**Title:** The Price of Stigma: The Disproportionate Punishment of Men Who Pay for Sex in Sweden

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**Abstract**:

This paper examines the various forms of punishment faced by men who pay for sex in Sweden. It highlights how social condemnation amplifies the consequences of their actions beyond the legal framework that criminalizes the act of paying for sex. Drawing on media reports, court rulings, decisions by government agencies, and interviews with men who have paid for sex, the analysis explores how stigma shapes both formal and informal punitive practices. The findings demonstrate how these men face penalties that extend far beyond the scope of their crimes. Extortion schemes exploit their fear of exposure, while interactions with law enforcement and child welfare agencies often reflect societal moral judgments rather than proportional responses to their offenses. These cases challenge the principle of justice as fairness, revealing how stigma and condemnation intensify the punitive impact. By exploring the tension between formal justice and societal retribution, this paper argues that the repressive Swedish prostitution policy perpetuates a disproportionate and stigmatizing punishment regime. The findings contribute to broader debates on the ethics of stigmatization, the role of moral judgment in justice systems, and the societal consequences of conflating legal and moral culpability.