilized society”, a “protector of women’s rights” and of “gender equality”. Norway’s national identity became particularly evident

through implicit identity constructions: What is *not* considered Norwegian. Through a differentiation process, foreign prostitution was represented in terms of criminal networks, organized crime and uncivilized anarchy. Through the articulations of threats and Others, this thesis has demonstrated how foreign prostitution is described as both radically different from and a threat to Norway's national Self-identity.

The analysis shows that the dominant representations within the Norwegian media debate on prostitution can be considered to be blooming from an object/subject dichotomy. Voices in favor of the 2009 ban against purchase of sexual services argue that it is wrong and unethical to punish women in prostitution, since prostitution is described as usually a forced condition. By criminalizing the purchase of sex, the male becomes constructed as the subject that has the ability to limit, or even stop the prostitution market. On the other hand, critical voices against the prohibition of purchase of sexual services hold that sex sellers should be the main agenda setters within the prostitution discourse. The consequence is that prostitution is being explained as "simple problem with a simple solution", rather than describing the nuances of this complex phenomenon.

The constructed problems and identity within the debate are tools that help sort knowledge into manageable terms and help us understand social processes. However, it creates an ethically polarized debate, where supporters of the prostitution policy argue that the ban is an important means to protect the victims in prostitution, in particular related to human trafficking. However, those against the law argue that the 2009 ban is unnecessary, since human trafficking can be defeated by other means.

The identity constructions within the discourse on prostitution in the post-criminalization period can be regarded as both constructed and created by the introduction of the 2009 law. In particular the way Norway, together with Sweden, in the media has been described as an important representative of the "Nordic model", prostitution policy is an identity construction that that can be regarded as strengthened within the Norwegian prostitution policy in the post-criminalization period.

The link between identity and prostitution policy is constructed around foreign threats and protection of the Self. The dominant representation of prostitution is that foreign prostitution is violence against women. Foreign prostitution is therefore an ontological threat against the Norwegian identity as a protector of gender equality. But even though foreign prostitutes are victimized in the media debate, criminal networks, organized crime and the social degradation

of Norwegian society are threats associated with foreign prostitution that were used to legitimize arguments about stricter control of foreign women in prostitution. This problem representation became a legitimizing argument in favor of keeping the law. Further, this problem representation suggests stricter control of foreign prostitution, which implies stricter control of foreign women within prostitution than the law itself already has introduced.

The Norwegian prostitution debate also shows that there are degrees of difference, since Norwegian prostitutes are articulated as actors with a free will that do not represent a threat to the Self, but rather are becoming closer to the Norwegian Self through the (shifted) framing of the Other.

One of the goals of this thesis was to provide insight into why some policy solutions seem more “rational” than others. Identity constructions stands central here, because the identity and problems that are articulated in the media debates on prostitution become crucial for understanding the different stands in the media debate, and why this debate is such a hot topic even if the law has been introduced to solve the problem with prostitution. While reading the material I noted how the discourse on prostitution interacted with other discourses, such as the debate about stripping, begging and surrogacy. To study the interaction between these discourses would be an interesting topic for further analysis, particularly when it comes to how changes or arguments in these discourses affect or transform the prostitution debate.

Within the chapter “Prostitution as a threat at the gate”, the dominating articulated threats against national physical and ontological security was mapped out and discussed. I will argue that it confirms the hypothesis that foreign prostitution is represented as something Other to Norwegian Self-identity. In the media debate on prostitution policy, foreign prostitution was articulated as something different and threatening to Norway’s self-identity, posing a threat against the national Self. This thesis has shown how the discourse on prostitution is moved by who is considered to be the threatening Other against the Self. Although the represented threats studied in the analysis do not imply military aspects, they involve security threats that are constructed within the social, economical and cultural sphere, and they highlight that there is a solid security dimension within the media debate on prostitution policy in Norway. On the one hand, there is a described link between Norway’s interests, values and needs, and the articulated interest among foreign women in prostitution. There is also described a strong link between Norway and its neighboring countries, particularly Sweden. Countries with liberal prostitution policies were often described as countries seeking to transform their policies to the Norwegian ones. On the other hand you can find a differentiation process, where Norway

is constructed as different from countries involved in foreign prostitution. When it comes to not articulating a punishment for the prostitute, but only banning the purchase of sexual services, this can be seen as a process that is contributing to the stabilization of the Norwegian identity as part of the “Nordic model”, and it is in line with the ethical dimension of the Norwegian identity.

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