

Assessment 1

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Abstract

One of the most morally and ethically questioned professions, both historically, and up to the present day, is prostitution. The profession can be defined as the act of exchanging sex for financial or material gain. There are a number of conflicting opinions on its morality, combined with differences in the legal considerations of the profession. Laws are often predicated upon a society's moral and ethical views, and can play an ever changing role in the establishing of such laws. A number of countries prohibit selling or buying any such service, or related service entirely. In the United Kingdom, it is legal to sell and to buy, but illegal to solicit for the service; the exception to this being Northern Ireland, where it is illegal to pay for such a service. Many countries also regulate legal prostitution, with local government licencing. The 'equality' model adopted by some countries make it legal to sell the service, but illegal to purchase, with other countries making legal distinctions based upon whether the service is being sold privately or publicly. It is a difficult profession to fully regulate, and as such, is subject to immoral exploitation as is the case in forced prostitution through human trafficking. However, it can also be viewed as a service which can help to lessen sexual assault crimes, with speculation that legalising prostitution decreases rape rates, whilst criminalising it increases the occurrence of these types of crimes. Although the service can be provided by both females and males, females are generally subjected more so to objectification through a patriarchal lens. In favour of the profession, it can be argued that criminalisation removes the autonomy of the individual providing the service, and legalisation may provide a safer working environment and reduce enforced prostitution. Moral views upon the profession are somewhat subjective; a feminist view may conclude that women are persistently subject to subservience to men, and therefore all heterosexual sex is immoral, religious morality may suggest that prostitution is an affront to God, monogamists may argue the importance of commitment to one partner, whilst others may argue that the profession perpetuates a sense of hierarchy or class differentiation. From an ethical standpoint, health services may refer to the increased risk of sexually transmitted diseases, policing may highlight the frequency of assaults – from customers not wishing to pay, or from abusive management, and the judicial system may have issues contending with difficulty establishing a criminal activity. What is very apparent however, is the fact that the profession has been around for a very long time, it has been consistent in its aim, and it still remains to be going strong, indicating that there is a requirement for the service, regardless of its moral or ethical implications.

Key words: Prostitution, Profession, Morality, Ethical