

Male opinion about prostitution and trafficking in human beings

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The paper analyses the results of public opinion research that examined the attitudes of randomly selected male respondents to trafficking in human beings and prostitution in Slovenia. The analysis shows how both prostitution and trafficking in human beings are related to policies of control and border regimes and appear as legal or moral questions, addressing issues of human rights, the labour market and the sex industry. The majority of respondents supported the legalization of prostitution in Slovenia; those with a lower level of education were less favourable to its legalization and compared to highly educated respondents, they were more supportive of suitable sentencing policies. Most respondents also agreed that soliciting in a public place should be considered to be a minor offence. The paper exposes the shortcomings of the paradigm of moralization and criminalization which serve to victimize women and treat prostitution as an a priori violent activity. Most respondents also considered that prostitution destroys families and that it is shameful for males as well as for females. Advocates of legalization expressed to a lesser degree attitudes toward prostitution that can be explained within the paradigm of moralization. At the same time, the analysis highlights the inconsistencies of the sex work paradigm that does not reflect the role of clients and is blind to situations in which prostitution does not merely appear as »voluntary sex work«.

Key words: prostitution, trafficking in human beings, public opinion research, legalization, restriction, sex work

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