



Moral Fucking

The complications of sex work

By Kate Ripley



Purpose

Sex workers deserve safety and autonomy regardless of the details of their sexual labor. This zine was created with the intention of educating a wide audience on the nuances in sex work and a need for decriminalization and care.

We will be exploring basic principles of sex work discourse – why are some forms of labor viewed as more valid than others? What are the implications of criminalizing an entire form of labor? As well as questions less discussed – how is anti-sex work sentiment formed from American Puritanical roots? In what ways do hegemonic morals determine levels of respect, resources, and opportunities for people in America? How has sex trafficking been misunderstood and used to create moral panic around sex work?

By the end of this zine I hope readers can reflect on their own views of sex work, investigate how they may be contributing to misconceptions of sex work, and feel motivated to learn more about how sex work fits in the fight for sexual autonomy and choice.

At this point I would also like to disclaim that I myself have not engaged in sex work and do not identify as a sex worker. The analysis provided is the result of sex worker's testimonies as well as ethnographic work and collaboration between academics and sex workers. Therefore my analysis is limited by a lack of first-hand experience.

RAVEN SLANDER

West End Sex Workers Memorial

In the back lane
off Davie Street
I light a cigarette
No smoking
 indoors anymore
Fishnets & tall boots
I like what I think
they're thinking
 the passers-by
Inhaling flashes
of cities & of nights
street corners & strolls
of excitement & anticipation
of men in cars
of money coming money going
of waiting around & smoking

Truly I don't know what
they're thinking
Times have changed
I'm older now
 Not as skinny
 dope skinny, it's true
Then, I wore crop tops & tight tights
so they could see what I had
cuz I knew what they wanted

the chasers, the johns
Taunts
being spat at
bad dates
getting ripped off
roughed up & beaten up
 I remember too
But we rode the night
trannys on the tranny stroll
shit talkers & straight shooters
rivals & thieves
spotters & seraphims
companions & lovers
cocaine & courage
heroin & bareback

We rode the night until
the genocide of indifference
& conniving knives of hatred
disappeared us all
Here in the back lane
just a block from the newly erected
West End Sex Workers Memorial
a tall pillar
a lighted crimson beacon
a bronze plaque
Finally this for us
 In the end
a *red-light* tomb

A car slows
my breath sharpens
I wonder
& light another cigarette



the broad aspects of SW

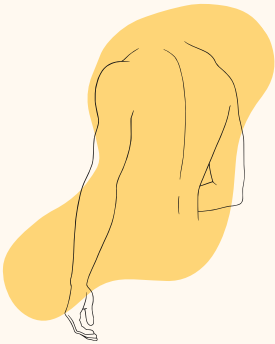
What is sex work?

Sex work can be a broad term and some disagree on what constitutes sex work. Are OnlyFans workers, strippers, and cam workers sex workers? Some would say yes, sex work includes all sexually-related laborer. Others would say no, that sex work is specific to sexual interaction in exchange for money or goods. I will be using the latter definition in my discussions, however I will be including viewpoints from OnlyFans workers as well.



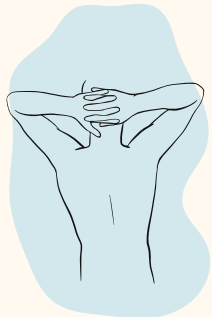
Why do people do it?

People engage in sex work for many different reasons and time periods. Many people turn to it as a means of income during an especially troubling time, many genuinely enjoy their work as a sex laborer, and still others have an infinite number of reasons to engage in this work.



How do we fix it?

Sex work itself is not a problem to be solved. Sex work is work. The problem is the abuse within the industry (which is not isolated to sex work), social stigma, and the issues that lead people into sex work for survival. Meeting basic needs and decriminalizing sex work will result in safer work environments and provide alternatives for those who would rather find other means of work.



Criminalization & Police Interaction

Criminalizing sex work disproportionately affects Black and Brown people, trans folx, and houseless neighbors (even if they aren't sex workers!).

American cities spend an average of

\$7.5 million

each year enforcing prostitution laws

Like most issues which affect people with marginalized genders, socioeconomic statuses and racial groups — sex work is not solved with the police. At the least police act as enforcers of the criminal status of sex workers, at the most they are abusers themselves. In addition, street sex workers who interact with police are more likely to face customer violence. Most sex workers have experienced sexual harassment or assault from the police at some point which includes (but is not limited to):

- Being coerced into sexual acts in exchange for being tipped off about a sweep or raid
- Sexual violence, particularly during arrests
- Refusal to respond and assist after an act of sexual violence occurs to a sex worker
- Being arrested for "loitering" or "propositioning" aka being on the street

78%

of cis female sex workers have had at least one abusive encounter with police

70%

of sex workers report daily contact with the police



Abolish the police

Criminalizing sex work does not make it happen less. It only contributes to the danger sex workers face and wastes money that could be better spent caring for those struggling to survive.

As a society we are more uncomfortable with someone openly consenting and enjoying sex than sexual violence and subordination.



purity and sex ideals

- If you're uncomfortable with the idea of sex work, ask yourself why. Are you scared, distrusting, disgusted, worried?
- Where are these feelings stemming from?

In an idealized American morality, women are meant to be sexy but not sexual, publicly disdained but privately enjoyed, sexually capitalized but not capitalizing on their own sexuality. As a whole, we have maintained gendered subordination, purity, gender roles, and religious & moral doctrine as more important than consent, agency, and safety.

A perfect woman wears a promise ring, allows her sexuality to be "guarded" by her father and then "gifted" to her spouse. The men in her life may profit from the abstract commodification of her sexuality but she may not follow through in acts of actual sexual gratification. A woman who has sex before marriage (consensually or otherwise) is a spoiled good.

Objectification is not a problem in American morals, it's the standard. It becomes immoral when someone is aware of this objectification and chooses to profit from it, whether that be in sexual gratification, money, or other benefits.

If the biggest moral offense I can make is enjoying a premarital orgasm, I will happily sin

Consensual sex work (and poverty) are more criminalized than rape. Yes you read that right.

About 83% of sex workers have been incarcerated in their lifetime (mostly for sex work, houselessness, and drug use). On the other hand, Only about 8% of reported sexual assaults will result in incarceration.

*While we're here let's note that incarceration is not an adequate response to sexual assault

**FUCK
YOUR
MORALS**

Sex, Porn, Health?

What is healthy sexuality? Who has the right or ability to define that? The outline of a healthy sexuality has been formed by the most privilege and oppressive groups. It is founded in white, colonial, cisheteronormative, patriarchal expectations and morals.

The moral panic surrounding porn has been used for political purposes and to enforce conservative sexual ideals.

XXX



How do you make sex work legal? Put it on camera.

"Publicly scorned and privately enjoyed"

6
● "If porn is a public health crisis, then, what exactly are the health outcomes of watching too much pornography?"

Like sex work, porn is not inherently empowering or harmful. It has the potential to both reinforce or subvert oppressive and hegemonic ideologies. There are a number of issues to explore within porn – including coercion, racialization, lack of differentiating fantasy and reality, and abuse of performers. Addressing these issues does not mean porn should be banned flat out, but that more care should be taken to ensure workers are receiving the respect and benefits they deserve (just as in other forms of labor), and that we have to be conscious of the media we consume and how it might impact our perceptions of the world and others.

Sex Trafficking

Human trafficking **DOES** happen but sex work is not the same as sex trafficking. Conflating the two leads us to focus much of our time, efforts, and resources on prohibiting consensual adult sex work rather than helping actual victims of human trafficking.

The supposed link between global sporting events and sex trafficking has been disproved and exposed as a moral panic. In fact, the crack down on sex work (even in countries where sex work is legal) due to these panics winds up putting sex workers in more dangerous situations, closing important centers of support for sex workers, and displacing minors in distress.

The generally accepted international definition of human trafficking is ambiguous enough to cause discourse over whether all prostitution or just forced prostitution is human trafficking. Because of this confusion there have even been instances of sex workers being charged with trafficking themselves!

The statistics surrounding human trafficking are incomplete, conflicting, and complicated. Human trafficking is underground and often unreported, different countries and regions have differing laws and definitions in relation to human trafficking, and there is no global database. This leads to circular information and great difficulty finding an accurate count of the people who are trafficked every year.

According to...

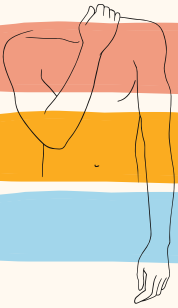
The U.N.

2.4 million trafficked annually
80% sexually exploited
\$32 billion annually



International Labor Organization

18.7 million trafficked annually
22% sexually exploited
\$150 billion annually



labor and sex

Is sex work
inherently
harmful?

Is it more harmful
than other types of
labor?

Much of the argument against sex work is that it is inherently harmful and not consensual. This take not only erases the agency of sex workers to define their own experiences, but it also ignores the harm of other industries and their use of forced and coerced labor. Developed countries' demand for low-wage labor has led to a large influx of migrant workers from less developed areas. Many companies have enlisted and preyed on migrants, particularly those who are undocumented, utilizing their power imbalance to coerce cheap labor from them. Sex work can be empowering and/or degrading. Like other forms of labor, it is not inherently either. And if we are concerned that the choice of sex work isn't really a choice, then we need to look at other forms of labor people enter under distress and what is motivating them. The answer to labor exploitation is not to criminalize the labor or punish the people who are forced to work in an underground economy. People are making difficult decisions under difficult situations.

WORK

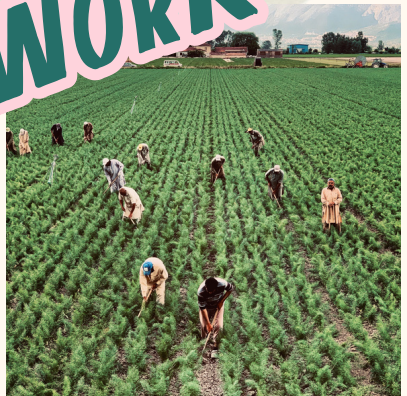


fuck "latinidad"
@ytnessisdeath

All labor is exploitative & violent. We live under capitalism. We are forced to sell our labor-power to survive. The solutions are ending capitalism and ending all work. You end the most exploitative conditions through organizing, not legal "abolition". Sex work is no exception.

12:50 PM · Jul 8, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

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consent and Agency

The shock of sex work is not that sex is being commodified. It's that women and queer folk are commodifying it themselves rather than allowing it to be controlled by hegemonic ideals of purity and control.

"My Body My Choice" refers to ALL bodily choices, including the choice to commodify it

dove clarke
@lovedoveclarke

Insane how guys love to violate me by posting my content without my consent like what part of "I will sue you" do you not fucking understand??? Lmao??? You have no problem buying it from another man reselling it against my will but a problem with buying it directly from ME? gross

5:49 PM · Feb 2, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

17 Retweets 669 Likes

dove clarke
@lovedoveclarke

Me: please don't do things without my consent

Y'all:

BETSYBABY @BETSYBABY37 · Apr 4, 2021
Replying to @lovedoveclarke @dovenymph and 2 others
You're an Internet prostitute who cares

9:07 AM · Apr 5, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

2 Retweets 352 Likes

Sex workers are subject to epistemic injustice, meaning the dominant social imagery has failed to recognize them as subjects who can speak for themselves. Sex workers have had their agency and voices robbed. Sex workers are the experts on sex work yet they have been treated as unknowing and untrustworthy.

In addition to having their knowledge and expertise ignored. Sex workers' consent and autonomy is often seen as invalid or unimportant. If a sex worker claims to be working of their own will and desire, they are told they are brain washed victims who cannot consent. Yet when they do experience sexual violence, wage stealing, and abuse, they are blamed because they chose to work in the sex industry. Being a sex worker should not nullify your right to control your own sexual experiences.

So what might actually help?

Education

Healthcare

Housing

Expand Resources

Many people turn to sex work when they would rather not due to economic instability. How do we help people transition out of sex work if that's what they want? Provide the resources that will allow them the economic security they need.

Listen & Learn

- **Hustling Verse** by Amber Dawn and Justin Ducharme
- **A Whore's Manifesto** by Kay Kassier
- **Revolting Prostitutes** by Molly Smith and Juno Mac

The best way we can support sex workers is by listening and asking questions. What do they want or need? What are the biggest struggles they face? How can we promote safety and autonomy while respecting their workspace?



Decriminalize

Let's stop punishing sex workers for surviving how they can. Decriminalization will result in safer spaces for sex workers and more accountability for abuses within the industry.



(Re)Sources

The Purity Myth: How America's Obsession with Virginity Is Hurting Young Women.

Coerced Performances? Trafficking, Sex Work, and Consent

The Harmful Consequences of Sex Work Criminalization on Health and Rights

The Criminal Justice System: Statistics (RAINN)

Evangelical Ecstasy Meets Feminist Fury: Sex Trafficking, Moral Panics, and Homonationalism during Global Sporting Events

"Sex Work" Last Week Tonight

Human rights violations: The acceptance of violence against sex workers in New York

Evangelical Ecstasy Meets Feminist Fury: Sex Trafficking, Moral Panics, and Homonationalism during Global Sporting Events

"Constructing a Crisis: Porn Panics and Public Health"

A Taste for Brown Sugar: Black Women in Pornography

Police interactions linked to increased risk of client violence for female sex workers

