MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

How views, opinions and policy on prostitution and the global sex trade are shaped by terminology

By Julie Bindel

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Contents

Images from the work of artist Claudia Clare's 'And the Door Opened' Project, undertaken in partnership with women@thewell

women@thewell

women@thewell is a women-only service located in Kings Cross dedicated to supporting women whose lives are affected by or at risk of being affected by prostitution to exit. The women we support have experienced multiple and complex needs including mental health issues, substance misuse and homelessness, many have been victims of trafficking and Modern Slavery.

women@thewell provides specialist exiting services to women, providing trauma responsive services in a creative and supportive environment. We work across all our services to enable women to develop sustainable exit strategies from involvement in prostitution and the cycles of abuse that are associated with the sex trade. We provide specialist training and consultancy to agencies to improve and develop their practice with a view to improving the services and support available to women who are seeking to exit prostitution. We work at a local, national and international level, to abolish the systems of prostitution and the sex trade, ending the sexual exploitation of women and actively promote the establishment of effective exiting services.

As part of its commitment to abolish the sex trade and to support, educate and inform others on the complex issues in this area, **women@thewell** commissioned this resource from an expert in the field. It is intended as a guide to support those non-specialist organisations that are working in related fields, such as homelessness, health and Modern Slavery. We hope this resource will be of use to both large national and international organisations and small community groups, such as churches. The aim is to help those individuals and organisations to understand what appropriate and inappropriate language is. It is important to understand the correct use of language so as not to accidentally further stigmatise or victimise the women and girls trapped in the sex trade, or to minimise the actions of the punters and other exploiters, such as pimps and brothel owners. We hope this resource enables readers to communicate more effectively and consistently in matters relating to prostitution and the sex trade.

The author

Julie Bindel a journalist, writer, broadcaster and researcher. She has been active in the global campaign to end violence towards women and children since 1979 and has written extensively on rape, domestic violence, sexually motivated murder, prostitution and trafficking, child sexual exploitation, stalking, and the rise of religious fundamentalism and its harm to women and girls.

Julie has authored over 30 book chapters and reports on a range of topics relating violence and abuse of women and girls. She writes regularly for The Guardian Newspaper, the Telegraph, Spectator, Truthdig, and Sunday Times Magazine, and appears regularly on the BBC and Sky News. Julie was Visiting Journalist at Brunel University (2013 - 2014), Visiting Fellow at Lincoln University (2014 - 17). Her book on the global sex trade is The Pimping of Prostitution: Abolishing the Sex Work Myth (2017). Her new book Feminism for Women: The Real Route to Liberation will be published in early 2021.

INTRODUCTION

Prostitution is a human rights violation against women and girls, although not everyone shares this understanding. We are now at a crossroads, with a number of countries around the world under pressure to either remove all laws pertaining to the sex trade (including those governing pimping and brothel owning), or to criminalise the purchase of sex (known as the Abolitionist or Nordic[1] model). However, the polarised debate on the sex trade, being played out within academia, media, feminist circles and human rights organisations has reached a critical point.

Sex buyers have described prostitution as like "renting an organ for 10 minutes", which women in prostitution say makes them feel as if they are "toilets". This language and this experience serves to dehumanises the women, and the effects of this are wide-ranging, including depression, suicidality, post traumatic stress disorder, dissociation, substance abuse, eating disorders and more. [2]

No other human rights violation towards women and girls is so grossly misunderstood. While domestic violence has often been, and sometimes still is, assumed to be the fault of the victim ('She was nagging him', 'She failed to understand his moods'), there has been a significant improvement in the way that those experiencing it are supported and the perpetrators called to task thanks to feminist campaigning and interventions.

Part of dismantling the 'happy hooker' myth involves addressing the misuse of language relating to the sex trade, which is where this resource comes in.

In recent years, despite the increasing numbers of women with direct experience of being prostituted coming out as 'survivors' of the sex trade, the dominant discourse is one of prostitution being about 'choice' and 'agency' for the women involved. The human rights abuse involved in the sex trade, according to liberals, libertarians and many of those who profit from selling sex, is when men are deterred from purchasing sex, and not when they rent the orifices of a woman for sexual release. The women selling sex, according to this logic, are the victims of pearl-clutching moralists who wish to take away their right to earn a living. We are labelled 'anti-sex'. The idea that to object to the sexual abuse of prostituted women means that abolitionists dislike sex is like suggesting that to dislike McDonalds is to be 'anti-food'. Prostitution is one-sided sexual gratification for the sex buyer.

EXITING

In 2009, I began a study on women exiting prostitution. During my time interviewing the women as well as health-funded service providers, I realised just how persuasive the misinformation and misuse of language surrounding the sex trade is. It was not unusual for the staff and volunteers of such organisations to ask the women about their 'boyfriends' (pimps); speak to the women about 'sex work', a term the women did not themselves use; and 'safe sex and harm reduction' when the women were well aware that prostitution is dangerous and cannot be made safe by condoms and rape alarms.

1 https://nordicmodelnow.org/what-is-the-nordic-model/
2 https://www.trauma-and-prostitution.eu/en/2016/11/06/melissa-farleys-response-to-un-women/

THE MEANING OF 'CONSENT' WHEN APPLIED TO PROSTITUTION

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission report[3] on prostitution had this to say about consent:

"In the context of prostitution, many factors can inhibit one's capacity to make a free choice."

And: 'Given the great importance placed upon sexual consent by society, it seems right that a high threshold applies when determining whether the choice to consent to prostitution is truly freely made. Yet evidence given to the Commission was clear that this threshold is rarely reached; that hardly any of those in prostitution would claim their entry to prostitution was without economic or social compulsion.'

Prostitution survivors such as Rachel Moran, the author and founder of the abolitionist Non-Governmental Organisation SPACE International, says that the concept of 'choice' when applied to prostitution is both misleading and offensive because "the cash is the coercion, and no woman or girl would choose prostitution if she had other options. It is a 'choice' out of no choice."

ARGUMENTS USED TO JUSTIFY PROSTITUTION

"What about disabled men?" is a question that abolitionists and those critical of prostitution are asked on a regular basis. This argument holds that disabled people have a right to access sex, with the implied premise that their disability somehow impairs their ability to form intimate relationships. This claim is one of the clearest examples of how the sex buyers' so-called 'human rights' have been placed above those of the prostituted woman.

To hear the way many apologists for the sex trade describe disabled sex buyers, one could easily get the impression that selling sex to disabled men is an altruistic service, akin to meals on wheels. But the focus on this largely mythical buyer obscures both the majority of 'undeserving' punters and the harms done to women. "Maybe if men could get it [prostitution] on the NHS [National Health Service] if they are disabled, it would prevent them from raping" one sex buyer told me in an interview.

This is another myth used to support prostitution: that if men cannot access sex they will be compelled to rape. Obviously, no man is programmed to commit acts of sexual assault, and a lack of sexual access to women is NEVER an excuse to pay for sex.

Another extremely pervasive myth is that abolishing prostitution removed the 'agency' and 'freedom' from women who 'choose' to be 'sex workers'. The issue of 'choice' is dealt with in the above section on 'consent'.

3 http://www.conservativehumanrights.com/news/2019/CPHRC_Consent_Report.pdf

ABOLITIONISTS & MISINFORMATION

Abolitionists are regularly accused of being anti-sex moralists, prudes and man-haters. The debate on the sex trade has reached a new nadir. Globally, groups are being funded to lobby for decriminalisation of all forms of prostitution. Most, if not all, of the major funders describe themselves as human rights-based organisations. So-called 'sex workers' rights activists' are marching in the streets, waving their red umbrellas (a symbol of the 'sex workers' rights' movement) and shouting about the rights of women and men to do what they wish with their bodies.

"When I was in prostitution I would always say, "I'm fine, I love what I do". I had to or I would have gone mad" says Alice. "It is only when we get out, if we are lucky enough to get out alive, we can admit the hell, the horror of what was happening to us."

THE DEBATE

One of the consequences of the ongoing 'sanitisation' of the sex trade is that language loses all meaning. For example, pimps become 'managers', prostituted women become 'sex workers' and rape is an 'occupational hazard'.

The term 'forced sex work' has become widely used among some international Non-Governmental Organisations (including, for example, Action Aid), which strikes me as an oxymoron. If we are to take the intended meaning of 'sex work' (to engage in sex as labour), surely if the 'sex' part of sex work is forced, it is actually rape or slavery?

The most effective way to sanitise any human rights abuse is to rename it. For example a pro-slavery strategist in the West Indies suggested: "Instead of SLAVES, let the Negroes be called ASSISTANT PLANTERS and we shall not then hear such violent outcries against the slave trade by pious divines, tender- hearted poetesses and short-sighted politicians".

LANGUAGE

"If sex work is work, then rape is merely theft"

Julie Bindel

In the past few decades, prostitution and the sex trade have been given a serious makeover. The title of my 2017 book, *The Pimping of Prostitution*, is meant to convey how sanitised commercial sexual exploitation has become. For example, The Urban Dictionary definition of pimping is 'to make something "cool", "better" or "awesome."'

In recent years, the sex trade has been rebranded to give the impression that it is not harmful, nor even prostitution. Academics and pro-prostitution activists have begun to use terms such as 'selling love', 'transactional sex' and 'compensated daters' as euphemisms for prostitution. Those who support the sex trade use terminology that masks the reality of what it actually is: one person, almost always male, having sex with another person, almost always female, without mutual desire. The sex buyer knows that the woman he is buying does not want to have sex with him, otherwise he wouldn't have to pay her.

The pro-sex trade lobby often use language that belies the reality of prostitution, using a narrative more appropriate for a description of labour rather than a sexual act performed upon a person.

The problem with pro-prostitution language

Today, 'sex work' is common parlance amongst the media, criminal justice agencies, health, social services and much of the general public. The pro-prostitution lobbyists that promote the use of sanitising language argue that the term 'sex work' dignifies the women, and that 'prostitute' is demeaning.

Abolitionists tend not to label anyone as a 'prostitute' but prefer the term 'prostituted woman' or 'woman involved in prostitution'. Many that use the term 'sex work' and 'sex worker' do so for good reason, and genuinely believe this language is more respectful of the women. In fact, women in prostitution rarely describe themselves as 'sex workers'. The term belies the reality of prostitution, and dignifies the buying and selling of women's bodies, rather than the women themselves.

The term ‘sex work’ was coined in the early 1980s by Carol Leigh and was popularised by a 1987 anthology of the same name. The movement had become less about workers’ rights, and more about ‘happy hookers’. Former ‘sex worker’ Xaviera Hollander claims credit for coining the term ‘happy hooker’. It was used as the title for the bestselling book about Hollander’s life. The book went on to be an international bestseller, was adapted into a 1975 film, and has also been performed as a play and an opera.

The prostitution as ‘work’ approach was spearheaded by Australian pro-prostitution groups such as Scarlet Alliance. This was clearly an appropriation of the libertarian arguments adopted by a section of the gay rights movement and the HIV/AIDS crisis that transformed the ‘sex workers’ rights’ movement into an international force. Large amounts of government funding were made available for HIV/AIDS prevention projects, and this money was used to found organisations including TAMPEP (The International Foundation: European Network for HIV/ STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers), the Network of Sex Work Projects and COYOTE.

ASIA DECEMBER 13, 2017 / 1:47 PM / A YEAR AGO

Rescued child sex workers in India reveal hidden cells in brothels

Anuradha Nagaraj 5 MIN READ

NEWS

4th June 2015

Kerb crawling crackdown sees 35 men arrested

By Graeme Hetherington

CRAWLERS: A crackdown on kerb crawlers has seen more than 30 men arrested on Teesside.

0 comment

MOST READ COMMENTED

1 Man becomes second person to die after Newton Aycliffe car crash

2 Two assaulted in women's toilets of bar

3 Darlington firm wound up after it failed to pay back millions of investors' funds

4 Vigilante on way to "sort out" drug dealers told police he was 'on the f***** rampage

THE DEMAND

Sugar Daddies, not Punters

The website *Seeking Arrangement* is one of the most popular sites used by those wishing to enter into such a deal. According to the website, there are 12 females to each male looking for a ‘partnership’. ‘Sugar Babies and Sugar Daddies have on-going relationships not transactions’, reads the introductory blurb. “More often than not, a sugar relationship will resemble that of a girlfriend–boyfriend relationship. There are real connections and real possibilities at romance, something that is not in the realm of possibility with an escort or prostitute.”

UNITED NATIONS – HUMAN RIGHTS AND WRONGS

In late 2013, in a note on the issue of terminology, UN Women said it would use the terms "sex work" and "sex workers" and "recognize the right of all sex workers to choose their work or leave it and to have access to other employment opportunities."

In 2014, in response to the unofficial memo, which was widely circulated in UN agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations and which said that UN Women would no longer use the word "prostitution", 61 survivors of prostitution joined with women's groups to write to the UN to protest.

They wrote: "We do not want to be called 'sex workers' but prostituted women and children, as we can never accept our exploitation as 'work'. We think that the attempts in UN documents to call us 'sex workers' legitimises violence against women, especially women of discriminated caste, poor men and women and women and men from minority groups, who are the majority of the prostituted." [4]

On International Women's Day in New York, 2015, the world-renowned anti-trafficking activist Ruchira Gupta was warned in an email from UN Women, the organisers of an event at which Gupta was about to be awarded the Woman of Distinction honour, not to mention the word prostitution in her acceptance speech.

On Oct. 25, 2019, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Women's Executive Director, overruled the 2013 memo. "We are aware of the different positions and concerns on the issue of prostitution/sex work and are attentive to the important views of all concerned," Mlambo-Ngcuka wrote. "UN Women has taken a neutral position on this issue. Thus UN Women does not take a position for or against the decriminalisation/legalisation of prostitution/sex work."

Mlambo-Ngcuka was responding to a letter she received days earlier, signed by more than 1,400 individuals and organizations around the world. They are concerned that UN Women is allowing civil society groups advocating for decriminalization of both buyers and sellers of sex to influence future debates about women's equality and rights.

Amnesty International

As part of the My Body My Rights campaign, Amnesty International (AI) sought to develop a policy around the decriminalisation of sex work. The My Body My Rights campaign seeks to raise awareness of, and advocate for, sexual and reproductive rights. One of the guiding principles of this campaign is that people should be able to exercise autonomy over their bodies, reproductive capacities, and sexual choices. (Amnesty International Australia)

Those engaging in 'sex work' often use 'choice feminism' to defend prostitution: the notion that a woman choosing to do whatever she wants is performing an inherently feminist act. In accordance with this, the 'Sex Workers' Rights' Movement argue that the abolitionist position is anti-feminist: they believe that it is an effort to constrain the 'free choices' of other women who are perfectly capable of making their own decisions. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this argument is commonly used by women

4 https://www.passblue.com/2015/03/31/prostitution-a-word-that-un-women-does-not-want-to-hear/

prostituting in relatively independent and low-risk areas of the sex trade.

The Amnesty document contained several comparisons between lesbian and gay oppression, and anti-abortion policies. For example: "Sex workers are at risk of multiple, intersecting forms of criminalisation and penalisation. Sex workers who are at risk of criminalisation on the basis of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity face criminalisation in some countries under laws against sex work and/or laws against sexual activity between people of the same sex or laws enforcing norms of gender expression such as prohibitions against cross dressing.....Women who are sex workers may face additional criminalisation in countries where access to abortion is prohibited by law and/or where sex outside marriage is criminalised."

On 11 August 2015, Amnesty International voted to decriminalise "all operational aspects" of the sex trade, including the sale, facilitation and buying of sex. With the cast of a vote, a pimp became a 'manager', a sex buyer became a 'client', and a prostituted person became a 'sex worker'. "Amnesty International is opposed to the criminalisation or punishment of activities related to the buying or selling of consensual sex between adults," read the first line of the document. "Amnesty International believes that seeking, buying, selling and soliciting paid sex are acts protected from state interference as long as there is no coercion, threats or violence associated with those acts."

According to Amnesty International: "...men and women who buy sex from consenting adults are also exercising personal autonomy. For some, in particular persons with mobility or sensory disabilities or those with psycho-social disabilities that hamper social interactions, sex workers are persons with whom they feel safe enough to have a physical relationship or to express their sexuality."

Sanitisation of language

The sanitisation project began with the introduction of the term 'sex work', now used by the majority of police officers, media outlets and human rights organisations. There are even those who use the term 'juvenile sex work' to describe sexually abused children. The sanitisation of language to describe the sex trade and activities associated with it has reached what I hope is a nadir. The term 'forced sex work' has become widely used among some international Non-Governmental Organisations which strikes me as an oxymoron.

If we are to take the intended meaning of 'sex work' (to engage in sex as labour), surely if the 'sex' part of sex work is forced, it is actually rape or slavery? Indeed, Action Aid's paper on the topic is entitled 'Position Paper on the Rights of Sex Workers' and is written by the International Women's Rights Team. The only 'rights' considered within this framework appear to be those of men to abuse women in prostitution.

For all the attempts at sanitising the prostitution aspect of the sex trade, and the liberal use of euphemisms to describe the realities, the majority of the survivors I have interviewed over the years tell me that the misrepresentation from the pro-prostitution lobby about the lack of harm and violence from pimps and punters are what angers them the most.

There are a number of key tactics used by the 'sex workers' rights' activists to promote blanket decriminalisation of the sex trade and to lobby against the criminalisation of sex buyers. And today's movement blames feminist abolitionists for the danger and abuse faced by those in prostitution and names them 'whorephobic'.

LAW AND POLICY

Legalisation/Decriminalisation

"Decriminalise now! Stigma kills" is a common chant used by pro-prostitution lobbyists. But stigma does not kill women in prostitution. Men do.

The pro-prostitution lobby adopted the term 'decriminalisation' and stopped using 'legalisation' during the early 2000s. This was around the time that New Zealand introduced the Prostitution Reform Act, which decriminalised its sex trade (2003) by a majority of one vote; and at a time when it became official that the legalised regime in the Netherlands had been an unmitigated disaster (the same year).

The difference between the decriminalisation and legalisation of prostitution is that in a decriminalised context, prostitution is treated like any other business and subjected to same of the same regulations. Alternately, the legalisation of prostitution means that the State 'recognises prostitution as a lawful activity' but requires the licensing of brothel prostitution and may retain criminal laws against other forms of non-brothel prostitution, such as street prostitution.

What unites full decriminalisation and legalisation is that neither regime would result in either a reduction or an end to the sex trade but sets in stone the notion that prostitution is an inevitability, and that there will always exist both a supply and demand. They also make pimping, brothel keeping and sex buying legal.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

A Guide to Occupational Health and Safety in the New Zealand Sex Industry, published in 2004 by the New Zealand Department of Labour. This document, despite being published in 2004, is still the most up-to-date version, and advertised on the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective website in the section 'Business Matters: Information for Brothel Operators'. Health and safety guidelines were based on those previously prepared by the Scarlet Alliance, the Australian forum for 'sex workers' rights' organisations, and the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations publication *A Guide to Best Practice: Occupational Health and Safety in the Australian Sex Industry.*

The document addresses issues such as condom breakage, repetitive strain injury, violence from punters, and rape (described in the document as "Unfortunately incidents occur where workers are forced by clients to have sex without a condom against their will"), and 'mopping up semen': 'Use disposable paper and place it in sealable plastic bag(s) for safe disposal. Is not to be directly handled; hard surfaces to be sponged with cold water and soap or detergent. Ditto for carpets and rugs; bedding to be machine washed separately in warm water and detergent and then dried.'

This document outlines a number of life-threatening 'occupational hazards' in a way that makes clear these are common occurrences. HIV/ AIDS, rape, sexual violence and other serious crimes are endemic to the sex trade. According to Prostitution Research and Education, 70–95% of women in prostitution experience physical assault during 'work', 60–75% are raped, and 95% experience sexual harassment that in other industries would result in legal action.

The ABOLITIONIST (NORDIC) MODEL

This law was first introduced in Sweden in 1999. It is a set of laws and policies that criminalises the demand for commercial sex and decriminalises those selling sex. The Abolitionist model has two main goals: to curb the demand for prostitution and promote equality between women and men.

The Abolitionist Model has since been adopted by Norway, Finland, Iceland, Canada, South Korea, Israel, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and France. Governments Latvia and Lithuania are considering the law, and the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe have both passed recommendations that the law should be implemented as the best way to tackle prostitution across Europe.

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

Within the world of academia, the most popular view of the sex trade is clearly that of pro-decriminalisation. Academic papers and books on prostitution are often peppered with the type of euphemisms that serve to distort the reality of the sex trade, for example:

- **'Contract breach' - rape**
- **'Business practices' - pimping**
- **'Facilitate disabled people's sexual lives' - disabled men buying sex**
- **'Occupational health risks' - violence, sexually transmitted diseases, rape**
- **'Job amenities' - the ability to turn down undesirable clients**
- **'Affective-erotic services performed by prostitutes' - sex acts**
- **'Third parties' - pimps**
- **'Sex work management' - running a brothel and/or women**
- **'Grooming gangs' - pimps who target girls under the age of 18**
- **'International marriage community' - mail-order brides.**

Coerce, victim, trafficking and survivor were put in scare quotes in the conference materials.

'PROSTITUTION' AS A WORD

In recent years I have noticed that the word 'prostitution' is used far less than 'sex work' or other euphemistic terms. One way to get a sense of the changing attitudes towards the words 'sex work' and 'prostitution' is to examine their use in the media. For this purpose, I utilised a major archive of digitised newspapers (LexisNexis) and counted the number of uses per month of the word 'sex work' (or 'sex worker[s]') and 'prostitution' (or 'prostitute[s]') from 2005 to 2015 in the UK. This included not only the major broadsheets but also other smaller newspapers, Press Association reports and a variety of other sources listed in the UK Publications category.

While the word 'prostitution' was and remains the more common phrasing, the use of the word 'sex work' has been increasing. In 2005, the ratio of the use of the word 'sex work' to 'prostitution' was 1:20; that is, there were 20 uses of the word 'prostitution' for one use of the term 'sex work'. This moved slightly over the next few years, with the ratio rising to 1:9 in 2013. In recent years, the increase has seemed to come more rapidly with the ratio rising to around 1:6 in 2014 and 2015 (January–September).

JOURNALISM – REPORTING ON PROSTITUTION

The media has a very important role in highlighting the harms of prostitution and the sex trade. Sensationalist and inaccurate reporting can result in a lack of sympathy and understanding regarding the plight of women abused in the sex trade and can even affect police investigations into serious crimes.

The media plays a significant role in the way we understand and respond to sexual violence and exploitation. Although people are not passive recipients moulded by media influences without any capacity for critical reflection, the media does not only reflect our dominant assumptions about what is 'normal', 'natural' and 'inevitable' – it helps to create and reinforce them.

It can also, under the right circumstances, play a role in challenging them. Language used to describe prostitution in the UK media, is currently helping to distort the reality faced by women and girls who are prostituted, as well as lend a supportive voice to sex buyers, brothel owners, pimps, and other exploiters. Using terms like 'sex worker ' (prostituted person), 'juvenile sex worker' (prostituted child), 'client' (sex buyer), and 'business owner' (brothel keeper/pimp), are terms commonly used across the media. As Fiona Broadfoot, a sex trade survivor who, for the past 20 years, has trained multiagency professionals on the reality of prostitution has said, using terms such as 'sex worker' to describe a woman abused in prostitution does not dignify victim, rather it dignifies the sex trade and the exploiters that drive it.

Conversely, use of terms, mainly in the tabloid media, such as 'tart', 'hooker', and 'prostitute', are not uncommon, even in newspaper reports on the murders of five street prostituted women in Ipswich.

Below is a check list of roles and responsibilities in reporting such cases:

- **Courageous, professional and human reporting.**
- **Respecting a code of ethics, especially in relation to sexually exploited women and children.**
- **Cooperation with anti-trafficking professionals and activists, especially in relation to awareness raising and prevention.**
- **Media involvement in a wide awareness raising campaign on prevention, targeting young people.**
- **Challenge, rather than promote, stereotypes.**
- **Constantly ask "Is the story more important than the victim of sexual exploitation?"**

FALSE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN PROSTITUTION AND TRAFFICKING

Pro-prostitution lobbyists will argue that it is wrong to 'conflate' prostitution and trafficking, claiming that trafficking is bad and a human rights abuse, but prostitution, or rather 'sex work' is a choice and perfectly fine. The lobbyists claim that trafficked women are 'forced' into prostitution, whereas 'sex workers' are making a choice.

But both local prostitution and human trafficking for sexual exploitation can include isolation, threats, humiliation, psychological abuse, manipulation, violence, sexual abuse, torture and daily violations. It leads to both physical and psychological damage, and in worst case scenarios, death. Also, trafficking is merely a 'process' used by pimps to transport and coerce women into the sex trade.

By the legal definition in the UK (and other countries) it is not necessary to prove 'force' or 'violence' in order to be considered a victim of trafficking. Trafficking can occur across and within international borders. Women are trafficked from Thailand to the UK, Nigeria to Italy, and Leeds to London. The mere act of an exploiter coercing a woman into a brothel can be defined as 'trafficking', whether or not she has been physically transported. Trafficking across borders is merely 'international pimping'. Many women who are pimped locally define themselves as trafficking victims.

Pro-prostitution organisations argue that treating prostitution as 'sex work' would make addressing those incidents of 'forced' prostitution and trafficking easier. By acknowledging prostitution as a legitimate form of 'work', prostituted women would then have access to a range of resources to protect them (legislation, grievance processes, officially recognised unions).

THE DELIBERATE CONFLATION OF GAY RIGHTS AND 'SEX WORKER' RIGHTS

Accusations of 'whorephobia', which is meant to mean hatred towards or stigmatising of prostituted women and men, is in fact used to silence and deter any criticism of the sex trade whatsoever. This viewpoint is enshrined in university safe space policies and has led to a number of students who are lesbian or gay being diverted into adopting a queer identity.

Prostitution is not a sexuality. There is a clear difference between a sexual preference or identity and prostitution (a form of men's abuse). The Abolitionist model is not a moral perspective about sex: it is an issue of justice for women. Accordingly, prostituted women (or men) are not criminalised: instead the attention is focused on the crime as it is; that is, men's abuse. These men are arrested and charged: prostituted women face no sanction or interference whatsoever. We need to ask why there is a conflation made between being gay and being involved in 'sex-work', and what ideology and motivations drive this.

CONCLUSION

Language matters. It helps us understand concepts and theories and make sense of complicated and contested issues. We hope this resource helps you to navigate your way around the contradictory and often misleading terminology relating to what is undoubtedly the world's oldest oppression and most certainly not a profession by any reasonable and true definition.

APPENDIX I

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APPENDIX II

Guidelines for the Press: Reporting on Prostitution, Trafficking and Violence Against Women

Relevant General Guidelines:

- IPSO's (Independent Press Standards Organisation) Editor's Code of Practice:
    - Clause 3, Privacy: Everyone is entitled to respect for his or her private and family life, home, health and correspondence, including digital communications.
    - Clause 11, Victims of Sexual Assault: The press must not identify victims of sexual assault or publish material likely to contribute to such identification unless there is adequate justification and they are legally free to do so.
    - Clause 12, Discrimination: The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an individual's race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability. Details of an individual's race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability must be avoided unless genuinely relevant to the story.

Found in full at: https://www.ipso.co.uk/IPSO/cop.html

Specific Guidance from PCC (Press Complaint's Commission):

- **'Reporting on court cases involving sexual offences' (2011)**
- **'Court Reporting' :**

"As the PCC has often made clear, it is a fundamental principle of open justice that court proceedings are reported by the media. However, the Editors' Code of Practice places a number of restrictions on such reporting, particularly in relation to cases involving sexual offences, where protecting vulnerable victims is of paramount importance. During the last twelve months, the PCC has upheld a number of complaints in this area, which has prompted the Commission to set out the following guidance.

Protecting victims of sexual assault
In any court case involving charges of sexual assault (including rape, sexual assault and other similar offences) the media can name the defendant and record the verdict of the trial. In fact, best practice will generally be to do so, although editors should take account of information about the case that is already in the public domain in order to avoid "jigsaw identification" of the victim (see below).

When it comes to the victim, Clause 11 (Victims of sexual assault) of the Editors' Code makes clear that they must not be identified. In addition, the press must not publish material "likely to contribute to such identification unless there is adequate justification and they are legally free to do so". In practice, the Commission has never examined a case in which "adequate justification" was shown to exist.

The requirement to avoid this kind of indirect identification places a considerable responsibility on editors. Sometimes, it will be obvious that a piece of information would be likely to contribute to a victim's identification - the inclusion of an address (full or sometimes even partial) or specific reference to the relationship between the victim and the accused, for instance. On other occasions, information will seem insignificant and yet, to people who know something about the accused, it may be sufficient to lead to the victim's identification. Editors must bear this in mind: what at first glance may seem trivial, could in fact lead to a breach of the Code if it is published. For instance, even such apparently incidental details as the precise dates on which offences were alleged to have taken place have contributed to identification.

Other examples of where publication of such information led to a complaint being made and upheld include:

- Reference to a defendant (who was named) meeting his victim, who he regarded as his "girlfriend", at an unnamed church. Even though the newspaper had not named the church, to those who attended it and knew

something about the defendant, identification of the victim became highly likely especially as her age was given. (To see the full PCC decision go to: http://www.pcc.org.uk/news/index.html?article=NjEwMg)

Jigsaw identification

The reason the Code goes into some detail in this area, especially in Clause 7, is to ensure that all publications follow the same format for reporting - and do so from the first occasion that a particular case is written about. This is important because otherwise there is the risk of "jigsaw identification", where different pieces of information appear in different newspapers allowing readers, who have seen these reports, to work out who the victim is. Editors should take all steps to make sure they and their news desks are aware of what information has already been published in the public domain by other media outlets - and by their own publication in any previous reports on the case.

As has already been noted, identification can come about by the publication of information that might, to those not fully in the know, seem of only minor significance. It can also result from the use of a combination of details that on their own would not imply the relationship.

Summary

It is an important function of the press to report court proceedings in order properly to inform local communities. But when reporting cases involving sexual offences, editors and journalists should never lose sight of the fact that the victim will often be in a particularly vulnerable position. It is the duty of the press to ensure that their vulnerability is not deepened by failures to abide by the requirements of the Editors' Code of Practice. If in doubt, editors should err on the side of caution.

Find in full at: http://www.pcc.org.uk/advice/editorials-detail.html?article=NzM0Nw

- **NUJ's (National Union of Journalists) Code of Conduct:**
  - **"A journalist:**
  - **Clause 9: Produces no material likely to lead to hatred or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age, gender, race, colour, creed, legal status, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.**

Specific Guidelines for Reporting on Violence Against Women:

- **IFJ (International Federation of Journalists): 'Guidelines for Reporting on Violence Against Women'** [5]

1. Identify violence against women accurately through the internationally accepted definition in the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.
2. Use accurate, non-judgmental language. For instance, rape or sexual assault is not in any way to be associated with normal sexual activity; and trafficking in women is not to be confused with prostitution. Good journalists will strike a balance when deciding how much graphic detail to include. Too much may be sensationalist and can be gratuitous; too little can weaken the victim's case. At all times, the language of reporting should avoid suggestions that the survivors may be to blame or were otherwise responsible for the attack or acts of violence against them.
3. People who suffer in such an ordeal will not wish to be described as a 'victim' unless they use the word themselves. The use of labels can be harmful. A term that more accurately describes the reality of a person who has suffered in this way is 'survivor.'

5 http://www.ifj.org/fileadmin/images/Gender/Gender_documents/IFJ_Guidelines_for_Reporting_on_Violence_Against_Women_EN.pdf

4. Sensitive reporting means ensuring that contact for media interview meets the needs of the survivor. A female interviewer should be on hand and the setting must always be secure and private, recognising that there may be a social stigma attached. Media must do everything they can to avoid exposing the interviewee to further abuse. This includes avoiding actions that may undermine their quality of life or their standing in the community.
5. Treat the survivor with respect. For journalists this means respecting privacy, providing detailed and complete information about the topics to be covered in any interview, as well as how it will be reported. Survivors have the right to refuse to answer any questions or not to divulge more than they are comfortable with. Journalists should make themselves available for later contact; providing contact details to interviewee will ensure they are able to keep in contact if they wish or need to do so.
6. Use statistics and social background information to place the incident within the context of violence in the community, or conflict.

   Readers and the media audience need to be informed of the bigger picture. The opinion of experts on violence against women such as the DART centre will always increase the depth of understanding by providing relevant and useful information. This will also ensure that media never give the impression that violence against women has an inexplicable tragedy that cannot be solved.
7. Tell the whole story: sometimes media identify specific incidents and focus on the tragic aspects of it, but reporters do well to understand that abuse might be part of a long-standing social problem, armed conflict, or part of a community history.
8. Maintain confidentiality: as part of their duty of care media and journalists have an ethical responsibility not to publish or broadcast names or identify places that in any way might further compromise the safety and security of survivors or witnesses. This is particularly important when those responsible for violence are the police, or troops in a conflict, or agents of the state or government, or people connected with other large and powerful organisations.
9. Use local resources: Media who take contact with experts, women groups and organisations on the ground about proper interviewing techniques, questions and places will always do good work and avoid situations – such as where it is unacceptable for male camera workers or reporters to enter a secluded place – which can cause embarrassment or hostility. There is always virtue in reporters educating themselves on the specific cultural contexts and respect them.
10. Provide Useful Information: reports that include details of sources and the contact details of local support organizations and services will provide vital and helpful information for survivors/witnesses and their families and others who may be affected.

- **NUJ Guidelines for Reporting on Violence Against Women** [6]

Key issues:

- Frame violence against women and girls (VAWG) as a gender equality and human-rights abuses rather than as a “mishap”, a “bad relationship” or as the consequence of women undertaking activities that would be unremarkable for men (walking alone, being out after dark, drinking in a bar, etc.).
- In the case of attack that has not resulted in murder, do not use the word “victim” unless the woman self-identifies as one. If she has survived the attack, she is a “survivor”
- Have regard for women as individuals and avoid media reporting which reinforces negative gender stereotypes.
- Take care not to contribute to the sexualisation of women and girls in the media.

6 file://eaves2k8/work/Users_staff_folders/charlotte.rowland/My%20Documents/Downloads/nuj-guidelines-for-journalists-on-violence-against-women.pdf OR http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:qbI1BOtLrhAJ:www.nuj.org.uk/documents/nuj-guidelines-on-violence-against-women/nuj-guidelines-for-journalists-on-violence-against-women.pdf+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk

Guidance:

- Include helplines at the end of articles or broadcasts and include all jurisdictions information where appropriate (i.e. England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, etc.).
- Include more informative and educational materials (e.g. challenging rape myths and misconceptions about the "types" of victim).
- Broadcast warnings before presenting material in which violence against women is to be depicted, especially if reporting sexual violence.
- Name violence against women as violence against women (e.g. domestic violence is not a "volatile relationship"). Do not use the word sex when you mean rape. "Honour" crime should appear in quotes or with "so-called" before it. "Crimes of passion" is not an appropriate way to describe murder
- Do not blame religion or culture for gender-based violence and do not assume that one religion or culture is more inclined than others. Represent gender-based violence as a cross-cultural phenomenon with no geographical or cultural boundaries.
- Female genital mutilation is a violation of the human and bodily rights of women and girls which is practised in many countries for different stated reasons. It is not circumcision. The word mutilation in itself condemns the practice in the view of the World Health Organisation, which states female genital mutilation includes "all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons".
- When reporting on violence against women working in prostitution, avoid using derogatory language (e.g. hooker).
- Make the perpetrator visible in your report (e.g. women do not "get themselves raped"), it is not domestic violence that "claims the lives of two women a week", it is murder.
- Do not refer to abusers as "monsters", "fiends", "maniacs" or "beasts" as this creates the myth that abusers are noticeably and substantially different from "normal" men.
- Take care not to imply that a survivor of gender-based violence might be somehow, even partially, to blame for the violence she has experienced, nor assume or imply that any of her behaviour might have triggered the abuse or that "she asked for it".
- Avoid treating homicides resulting from domestic violence as inexplicable or unpredictable tragedies simply because the factors which led to the homicide are unknown.
- Avoid comments which could be interpreted as making excuses for the abuser, such as commenting on his remorse, or suggesting that the way women dress or behave incited the incident.
- In general, when presenting stories on rape keep in mind that stranger rapes are rarer than those involving people known to the survivor.
- Use up-to-date statistics and do your research.
- Pay attention to potential risks and the safety of the woman being interviewed (e.g. take care when filming, even if only doing hand shots, her jewellery may be recognisable)
- Consider reporting more fully on the successful prosecutions of those guilty of violence against women, as well as the success many women have had recovering and rebuilding their lives

VAW Prevention Scotland: 'Handle With Care: Guide to Responsible Media Reporting'[7] – In particular:

- **Language' (15-17), interview techniques (18-19) and recommendations (4):**

1. Journalists should make good use of case study information and statistical evidence when reporting on sexual exploitation issues (such as prostitution or lap-dancing), to highlight the harms and violence inherent in the sex industry.
2. Journalists should refer to national and international statistics where possible to place individual incidents in a wider social context and provide the 'bigger picture' that readers, viewers and listeners need to make sense of the story.
3. Journalists should carefully choose language when reporting on violence against women and always avoid implying the survivor is to blame; portray perpetrators as real men; and portray survivors of violence as real women.
4. Journalists should conduct all contact with survivors of abuse or violence with respect for their experience, dignity and safety.
5. Journalists should highlight the gendered nature and root causes of violence against women in all reporting.
6. Journalists should be mindful of the lack of convincing evidence for a 'cycle of violence' and avoid making simplistic connections between men's violence against women and their childhood experiences of violence.
7. Journalists should report on rape and sexual violence using data and evidence about the current pattern of victimisation and avoiding myths and stereotypes.
8. Journalists should make careful use of images in reporting on violence against women and ensure the images chosen do not distort the story, contribute to the problem or objectify women.
9. Journalists should avoid implying that alcohol use is a cause of violence against women and instead name the real causes and challenge misconceptions about the links between violence against women and alcohol.
10. Journalists should respect the privacy and dignity of abuse survivors at all times
11. Journalists should tell the real story and be careful about selecting a narrative when reporting on violence against women as part of another social issue.
12. Journalists should treat violence against women as a serious concern and use an appropriate tone in all reporting.

7 http://www.vawpreventionscotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/HWC_V5.pdf

Specific Guidelines for Reporting on Sex Trafficking:

- **Learning Resource Kit for Gender-Ethical Journalism and Media House Policy, Book 2: Practical Resources, 'Women's Human Rights: Human Trafficking'[8] :**
  - **Background information and case studies (p. 37-39).**
  - **'Guidelines: Women's Human Rights – Reporting on Human Trafficking' (p. 40-41):**

1. In most cases, their conditions of social vulnerability, submission and cultural/social mandates lead women to fall prey to trafficking networks; the networks and the criminals who run them take full advantage of these conditions. The term "consent" cannot be used since there are no true conditions of freedom or reciprocity. Journalists should avoid making judgments in this regard and avoid speculating about the conditions and/or consent regarding the women's entry into and permanence in these networks.
2. When referring to a woman or a girl who has been drawn into a prostitution or trafficking network, it is important to remember and shed light on the fact that she is the vulnerable link in a chain maintained by complicity, silence and pacts between individuals, governments and security forces.
3. Since the women originally lived in situations of vulnerability, when rescued, they should be given possibilities for a new start, for finding employment and a place in society, with the necessary medical treatment and psychological support. An ethical media approach would be to give visibility to civil society organisations or other institutions that help to support survivors of trafficking, as well as institutions and ways through which the women can file complaints. Confirmation of helpful information and the legitimacy of places said to provide support is necessary before publication.
4. The survivor's right to security and privacy is non-negotiable and unquestionable. Journalist should always avoid using real names, personal information and/or images that could lead to identification. It is important to remain mindful when selecting general images for these stories so that they do not further stigmatize women or normalize forced prostitution.
5. It may seem natural to incorporate lurid details of the investigations on sex trafficking of women into an article. Rather than help readers understand the crime, such information tends to rebound upon the survivors, generating greater victimization and stigma when the women seek to reinsert themselves to society, in addition to the psychological repercussions.
6. It is worth rethinking the inherent relationship between prostitution trafficking networks and the demands of men in different parts of the world. As is often said, without clients, there would be no trafficking. A complete analysis of the problem should necessarily include the participation of those who are paying for sex in this global crime. Without demand, which is habitually naturalized in all societies as part of the macho, patriarchal substratum, there would be no pimps and no trafficking.

Julie Bindel: 'Press for Change: A Guide for Journalists Reporting on the Prostitution and Trafficking of Women'[9]
The Sage Project: 'Journalists Guidelines and Principles for Reporting on Issues Involving Human Trafficking'[10] (concise)

Specific Guidelines for Reporting on Domestic Violence:

- The Dart Centre: 'Where to Look; What Questions to Ask'[11]
- Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence: 'Covering Domestic Violence: A Guide for Journalists and Other Media Professionals'[12] (particularly p. 12-17)

8 http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/learning_resource_kit/learning-resource-kit-book-2-eng.pdf
9 http://www.childtrafficking.com/Docs/prostitute_traficking_women_070402.pdf
10 http://sagesf.org/guidelines-media
11 http://dartcenter.org/content/legwork-where-to-look-what-questions-to-ask#.VCqUApRdUuc
12 http://wscadv2.org/resourcespublications.cfm?aid=cab20c1c-c298-58f6-0a5a0d849664d663 – NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE ONLINE (SENT IN EMAIL TO JULIE)

Specific Guidelines for Reporting on Sexual Violence:

- The Dart Centre: 'Reporting on Sexual Violence: A Tip Sheet'[13]
- Chicago Task Force on Violence Against Girls and Young Women: 'Reporting on Rape and Sexual Violence: A Media Toolkit'[14] – p. 7-18

Further Guidelines/ Resources:

- International Organisation for Migration: 'Reporting on Trafficking – General Principles'[15]
- UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking
  - 'How the Media Reports on Human Trafficking'[16] – brief guidelines
  - 'Forum to Fight Human Trafficking: The Role of the Media in Building Images'[17]
- Global Freedom Centre, 'Media Reporting on Human Trafficking'[18] - second page highlights what makes effective reporting
- The Dart Centre:
  - Article: 'Domestic Violence: A Look at Coverage'[19] – shows what is missing from reporting, about the reality of DV
  - Article: 'How News is Framed' – discusses lack of context[20]
  - Article: 'Effects of News Frames'[21] – lack of context leads readers to see crime as random, for example.
- Internews: 'Speak Up, Speak Out: A Toolkit for Reporting on Human Rights Issues'[22], p. 131
- The Hoot: 'Guide to Rape Reporting'[23]– targeted at Indian cases

13 http://dartcenter.org/files/sexual%20violence%20tipsheet_final_27.08.11.pdf
14 http://www.chitaskforce.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Chicago-Taskforce-Media-Toolkit.pdf
15 http://www.iom.md/attachments/076_General%20Principles%20for%20Reporting%20on%20Trafficking%20IOM%20Moldova.pdf
16 http://www.ungift.org/knowledgehub/en/about/how-the-media-reports-on-human-trafficking.html
17 http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2008/BP012TheRoleoftheMedia.pdf
18 http://globalfreedomcenter.org/GFC/sites/default/files/Media_Reporting_on_Human_Trafficking.pdf
19 http://dartcenter.org/content/domestic-violence-look-coverage#.VCqTX5RdUud
20 http://dartcenter.org/content/how-news-is-framed#.VCqUPJRdUue
21 http://dartcenter.org/content/effect-news-frames#.VCqVGJRdUud
22 https://internews.org/sites/default/files/resources/Internews_SpeakUpSpeakOut_Full.pdf
23 http://www.thehoot.org/web/home/story.php?storyid=7052&mod=1&pg=1&sectionId=54&valid=true

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