

University of Birmingham, 29
Redefining Victim Protection,
Migration Protocol, North Amherst,
and Human Smuggling in
and D. Thompson (eds.),
A Review of the Evidence with
IOM, pp. 11–64.
Onderzoek naar slachtoffers van
Vakgroep Strafrecht en

Women, Forced Labour and
and Prostitution, Utrecht:

3 Philosophical Assumptions and Presumptions about Trafficking for Prostitution

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Introduction

Trafficking in women generates about \$12 billion a year, making it the third largest profit industry in the world after trafficking in weapons and drugs (Bindel, 2003). The public health dimensions of trafficking involve sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and the impact on the health of adolescent girls, since many of the women are in fact adolescents. One might assume that this obvious hazard to public health and women's rights would generate universal condemnation, but, with one or two notable exceptions,¹ the trafficking debate is dominated by those who argue against abolitionism as a hopelessly patronising and moralistic approach.

On the dominant flank of the trafficking debate are ranged the somewhat rag-tail armies of neo-liberals and neo-feminists, both of which view sex work as work like any other, more or less freely chosen by the women involved. In the Czech Republic, for example, a draft law specifically treats prostitution as a normal job, subject to the usual forms of contract and employment protection. This position takes male sexuality to be inherently promiscuous and incapable of reform, if it considers male sexuality at all. It tends to focus on the women involved, and not on their clients or traffickers; to take prostitution likewise as a given; and to reject the notion that women are exploited in prostitution.²

On the other side of the battle-lines stands an equally ill-matched alliance of law-and-order advocates and old-style feminists, who view sex work as inherently wrong or exploitative. This approach does examine the motives of the clients, rather than simply taking male sexuality

