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The Social Construction of Sex Trafficking: Ideology and Institutionalization of a Moral Crusade

RONALD WEITZER

The issue of sex trafficking has become increasingly politicized in recent years due to the efforts of an influential moral crusade. This article examines the social construction of sex trafficking (and prostitution more generally) in the discourse of leading activists and organizations within the crusade, and concludes that the central claims are problematic, unsubstantiated, or demonstrably false. The analysis documents the increasing endorsement and institutionalization of crusade ideology in U.S. government policy and practice.

Keywords: prostitution, sex trafficking, moral panic, criminalization

A robust moral crusade against sex trafficking has appeared in the past decade. This article examines the crusade's construction of the problem by identifying its central claims, and tracing the institutionalization of these claims in state policy in the United States.¹ My analysis demonstrates that the crusade's core claims regarding both trafficking and prostitution are generally quite dubious, yet activists have met with remarkable success in getting their views and demands incorporated in government policy, legislation, and law enforcement practices.

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MORAL CRUSADES

In the social constructionist perspective, social conditions become “problems” only as a result of claims-making by interested parties, claims that may or may not reflect actual social arrangements. Claims about “putative conditions” are more consequential than the conditions themselves.² Moral crusades are one of the forces responsible for transforming such conditions into “problems.” **These movements define a particular condition as an unqualified evil, and see their mission as a righteous enterprise whose goals are both symbolic (attempting to redraw or bolster normative boundaries and moral standards) and instrumental (providing relief to victims, punishing evildoers).**³ To achieve their aims, activists seek to generate widespread public concern about a problem and lobby political elites to either intensify punishment of offenders or criminalize acts that were previously legal.

Moral crusades advance claims about both the gravity and incidence of a particular problem. **They typically rely on horror stories and “atrocious tales” about victims in which the most shocking exemplars of victimization are described and typified.**⁴ Casting the problem in highly dramatic terms by recounting the plight of highly traumatized victims is intended to alarm the public and policy makers and justify draconian solutions. At the same time, inflated claims are made about the magnitude of the problem. A key feature of many moral crusades is that the imputed scale of a problem (e.g., the number of victims) far exceeds what is warranted by the available evidence.⁵ Moreover, crusade leaders consider the problem unambiguous: they are not inclined to acknowledge gray areas and are adamant that a particular evil exists precisely as they depict it.⁶

A number of studies have examined the claims and activities of various moral crusades and the larger issue of how social problems are constructed,⁷ but much less attention has been devoted to the impact of crusade claims on public perceptions of social problems or the dynamics of institutionalization in state policies. Here, I identify and evaluate the core claims of dominant forces in the anti-trafficking campaign, and then trace the incorporation of these claims in state policy in the United States. The article is based on an analysis of activists’ pronouncements, movement documents, publications of government agencies, and relevant legislation.

ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Two decades ago, a coalition of the religious right and some radical feminists launched a major campaign against pornography. These groups played a predominant role in some municipal campaigns to ban pornography and, at the national level, in the Reagan administration’s commission on pornography, headed by Attorney General Edwin Meese.⁸ The commission’s recommendations relied heavily on the testimony of leading anti-pornography activists, privileged their

claims regarding the various harms of pornography (e.g., causing violence against women, moral decline), and dismissed counterevidence.⁹ The Justice Department formally accepted and implemented the commission's recommendations, including the creation of a new obscenity unit within the agency.¹⁰ In the resulting crackdown on pornography, the department launched an unprecedented number of obscenity prosecutions, resulting in huge fines that bankrupted several distributors and forced others to terminate sales in conservative areas of the country.¹¹

A remarkably similar alliance of the religious right, abolitionist feminists, and the U.S. government is occurring today. The inauguration of President George W. Bush in 2001 significantly altered the "political opportunity structure" for anti-prostitution forces,¹² providing a degree of access and influence that had not existed since the Reagan administration two decades earlier. On the right, crusade members include Focus on the Family, National Association of Evangelicals, Catholic Bishops Conference, Traditional Values Coalition, Concerned Women for America, Salvation Army, International Justice Mission, Shared Hope International, Religious Freedom Coalition, and numerous others. The premier abolitionist feminist organization in the United States is the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW). Others include Equality Now, the Protection Project, and Standing Against Global Exploitation (SAGE).

Members of these conservative religious and feminist groups hold opposing views on other social issues, such as abortion and same-sex marriage, but they largely agree on prostitution and pornography. The single-issue focus of most of these feminist groups—targeting the sex industry exclusively—trumps all other issues and facilitates their willingness to work with right-wing groups. The same dynamic characterized radical feminist involvement in the anti-porn coalition of the mid-1980s.¹³ The partners in this alliance clearly recognize the strategic advantages of coalition work in enhancing the legitimacy of their campaign as a bipartisan enterprise. The advantages of a united front are outlined by two prominent activists:

Feminists have been hampered in their response to this threat because there are divisions within feminism about the nature of prostitution. . . . Feminists should stop demonizing the conservative and faith-based groups that could be better allies on some issues than the liberal left has been. . . . Saving lives and defending freedom are more important than loyalty to an outdated and too-limited feminist sisterhood.¹⁴

Another leader describes the benefits of this alliance: "Having faith-based groups come in with a fresh perspective and a biblical mandate has made a big difference" in that abolitionist feminists "would not be getting attention internationally otherwise."¹⁵ Regarding President Bush, activist Donna Hughes remarks, "Mainstream feminists like to say he's anti-woman, but by supporting the abolitionist work against the global sex trade, he has done more for women and girls than any other president I can think of. . . . Years from now, when the anti-Bush hysteria has died away, I believe he will be recognized as a true advocate for women's freedom and human rights."¹⁶

“Abolitionist feminist” refers to those who argue that the sex industry should be entirely eliminated because of its objectification and oppressive treatment of women, considered to be inherent in sex for sale. In the next section, I critically evaluate the claims made by activists in this camp regarding both sex trafficking and prostitution more generally. Here, it is important to note that mainstream feminist organizations have been far less active in this debate and have been overshadowed by the abolitionists.¹⁷ The premier women’s rights organization, NOW, makes no mention on its Web site of sex trafficking, prostitution, or pornography, though it did pass a resolution endorsing the decriminalization of prostitution in 1973.¹⁸ Another major mainstream association, the National Council of Women’s Organizations, is also silent on these issues, though its Web site does provide a link on trafficking to a member group, Vital Voices. Because the debate over sex work has been so divisive in the past and members continue to disagree, it is not surprising that organizations not directly involved with this issue would avoid it altogether.

The crusade’s claims have been challenged by other feminists and by other groups. In academia, a number of prominent feminists have been involved in a long-standing, heated debate with abolitionists over pornography and prostitution.¹⁹ Among the groups that stand opposed to the current anti-prostitution campaign are the Network of Sex Work Projects (a coalition of forty international groups), the Sex Workers Outreach Project, the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women, and the Sex Workers Project in New York.²⁰ These organizations conduct research on trafficking and/or provide assistance to individuals involved in sex work, but they do not condemn sex work per se.²¹ Their primary concern is the empowerment of workers and harm reduction via provision of condoms, counseling, and other support services. Because they reject abolitionism, they have been increasingly marginalized and dismissed as the “pro-prostitution lobby” in the discourse of the preeminent anti-trafficking forces.²² These groups, like American sex workers’ rights groups more generally, have virtually no access to state elites.²³ The moral crusade under examination here has increasingly dominated the debate.

CORE CLAIMS

Moral crusades often make grand and unverifiable claims about the nature and prevalence of a particular “social evil.” My analysis of the publications, Web sites, and testimony of organizations and activists in this campaign identified a set of core claims regarding prostitution in general and sex trafficking in particular. Such claims are based on (1) an ideology that simply decrees that prostitution is immoral, a threat to marriage and the family, or oppressive to women; and (2) studies conducted by activists. The former are articles of faith that are difficult to operationalize and evaluate, while the latter are more amenable to scrutiny. This section of the article outlines and assesses the core claims regarding prostitution and sex trafficking.

Claim 1: Prostitution is evil by definition. For abolitionist feminists, prostitution is inherently an institution of male domination and exploitation of women.²⁴ CATW's Web site proclaims, "All prostitution exploits women, regardless of women's consent. Prostitution affects all women, justifies the sale of any woman, and reduces all women to sex." It can never qualify as a conventional commercial exchange like other service work nor can it ever be organized in a way that advances workers' interests. As a former activist and now government official, Laura Lederer, insists: "This is not a legitimate form of labor. . . . It can never be a legitimate way to make a living because it's inherently harmful for men, women, and children. . . . This whole commercial sex industry is a human-rights abuse."²⁵

The feminist wing of this crusade does not proffer religious arguments against prostitution, although moral indignation is sometimes evident.²⁶ Morality is central, of course, for religious conservatives. Like pornography,²⁷ they view prostitution as sexual deviance, as a cause of moral decay, and as a threat to marriage because it breaks the link between sex, love, and reproduction. As the founder of Evangelicals for Social Action stated, the campaign against prostitution and sex trafficking "certainly fits with an evangelical concern for sexual integrity. Sex is to be reserved for a marriage relationship where there is a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman."²⁸ And an article in *Christianity Today*, titled "Sex Isn't Work," stated, "When sex becomes commerce, the moral fabric of our culture is deeply damaged."²⁹ A government crackdown on prostitution (and other types of sex work, such as pornography and strip clubs) thus ratifies the religious right's views on sex and the family.

While some conservatives are forthright in depicting prostitution as a threat to the family, to traditional sexual relations, and to society's moral fiber,³⁰ others have modernized their critique by espousing abolitionist feminist arguments and terminology that define prostitution as an institution of exploitation and abuse of women. The leading right-wing activists have adopted their feminist allies' framing of the problem and much of their language ("prostituted women," "sexual slavery," "violence against women"), terms that are now staples of their discourse.³¹ An identical use of feminist constructs was evident during the anti-pornography campaign of the 1980s, when the right argued that pornography was not only sinful but also exploited and caused violence against women.³² The latter, more modern charge is easier to sell to mainstream policy makers and the wider public in America.

The claim that prostitution is intrinsically evil is an essentialist tenet that does not lend itself to evaluation with empirical evidence, unlike most of the other claims outlined below, but it is crucial to the debate because it is the very key-stone for all other crusade claims regarding the sex industry and sex trafficking.

Claim 2: Violence is omnipresent in prostitution and sex trafficking. It is not simply that violent incidents occur; instead, *prostitution is a form of violence*

categorically and universally. CATW co-director Janice Raymond writes, “To understand how violence is intrinsic to prostitution, it is necessary to understand the sex of prostitution. The sexual service provided in prostitution is most often violent, degrading, and abusive sexual acts.”³³ Sex trafficking is similarly defined as involving coercion of some kind, physical or otherwise. As discussed further below, anti-prostitution activists have consistently tried to erase the distinction between coercive trafficking and voluntary migration, and insist that victimization is the hallmark of all trafficking and prostitution.

The claim that violence is pervasive in prostitution cannot be confirmed. Since no study uses a random sample because the population of sex workers is unknown, and all rely instead on convenience samples of persons researchers manage to access, all figures on the incidence of violence are unreliable.³⁴ Thus, the frequent assertion that victimization is pervasive violates a fundamental scientific canon—namely, that generalizations cannot be based on unrepresentative samples. One example of this tendency is a report on sex trafficking authored by feminist abolitionists Janice Raymond and Donna Hughes.³⁵ Their report, funded by the Justice Department, is based on interviews with only forty women, who were involved with organizations committed to getting women out of prostitution. From this small and skewed sample the authors draw numerous, sweeping conclusions about victimization. The well-known dangers of generalizing from small, convenience samples and from anecdotal stories is routinely ignored in these writings.³⁶

Claim 3: Customers and traffickers are the personification of evil. As in other moral crusades, the perpetrators are presented as “folk devils.”³⁷ Customers are labeled “sexual predators” that brutalize women, and traffickers are vilified as predators, rapists, and kidnappers involved in organized crime and sexual slavery. A leading coalition member, Michael Horowitz of the conservative Hudson Institute, says of traffickers and clients, “We want to drive a stake through the heart of these venal criminals. This is pure evil.”³⁸

Research on customers cautions against sweeping characterizations and generalizations. Customers vary in their background characteristics, motivation, and behavior, and they buy sex for different reasons.³⁹ There is no doubt that some customers act violently, that some seek out underage prostitutes, and that some travel to other countries for this purpose. But it would be premature to assume that these kinds of abuse are widespread given the lack of solid data addressing this question, and some analysts make the counterargument that only a small minority of clients mistreats prostitutes.⁴⁰ The crusade’s claims about customers, as well as traffickers, are caricatures.

Claim 4: Sex workers lack agency. The denial of agency is evident in the very framing of the problem as one involving “prostituted women,” “trafficking,” and “sexual slavery.” The central claim is that workers do not actively make choices to enter or remain in prostitution, and there is no such thing as voluntary migration

for the purpose of sex work. The notion of consent is deemed irrelevant, and activists have pressed governments to criminalize all such migration, whether consensual or not: "Legislation must not allow traffickers to use the consent of the victim as a defense against trafficking," argue Raymond and Hughes.⁴¹ This crusade rejects the very concept of benign migration for the purpose of sex work, since prostitution is defined as inherently exploitative and oppressive. Instead, the more nefarious term "sex trafficking" (borrowed from the equally insidious "drug trafficking") is applied to every instance of relocation to a destination where the individual sells sex.

The issue of worker agency is central to the research literature on the sex industry, and the evidence shows variation, rather than uniformity, in the degree to which workers feel exploited versus empowered and in control of their working conditions.⁴² Workers do not necessarily see themselves as victims lacking agency. Instead of viewing themselves as "prostituted," they may embrace more neutral work identities, such as "working women" or "sex workers."⁴³ Some prostitutes make conscious decisions to enter the trade and do not feel that their work is degrading or oppressive. Many independent call girls and employees of escort agencies, massage parlors, and brothels fall into this category.⁴⁴ These workers are invisible in the discourse of the anti-prostitution crusade precisely because their accounts clash with abolitionist goals.

Regarding sex trafficking, it is impossible to measure the ratio of agency to victimization—i.e., voluntary versus involuntary migration. But several studies suggest that a significant number of migrants have made conscious and informed decisions to relocate. **A study of Vietnamese migrants in Cambodia, who had been assisted by intermediaries, reported that out of 100 women studied, only six had been duped, and the rest knew prior to leaving Vietnam that they would work in a brothel in Cambodia. Their motivations consisted of "economic incentives, desire for an independent lifestyle, and dissatisfaction with rural life and agricultural labor." After raids on the brothels by "rescue" organizations, the women "usually returned to their brothel as quickly as possible."**⁴⁵ The researchers argue that criminalizing the sex industry "forces [the workers] underground, making them more difficult to reach with appropriate services and increasing the likelihood of exploitation." Similar findings have been reported in Europe, where the women are "often aware of the sexual nature of the work. . . . Many migrants do know what is ahead of them, do earn a large amount of money in a short time selling sex, and do have control over their working conditions."⁴⁶ One investigation of trafficking from Eastern Europe to Holland, based on interviews with seventy-two women, found that few of the women were coercively trafficked, and that a "large number" had previously worked as prostitutes:

For most of the women, economic motives were decisive. The opportunity to earn a considerable amount of money in a short period of time was found to be irresistible. . . . **In most cases recruiting was done by friends, acquaintances, or even family members.**⁴⁷

The facilitators made travel arrangements, obtained necessary documents, and provided money to the women. In Australia “the majority of women know they will be working in the sex industry and often decide to come to Australia in the belief that they will be able to make a substantial amount of money. . . . Few of the women would ever consider themselves sex slaves.”⁴⁸

These are not isolated studies; others have shown that a proportion of migrants sold sex prior to relocating or were well aware that they would be working in the sex industry in their new home. One analyst concludes that, “The majority of ‘trafficking victims’ are aware that the jobs offered them are in the sex industry.”⁴⁹ Whether this is indeed true for the majority (or instead applies to a minority) of women who have relocated to another locale and end up selling sex, it is clear that traffickers do not necessarily fit the “folk devil” stereotype popularized by the anti-trafficking movement. Some facilitators are relatives, friends, or associates who recruit workers and assist with migration, and these individuals have a qualitatively different relationship with workers than do predators who use force or deception to lure victims into the trade.

It would be mistaken to assume that coercion and deception are myths or that facilitators are necessarily benign agents even when they employ no force or fraud. Some women do not understand the terms of the contract or fully appreciate the impact of debt bondage or how difficult it can be to pay off the debt. Some facilitators alter the terms of the agreement after transit or renege on specific promises. In this scenario, the woman’s initial consent is compromised by subsequent, unexpected job requirements. Other workers have little prior awareness of the specific working conditions or risks involved in sex work in the new locale. For those who sold sex in their home country, working conditions in the destination country may be far worse in terms of health, safety, accommodation, and the sexual services required of them.⁵⁰ Others enter the sex industry reluctantly, out of an obligation to support their families or because of tacit pressure from relatives—not uncommon in Southeast Asia. A study funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) found that many of the Vietnamese women working in Cambodian brothels had been recruited and transported by their mothers and aunts, not by professional traffickers.⁵¹ In short, the evidence indicates that migration for sex work is a complex and varied process. There are multiple migration trajectories and worker experiences, ranging from highly coercive and exploitative to informed consent and intentionality on the part of the migrant. Yet, the crusade presents only the worst cases and universalizes them, just as anti-pornography activists have done for decades.⁵²

Claim 5: Prostitution and sex trafficking are inextricably linked. Activists in this crusade insist that prostitution must be targeted, because it is prostitution more than anything else that is the root cause of trafficking. Opposing trafficking without simultaneously fighting prostitution is seen as treating the symptom instead of the disease.

The conflation of trafficking and prostitution is motivated by the crusade's ultimate goal of eliminating the entire sex trade, a goal that is frequently articulated.⁵³ Donna Hughes, for example, calls for "re-linking trafficking and prostitution, and combating the commercial sex trade as a whole."⁵⁴ Not only does she equate the two ("sex trafficking of women and children—what's commonly called prostitution"),⁵⁵ but also claims that "most 'sex workers' are—or originally started out as—trafficked women and girls."⁵⁶

The research literature does not support this claim. There is no evidence that "most" or even the majority of prostitutes have been trafficked. Moreover, prostitution and trafficking differ substantively; the former is a type of work, and the latter is a means of accessing a new market. Both empirically and conceptually, it is inappropriate to fuse prostitution and trafficking.⁵⁷

Claim 6: The magnitude of both prostitution and sex trafficking is high and has greatly increased in recent years. The size of a social problem matters in attracting media coverage, donor funding, and attention from policy makers. Moral crusades therefore have an interest in inflating the magnitude of a problem, and their figures are typically unverifiable and/or incredibly elastic (e.g., "hundreds of thousands").⁵⁸ This is a staple of the anti-trafficking crusade. For instance, SAGE director Norma Hotaling recently claimed that "there are thousands of trafficked women in San Francisco"—a vague but seemingly high figure presented with no documentation.⁵⁹ The shock value of such claims is perhaps best reflected in the frequent assertion that trafficking has reached an "epidemic" level. And when figures are presented, they vary dramatically—ranging in recent years from a high of 4 million trafficked persons annually to a low of 600,000. The crusade's checkered quantification of the problem (with vague, wide-ranging, or fluctuating numbers) is, as shown below, being recapitulated by the Bush administration. In fact, *there are no reliable statistics on the magnitude of trafficking*, and the figures can only be described as guesswork. Even ballpark estimates are dubious, given the clandestine and stigmatized nature of the sex trade.

The mass media have uncritically reported these and other unverified numbers. An editorial in the *New York Times*, for example, was quite emphatic: "Around the world, about one million women and children are seduced into leaving their homelands every year and forced into prostitution or menial work in other countries."⁶⁰ On the popular *Oprah* television talk show, a recent episode claimed that "millions" of children are sold into prostitution each year, and that one-quarter of all sex tourists in the world are American men.⁶¹ The term "millions" is overly broad, and no survey of sex tourists has ever been conducted.

The high numbers have not gone unchallenged. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Bangkok office suggests that most of the statistics being circulated are "false" or "spurious": "When it comes to statistics, trafficking of girls and women is one of several

highly emotive issues which seem to overwhelm critical faculties.”⁶² Researchers have criticized the national, regional, and international statistics proffered by activists, organizations, and governments for their “lack of methodological transparency” and source documentation,⁶³ for being extrapolated from a few cases of identified victims (persons who are unrepresentative of the victim population),⁶⁴ and for the lack of a standard definition of “victims” as a basis for estimates of the magnitude of the problem.⁶⁵

The numbers issue was recently investigated by the U.S. General Accountability Office (GAO). The GAO report was very critical of the prevailing figures, which are replete with “methodological weaknesses, gaps in data, and numerical discrepancies,” and it concluded that “country data are generally not available, reliable, or comparable.”⁶⁶ In short, the “U.S. government has not yet established an effective mechanism for estimating the number of victims,” and the same is true for international nongovernmental agencies (NGOs) working in the trafficking area.⁶⁷

It is also claimed that the sex industry is *expanding* at an unprecedented rate, increasing the market for trafficked workers. The director of the evangelical International Justice Mission, for example, refers to “the growing trafficking nightmare,” and CATW proclaims that “local and global sex industries are systematically violating women’s rights on an ever-increasing scale.”⁶⁸ Again, such claims are problematic. Sex trafficking is “often described as mushrooming or being on the rise globally, while in fact these assertions are based on very few cases.”⁶⁹

It is conceivable that the number of sex-for-sale transactions has increased with the growth of the Internet—which facilitates contacts between providers and customers—but whether this has substantially increased the aggregate amount of prostitution, as claimed, is impossible to estimate. Internationally, it is clear that sex trafficking has increased in *some* parts of the world, especially from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The breakup of the Soviet empire and declining living standards for many of its inhabitants has made such migration both much easier and more compelling than in the past.⁷⁰ Given the underground nature of this economy, estimates of both its current magnitude and changes over time are highly dubious, which means that claims regarding a growing worldwide epidemic cannot be confirmed.

Claim 7: Legalization would make the situation far worse than it is at present. The crusade considers legal prostitution detrimental in two respects: practically (by magnifying all the problems associated with prostitution, and by increasing the amount of trafficking) and symbolically (by giving the state’s blessing to a despicable institution and condoning men’s exploitation of women). Regarding the symbolic dimension, it is claimed that, “When legal barriers disappear, so too do the social and ethical barriers to treating women as sexual merchandise. Legalization of prostitution sends the message to new generations of men and boys that women are sexual commodities and that prostitution is harmless fun,”⁷¹

and also poses a grave threat to social order: “the corrosive effect on society as a whole when prostitution is condoned through legalization or decriminalization.”⁷² Anti-prostitution forces often express concern about what they perceive as the “normalization” of prostitution in various parts of the world. Normalization is seen in the very premise behind state-regulated, legal prostitution. CATW’s mission is broad: to “challenge acceptance of the sex industry, normalization of prostitution as work, and to de-romanticize legalization initiatives in various countries.”⁷³ Crusade claims about the dangers of legalization are thus part of the larger objective of abolishing prostitution.

A second assertion is that legalization causes or serves as a magnet for increased sex trafficking. The claim is based on the notion of least resistance: legalization removes the constraints on a formerly illegal and circumscribed enterprise and inevitably leads to its proliferation. For example, CATW’s co-director declares that “legalized or decriminalized prostitution industries are one of the root causes of sex trafficking. . . . Anti-trafficking advocates and legislators must address prostitution as a root cause of sex trafficking, and not be silenced by those who insist that we must speak only about trafficking.”⁷⁴ Right-wing groups could not agree more. Linda Smith, director of Shared Hope International, testified in Congress that the government should “consider countries with legalized or tolerated prostitution as having laws that are insufficient efforts to eliminate trafficking. . . . Where there is a strong adult sex industry, the commercial sexual exploitation of children and sex slavery increases.”⁷⁵ And Concerned Women for America claims that “legalizing prostitution does not remedy the problem of sex trafficking but rather increases it.”⁷⁶

The causal link between legal prostitution and trafficking has not been empirically established. There is no evidence, for instance, that women are being coercively trafficked into Nevada’s legal brothels. And the State Department has published reports that appear to undercut this claim: In its 2005 *Trafficking in Persons Report*, several nations where prostitution is legal (Australia, Germany, Holland, New Zealand) were found to “fully comply with minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.”⁷⁷ Moreover, the *Report* reveals that the Dutch authorities report a “decrease in trafficking in the legal sector,” a finding confirmed by other analysts.⁷⁸ Rather than being a magnet attracting migrants into a country, it appears that legal prostitution may help *reduce* trafficking due to enhanced government regulation and oversight of the legal sector. And the obverse may also be true: “Traffickers take advantage of the illegality of commercial sex work and migration, and are able to exert an undue amount of power and control over [migrants]. . . . In such cases, it is the laws that prevent legal commercial sex work and immigration that form the major obstacles.”⁷⁹ As Murray writes, “It is the prohibition of prostitution and restrictions on travel which attract organized crime and create the possibilities for large profits, as well as creating the prostitutes’ need for protection and assistance.”⁸⁰

Research indicates that, under the right conditions, legal prostitution can be organized in a way that enhances workers' safety and job satisfaction. One of the advantages of Nevada's legal brothels is protection from violence. These brothels "offer the safest environment available for women to sell consensual sex acts for money," a recent study concludes.⁸¹ In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Justice found that the "vast majority" of workers in Dutch brothels, clubs, and window units report that they "often or always feel safe."⁸² And a major evaluation of legal brothels in Queensland, Australia, by a government oversight agency, concluded, "There is no doubt that licensed brothels provide the safest working environment for sex workers in Queensland. . . . Legal brothels now operating in Queensland provide a sustainable model for a healthy, crime-free, and safe legal licensed brothel industry."⁸³ In each case, safety measures (surveillance, alarm systems) allow for rapid intervention in the event of trouble from an unruly customer. None of this is to suggest that existing legal prostitution regimes are problem-free, but the evidence on at least these three systems contrasts strikingly with the image of legal sex work proffered by the anti-prostitution crusade.

In short, the core claims of this moral crusade are exaggerated, unverifiable, or demonstrably false—depending on the claim in question. Common to all of these claims are sweeping declarations that ignore counterevidence and give prominence to anecdotal stories describing worst cases. Crusade claims are contradicted by a large body of social science research.⁸⁴ This research shows that prostitution takes multiple forms and exists under varying conditions, which translates into diverse experiences for workers—a complexity that undermines sweeping generalizations.⁸⁵ Yet this movement's broad claims have been increasingly institutionalized in official government policies.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CRUSADE CLAIMS

Some moral crusades fail to achieve any of their goals, while others succeed in influencing public opinion, formal norms, and/or organizational practices. If the social problem identified by activists is accepted by the authorities as a bona fide problem, the crusade may gradually become institutionalized. *Institutionalization by the state may be limited or extensive—ranging from consultation with activists, inclusion of leaders in the policy process, material support for crusade organizations, official endorsement of crusade ideology, resource mobilization, and the creation of legislation and new agencies to address the problem.*⁸⁶ The institutionalization of the anti-prostitution crusade follows this trajectory. Below, I document *consultation and inclusion* of activists in policy making, official *recognition and endorsement* of crusade ideology, officials' independent *articulation* of this ideology, and *programmatic and legal changes* in accordance with this ideology.

Types of Institutionalization

Institutionalization of a movement is inchoate when it begins to gain access to the power elite in the form of *consultation*. Consultation takes place via conferences, meetings, lobbying, congressional hearings, and in other venues. Congressional hearings on sex trafficking are especially important. They typically showcase victims who present dramatic, shocking testimony, and provide a forum for activists to push for legal changes or greater enforcement. In the course of these events, the problem is amplified and new dimensions identified. In the past five years, these hearings have led to significant policy changes and new legislation.

Consultative access may be exclusive to certain groups. Since George W. Bush took office in January 2001, the anti-prostitution movement's access to policy makers has steadily increased. The director of the State Department's trafficking office, John R. Miller, revealed that the federal government has been "working closely with faith-based, community, and feminist organizations" to combat all forms of prostitution.⁸⁷ Miller credits these groups with keeping trafficking on the front burner: "They're consumed by this issue. I think it's great. It helped get the legislation passed, it helped spur me. I think it keeps the whole government focused."⁸⁸ Anti-prostitution forces frequently network with government officials during private meetings, at conferences, and at hearings—giving them unique opportunities to shape the terms of the debate and subsequent policy changes. Groups that do not share the crusade's views have been denied access to these venues and to policy makers more generally.⁸⁹

Inclusion is a step beyond consultation; it involves ongoing collaboration of a more formal nature. Many organizations within the anti-prostitution and anti-trafficking movement are now official partners with U.S. government agencies. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), for example, created a Rescue and Restore Coalition, which formally aligns HHS with many of this crusade's organizations.⁹⁰ An even stronger indicator of inclusion is the circulation of actors between a movement and government agencies, with the resulting amalgamation of their ideological positions.⁹¹ Some former anti-prostitution activists are now working in key government agencies. A stellar example is Laura Lederer. A prominent anti-pornography activist in the 1980s and editor of the book *Take Back the Night*, Lederer founded the anti-trafficking Protection Project in the 1990s. She was later hired as a senior advisor in the State Department's trafficking office. Lederer's inclusion within the government is part of the reason the State Department has adopted discourse and policies identical to those advocated by the Protection Project.

Actors also move in the other direction. Some former government officials have founded or work for anti-trafficking or kindred organizations after leaving the government. One example is Linda Smith. A former Republican congresswoman (1994-1998), she founded Shared Hope International in 1998 to rescue

trafficked women around the world. Another example is Robert Flores, former deputy chief of the Justice Department's obscenity unit who later became Vice President and Senior Counsel at the National Law Center for Children and Families, an anti-pornography organization.⁹² Patrick Trueman served as chief of the obscenity unit from 1988 to 1992, and was responsible for implementing the government's crackdown on pornography after the publication of the Meese Commission's report. Today, he is senior legal counsel for the Family Research Council, and also trains law enforcement officers on human trafficking for the HHS Rescue and Restore Campaign. Trueman recently testified before Congress, urging a government crackdown on pornography.⁹³

Institutionalization also manifests itself in *government funding of movement organizations*. Groups that share the Bush administration's perspective on the sex industry have benefited materially in several ways. First, the government has allotted considerable funds on anti-trafficking conferences throughout the world, which occur frequently; one in Washington, DC, in February 2005 had a \$1.8 million price tag.⁹⁴ Organizations critical of U.S. government trafficking policy have not been invited to these events, which are restricted to groups and individuals within the crusade coalition.⁹⁵ Second, under the Bush administration's Faith-Based Initiative, a huge amount of federal grant money has been awarded to religious organizations in the United States and abroad that are involved in promoting a conservative social agenda, including anti-abortion programs, abstinence education, and church-run social services.⁹⁶ Over the past five years, the U.S. Government awarded more than \$300 million to international and domestic NGOs involved in fighting trafficking and prostitution. Among the organizations receiving funding from the State Department, Justice Department, and HHS are prominent abolitionist feminist organizations (CATW, Protection Project, and SAGE), faith-based organizations (Catholic Conference of Bishops, Salvation Army, International Justice Mission, World Vision, and Shared Hope International) and their allies around the world.⁹⁷ Many of these groups receive funding for their activities in identifying and rescuing victims, while others are funded to conduct research. For example, Raymond and Hughes received \$189,000 from the National Institute of Justice to write a report on trafficking.⁹⁸ Regarding the funded research conducted by some of these individuals and groups, its quality has been questioned by the GAO, which cited the State Department's own Inspector General's concern with "the credentials of the organizations and findings of the research that the Trafficking Office funded"; the Inspector General called for rigorous peer review and greater oversight of the funding process.⁹⁹

The ultimate type of institutionalization involves *concrete changes in government discourse, policy, and law* consistent with crusade interests and demands. Some moral crusades are so successful that they see their ideology fully incorporated in government policy and vigorous efforts by state agencies to combat the problem on their own. In other words, the movement's central goals become a project of the government.

During the final years of the Clinton administration, there was little accommodation of crusade demands. The *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act* (TVPA) was passed in late 2000, which *inter alia* created the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons within the State Department. Anti-trafficking activists were pleased with the new agency but quite dissatisfied with the statute's definitions and provisions regarding trafficking. TVPA distinguished "sex trafficking" (which may be voluntarily entered into) from "severe trafficking" (which involves "force, fraud, or coercion" or persons under age eighteen); its protections and sanctions apply only to severe trafficking.¹⁰⁰ The anti-prostitution crusade fought, unsuccessfully, against this two-tiered approach, wanted sanctions applied to all trafficking, and rejected the distinction between coercive trafficking and voluntary migration for sex work.¹⁰¹ The Clinton administration distinguished forced and voluntary prostitution, did not link prostitution to trafficking, did not claim that legal prostitution increases trafficking into a country, and resisted mandatory sanctions against nations with poor records in combating trafficking. Organizations in the emerging anti-prostitution crusade, who lobbied the Clinton administration, were rebuffed on each of these issues.¹⁰²

After the Bush administration took office in 2001, the crusade's positions began to receive a favorable hearing in the White House. The new administration rejected the Clinton approach and replaced it with a model that is virtually identical to what was being advocated by the anti-prostitution crusade. In a remarkably short time span, the latter's views were accepted, incorporated into official policy, and implemented in agency practices.

Movement claims and the very language used by activists regarding prostitution in general and sex trafficking in particular, are abundantly evident in official declarations and legislation during the Bush administration. This institutionalization of crusade ideology is apparent in (1) the public pronouncements of government officials; (2) the official positions of government agencies, including Department of State, Department of Justice, USAID, and HHS; (3) the State Department's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report*; (4) the State Department's seminal document, *The Link between Prostitution and Sex Trafficking*; and (5) the TVPA reauthorization acts of 2003 and 2005 (TVPA 2005 incorporated certain elements of the *End Demand for Sex Trafficking* bill, including its provisions targeting domestic traffickers and customers).¹⁰³ Leading abolitionist feminist and religious activists played a key role in drafting this legislation.¹⁰⁴

The ideological convergence of the crusade and the state is striking. In 2002, President Bush signed a presidential directive on trafficking that defines prostitution as "inherently harmful and dehumanizing,"¹⁰⁵ and in a speech at the United Nations (UN) he referred to

hundreds of thousands of teenage girls, and others as young as five, who fall victim to the sex trade. . . . The victims of the sex trade see little of life before they see the very

worst of life—an underground of brutality and lonely fear. . . . Those who patronize this industry debase themselves and deepen the misery of others.¹⁰⁶

The president's UN address was the direct result of lobbying by evangelical leaders. Charles Colson (founder of Prison Fellowship Ministries) and Richard Land (of the Southern Baptist Convention) had pressed the White House for months to denounce the sex industry. Land stated, "We certainly encouraged the White House to make it a prominent issue" and the UN address "was one place we suggested it could be done."¹⁰⁷

The publications and Web sites of HHS, Department of State, and Department of Justice cite or provide links to the writings of prominent crusade members (e.g., Donna Hughes, Janice Raymond, Melissa Farley), which effectively privileges their opinions. Such references can be found on the State Department's Web site, which makes proclamations identical to those of the anti-prostitution movement: prostitution "is inherently harmful. Few activities are as brutal and damaging to people as prostitution"; it "leaves women and children physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually devastated"; legal prostitution "creates a safe haven for criminals who traffic people into prostitution"; and "prostitution is not the oldest profession, but the oldest form of oppression." Trafficking czar John Miller characterizes prostitutes as "victims of bodies demeaned, of spirits trampled, and souls destroyed."¹⁰⁸ In December 2006, he issued a directive urging other U.S. agencies, contractors, and other governments to avoid using the term "sex worker" because it wrongly implies that prostitution is work; agencies were instructed to refer to them as "women used in prostitution" to underscore their victimization.¹⁰⁹ The directive reflects the longstanding struggle of anti-prostitution forces to erase the notion of "sex work" from public discourse. In moral crusades, the use of proper language is an important part of the struggle to redefine a particular problem, and this crusade (and now the U.S. Government) has devoted a great deal of effort to demonizing prostitution.

High Numbers and Horror Stories

Activists' claims about the magnitude of sex trafficking have been given the U.S. government's stamp of approval, as it now officially holds that it is a huge and growing epidemic worldwide. Although a report by a State Department analyst attached to the CIA acknowledged in 2000 that "no one U.S. or international agency is compiling accurate statistics," the report then claimed that "700,000 to 2 million women and children are trafficked globally each year."¹¹⁰ In 2003, the State Department's maximum figure had grown to 4 million, but two years later it inexplicably fell to 600,000-800,000 victims of all types of trafficking, of which "hundreds of thousands" were said to be trafficked into prostitution.¹¹¹ No explanation has been given for the huge fluctuations from year to year in the official

figures. Similarly, it is frequently asserted by several agencies that 80 percent of all trafficking victims are women and 50 percent children—figures that are, again, unverifiable given the clandestine nature of the trade.

Severe sex trafficking is defined in the TVPA as the use of “force, fraud, or coercion” to induce an adult to perform a commercial sex act, or inducing a person under age eighteen to perform a commercial sex act regardless of whether force or fraud is used. This definition does not apply to adults who willingly travel, with some kind of assistance, in search of employment in the sex industry. However, the figures presented by advocates and officials often lump the latter kind of migration into the trafficking category, which inflates the number of victims, and some agencies in the U.S. and abroad treat all sex workers as trafficked.¹¹²

Like the global numbers, domestic figures have changed drastically and inexplicably in a short period of time. In 2002 the State Department’s annual trafficking report claimed that 45,000-50,000 persons are trafficked into the United States annually, but just one year later the number fell to 18,000-20,000 (a 60 percent drop), and the 2004 and 2005 reports cut the figures to 14,500-17,500 per year.¹¹³ Judging from their public statements, leading members of Congress and the Bush administration have accepted these numbers uncritically, though some have questioned the figures. The Justice Department, for one, seems skeptical:

Most importantly, the government must address the incongruity between the estimated number of victims trafficked into the United States—between 14,500 and 17,500 [annually]—and the number of victims found—only 611 in the last four years. . . . The stark difference between the two figures means that U.S. government efforts are still not enough. In addition, the estimate should be evaluated to assure that it is accurate and reflects the number of actual victims.¹¹⁴

Moral crusades typically offer anecdotal horror stories in addition to inflated numbers of victims to demonstrate the gravity of a targeted evil. This strategy is abundantly evident in the discourse of anti-trafficking forces both outside and inside the U.S. government. Typically, the testimonials of a few “rescued” victims are presented as evidence. Horror stories and photos of young victims are prominently displayed in government publications and Web sites. Such depictions dramatize human suffering and are designed to cause alarm and outrage, and this strategy can be quite effective. For example, several members of Congress—including the sponsors of trafficking legislation in the House and Senate—have stated that they became interested in trafficking only after hearing a particular victim’s testimony.¹¹⁵ The official discourse repeatedly invokes “women and children” victims, arguably to equate women with children’s vulnerability and lack of agency and to stoke popular revulsion and support for draconian measures. Claims about threatened children are a staple of many moral crusades.¹¹⁶

Domain Expansion

Over time, moral crusades often turn their sights on evils that were not originally targeted but come to be associated with the foundational problem.¹¹⁷ Such domain expansion is evident here. This movement has targeted not just sex trafficking, but all sectors of the sex industry. As one analyst points out, “Efforts to curb prostitution in the name of rescuing sex slaves are deeply intertwined with attempts by the Bush administration and its faith-based constituency to police nonprocreative sex on a global level.”¹¹⁸

Activists successfully pressed the U.S. government to adopt a policy denying funding to organizations that were not sufficiently committed to abolishing prostitution, or that dispensed condoms and other assistance to workers without trying to rescue them. Today, to be eligible for U.S. funding, any foreign NGO working on the trafficking front must declare its opposition to legal prostitution. The State Department’s Web site is unequivocal: “No U.S. grant funds should be awarded to foreign non-governmental organizations that support legal state-regulated prostitution.” Similarly, the AIDS funding law of 2003 (known as the Global AIDS Act) requires that any international organization working to curb AIDS must “have a policy explicitly opposing prostitution and sex trafficking” if it wishes to receive such funding. This applies to American groups insofar as they work with or subcontract work to international organizations. Organizations that do not take a position on prostitution, as well as those that favor decriminalization or legalization, are thus ineligible for AIDS funding from USAID or HHS. Similarly, the Justice Department now requires anyone applying for funding to conduct research on trafficking to certify that they do “not promote, support, or advocate the legalization or practice of prostitution.”¹¹⁹ Failure to do so results in summary denial of funding. The principle underlying these policy changes is the crusade’s claim that prostitution is intrinsically harmful and, specifically, that legal prostitution “fuels” trafficking, a notion now endorsed by the U.S. Government.

Because of the restriction, several NGOs have rejected government funding. In May 2005, 171 American and foreign organizations signed a letter to President Bush opposing the anti-prostitution pledge because they believe the policy interferes with promising interventions that require building trust with sex workers, and only heightens the stigma associated with sex work. Two lawsuits were filed claiming that the pledge requirement violates the right to free speech, is unconstitutionally vague (in mandating “opposing” prostitution), and improperly requires grantees to adopt the Bush administration’s positions.¹²⁰ In May 2006, federal judges in New York and Washington ruled the government’s prostitution pledge requirement an unconstitutional violation of the right to free speech, but they were later overruled on appeal.

Domain expansion is broader than prostitution, however. Activists have pressed the government to criminalize “the commercial sex trade as a whole,”¹²¹

and they have met with some success thus far. The key legislation on sex trafficking also refers to “commercial sexual activities,” defined as “any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to, or received by, any person.”¹²² The stated objective of the 2005 *End Demand for Sex Trafficking* bill (House of Representatives 2012 and Senate 937) was to “combat commercial sexual activities” in general, because “commercial sexual activities have a devastating impact on society. The sex trade has a dehumanizing effect on all involved.” Had the *End Demand* bill passed in its entirety (parts of it were merged into TVPA 2005), it would have targeted a wide variety of sex acts, such as lap dancing in strip clubs, legal brothel prostitution in Nevada, and pornography. The bill that did pass, the TVPA 2005 reauthorization, contains a section on Combating Domestic Trafficking in Persons that repeatedly refers to the need to investigate and combat “trafficking in persons and demand for commercial sex acts in the United States” (section 201[a]). This blurs the line between trafficking and commercial sex. The statute authorizes \$25 million per year for increased prosecution of those who “purchase commercial sex acts” (section 204[1b]), and funds for “john schools” (section 204[1c]), which consist of a day-long series of lectures designed to educate arrested customers about the harms of prostitution (such schools currently exist in several cities).¹²³

Donna Hughes’ State Department-funded report on trafficking includes sections on stripping and pornography.¹²⁴ Her report claims that “the introduction of lap dancing has almost eliminated the distinction between dancing and prostitution,” and also that women and girls are trafficked to perform at strip clubs (though she found only six cases of this in the United States during 1998-2005).¹²⁵ The Nevada case is also intriguing. The original version of TVPA 2005 (section 201[a]) included funding for a study to examine “sex trafficking and unlawful commercial sex acts in the United States [and] is intended to include data on commercial sex acts that are not unlawful in those areas of the country where prostitution and/or the purchase and sale of sex acts is legal, i.e., several counties in Nevada.” The reference to Nevada does not appear in the final version of the statute, but may reappear in future legislation.

Also under scrutiny is pornography. Most of the groups involved in the anti-prostitution crusade are just as concerned about pornography, as is abundantly evident in their Web sites and public statements. For example, Anthony Verdugo, director of the Christian Family Association in Miami, states, “Pornography is a poison and it’s addictive. It’s not a victimless crime. Women are the victims.”¹²⁶ Some activists link pornography to trafficking. Donna Hughes, for one, claims that the producers of pornography “often rely on trafficked victims,” a dubious charge made without any supporting evidence.¹²⁷ And Patrick Trueman, former chief of the Justice Department’s obscenity unit and now legal counsel for the Family Research Council, testified before Congress that “pornography is closely linked to an increase in prostitution, child prostitution, and human trafficking. . . .

Pornography is a powerful factor in creating the demand for illicit sex."¹²⁸ This causal relationship is utterly fictional, not supported by research.

The Justice Department recently launched a new effort against pornography under the auspices of an expanded obscenity unit consisting of a team of prosecutors and FBI agents who work exclusively on obscenity cases.¹²⁹ The crackdown is the result of lobbying by both former Justice Department officials who had previously served in its obscenity unit, as well as by conservative organizations, including the Family Research Council, Morality in Media, Concerned Women for America, Focus on the Family, American Family Association, and Citizens for Community Values. Some leading officials from the Reagan years have been reappointed to the department's obscenity unit, including the new head of the unit, Brent Ward, who, as U.S. Attorney in Utah during the Reagan administration, vigorously prosecuted distributors of video pornography, attempted to impose greater controls on strip clubs, prosecuted a phone sex company, and forced Utah's two remaining adult theaters to close.¹³⁰ Another major figure is Bruce Taylor, who served in the Justice Department's obscenity unit in the Reagan years, was a lawyer for the nation's premier anti-pornography group (Citizens for Decency through Law, founded in 1956), and was president of an organization fighting indecency on the Internet and pornography generally (the National Law Center for Children and Families). He is now the obscenity unit's senior legal counsel.¹³¹ The appointments of Taylor and Ward have been applauded by right-wing organizations that had been pressing the Bush administration to launch a new war on pornography. Concerned Women for America, for instance, urged its members to "call the Attorney General's office . . . to express your appreciation for Taylor's appointment and the department's prosecution efforts thus far."¹³²

The evidence presented above suggests that the dominant forces in the anti-trafficking campaign and in the Bush administration are committed to a far-reaching attack on commercial sex. Among the targets are prostitution, strip clubs, and pornography—all of which are associated with sex trafficking according to crusade leaders and government officials. A robust crackdown on prostitution and pornography becomes more palatable to mainstream organizations and moderate politicians if they can be linked to sex trafficking, that is, if it is accepted that most or all sex workers have been coerced and trafficked. Such domain expansion has been a gradual process: the initial, exclusive focus on trafficking was subsequently broadened as activists began to insist that all sectors of the commercial sex industry should be targeted for repression. Evidence of this domain expansion can be found in the areas designated for increased criminalization in the *End Demand* bill, the growing crackdown on domestic prostitution provided for in the 2005 TVPA, the requirement that those seeking government funding for their research or interventions regarding trafficking or AIDS sign an anti-prostitution oath, and the Justice Department's increasing prosecution of producers and distributors of adult pornography under the obscenity laws.

CONCLUSION

The anti-prostitution/trafficking campaign examined in this article has made considerable progress in transforming itself from a social movement into a project of the U.S. government, becoming almost fully institutionalized in official discourse, legislation, and enforcement practices under the Bush administration. During this period, there has been a remarkable osmosis between crusade and government ideology, claims-making, and policy preferences. This case illustrates a high degree of movement-state interpenetration.

All of the hallmarks of a moral crusade are evident—framing a condition as an unqualified evil; creation of folk devils; zealotry among leaders who see their mission as a righteous enterprise; presentation of claims as universalistic truths; use of horror stories as representative of actors' experiences; promulgation of huge and unverified numbers of victims; and attempts to redraw normative boundaries by increased criminalization. Prostitution is depicted as immoral or intrinsically harmful, and systems of legal prostitution as dens of iniquity and oppression. As is typical of moral crusades, activists (and now government officials) have presented questionable statistics and anecdotal horror stories as evidence of a worldwide epidemic of coerced prostitution. The crusade's sweeping claims are contradicted by academic research on the sex industry, including comprehensive reviews of the scholarly literature.¹³³

What is particularly striking is the degree to which current claims recapitulate arguments made a century ago regarding "white slavery," a problem that was largely mythical.¹³⁴ The anti-trafficking campaign has capitalized on "one of the most powerful symbols in the pantheon of Western imagery, the innocent, young girl dragged off against her will to distant lands to satisfy the insatiable sexual cravings of wanton men."¹³⁵ It has been argued that "today's stereotypical 'trafficking victim' bears as little resemblance to women migrating for work in the sex industry as did her historical counterpart, the 'white slave.'"¹³⁶

This does not mean that coercive sex trafficking is fictional. Force and deception are realities in the sex trade, and the perpetrators deserve stiff punishment. But instead of focusing on unfree labor, the campaign has broadly targeted all migration if sex is sold at the destination. What is largely missing from crusade discourse is attention to the root causes of migration, such as poverty and barriers to women's employment in the Third World and Eastern Europe. Crusade leaders occasionally mention structural factors, but this has been overshadowed by the dominant moral discourse and by a focus on individuals and their immediate circumstances.¹³⁷

An alternative model would (1) pay more attention to the socioeconomic conditions that promote sex work, (2) focus on unfree labor rather than prostitution per se, (3) faithfully represent women's varied experiences in prostitution, and (4) identify concrete ways of enhancing workers' health, safety, and control over

working conditions.¹³⁸ A full discussion of policy implications is beyond the scope of this article, but any such discussion must take into account differences between types of prostitution. In other words, policies should be sector-specific. Some workers, concentrated in the upscale echelon (call girls, escorts), are not interested in leaving the trade, and their biggest concern is being arrested.¹³⁹ Other workers, both internationally and domestically, whether trafficked or not, want to leave the sex industry, yet resources to facilitate exit are woefully lacking. In the United States, most cities provide virtually no government-funded support services for sex workers.¹⁴⁰ Desperately needed are resources for counseling, health care, drug treatment, temporary housing, and job training. Regarding sex trafficking, as noted above, interventions focused on persons who are unequivocally victims and perpetrators of coercive trafficking (involving force and fraud) would be a superior strategy to the undifferentiated and often counterproductive practices of many faith-based rescue organizations, whose practices are driven by this moral crusade's broad goal of abolishing the entire sex industry worldwide.

NOTES

1. The article examines developments in the United States, including American foreign policy, and does not examine the parallel debate on the international stage. See Jo Doezema, "Now You See Her, Now You Don't: Sex Workers at the UN Trafficking Protocol Negotiations," *Social and Legal Studies* 14 (2005): 61-89, and Barbara Sullivan, "Trafficking in Women: Feminism and New International Law," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 5 (2003): 67-91.

2. Malcolm Spector and John Kitsuse, "Social Problems: A Re-Formulation," *Social Problems* 21 (1973): 146.

3. Howard Becker, *Outsiders* (New York: Free Press, 1963); Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (New York: St. Martin's, 1972); and Joseph Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1963).

4. Joel Best, *Threatened Children* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

5. Cohen, *Folk Devils*; Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994).

6. Joel Best, *Random Violence: How We Talk about New Crimes and New Victims* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 103-18.

7. For example, Darren Sherkat and Christopher Ellison, "The Cognitive Structure of a Moral Crusade: Conservative Protestantism and Opposition to Pornography," *Social Forces* 75 (1997): 957-80; Louis Zurcher and R. George Kirkpatrick, *Citizens for Decency: Antipornography Campaigns as Status Defense* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976).

8. Meese Commission, *Final Report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography* (Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1986).

9. Carole Vance, "The Meese Commission on the Road," *The Nation* (August 2, 1986): 76-80; Gordon Hawkins and Franklin Zimring, *Pornography in a Free Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Donald Downs, *The New Politics of Pornography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

10. U.S. Department of Justice, *Beyond the Pornography Commission: The Federal Response* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1988).

11. Ted Gest, "The Drive to Make America Porn-Free," *U.S. News and World Report* (February 6, 1989): 26-27; Jim McGee, "U.S. Crusade against Pornography Tests the Limits of Fairness," *Washington Post* (January 11, 1993). Under Clinton, the Justice Department greatly reduced prosecutions of adult obscenity cases and focused instead on child pornography.

12. Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

13. Vance, "Meese Commission."

14. Phyllis Chesler and Donna Hughes, "Feminism in the 21st Century," *Washington Post* (February 22, 2004).

15. Laura Lederer, quoted in Mindy Belz, "No Sale," *World Magazine* (March 25, 2000).

16. Donna Hughes, quoted in Kathryn Lopez, "The New Abolitionist Movement: Donna Hughes on Progress Fighting Sex Trafficking," *National Review* (January 26, 2006).

17. Mainstream feminists have been involved in the debate at certain junctures. For instance, during international negotiations over a UN treaty on sex trafficking in January 2000, Gloria Steinem and the presidents of the National Organization for Women and Planned Parenthood sent a letter to President Clinton protesting the administration's refusal to define all types of prostitution as "sexual exploitation" and insistence that only forced prostitution be so designated. See Barbara Stolz, "Educating Policymakers and Setting the Criminal Justice Policymaking Agenda: Interest Groups and the 'Victims of Trafficking and Violence Act of 2000,'" *Criminal Justice* 5 (2005): 418.

18. Resolution 141, passed at annual NOW conference, 1973. The resolution called for the decriminalization of prostitution on the grounds that law enforcement was gender-biased, and that criminalization punished poor women who face limited job opportunities.

19. See, for example, Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for an Abolitionist Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in C. Vance, ed., *Pleasure and Danger* (Boston: Routledge, 1984); Rubin, "Misguided, Dangerous, and Wrong: An Analysis of Antipornography Politics," in A. Assiter and A. Carol, eds., *Bad Girls and Dirty Pictures* (London: Pluto, 1993); Nadine Strossen, *Defending Pornography* (New York: Anchor, 1995).

20. Melissa Ditmore, "Trafficking in Lives: How Ideology Shapes Policy," in K. Kempadoo, ed., *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2005).

21. Gretchen Soderlund, "Running from the Rescuers: New U.S. Crusades Against Sex Trafficking and the Rhetoric of Abolition," *NWSA Journal* 17 (2005): 64-87.

22. Elisabeth Bumiller, "Evangelicals Sway White House on Human Rights Issues Abroad," *New York Times* (October 26, 2003); Nina Shapiro, "The New Abolitionists," *Seattle Weekly* (August 25, 2004); Laura Blumenfeld, "In a Shift, Anti-Prostitution Effort Targets Pimps and Johns," *Washington Post* (December 15, 2005).

23. Ronald Weitzer, "Prostitutes' Rights in the United States: The Failure of a Movement," *Sociological Quarterly* 32 (1991): 23-41.

24. Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (New York: Putnam, 1981) and *Life and Death* (New York: Free Press, 1997); Catherine MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).

25. Lederer, quoted in Bob Jones, "Trafficking Cops," *World Magazine* (June 15, 2002).

26. CATW founder Kathleen Barry's book (*Female Sexual Slavery*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1979, 227, 230) advocates a view of sex quite similar to that of the religious right:

We are really going back to the values women have always attached to sexuality, values that have been robbed from us, distorted and destroyed as we have been colonized

through both sexual violence and so-called sexual liberation. They are the values and needs that connect sex with warmth, affection, love, caring. . . . Sexual values and the positive, constructive experience of sex *must be based in intimacy*. . . . Sexual intimacy precludes the proposition that sex is the right of anyone and asserts instead that it must be earned through trust and sharing. It follows then that *sex cannot be purchased, legally acquired, or seized by force*.

Although such traditional sexual values are rarely articulated by abolitionist feminists today, it is noteworthy that Kathleen Barry founded CATW, and that her book is the seminal text in the abolitionist literature.

27. Sherkat and Ellison, "The Cognitive Structure of a Moral Crusade."

28. Ron Sider, quoted in Shapiro, "New Abolitionists."

29. Timothy Morgan, "Sex Isn't Work," *Christianity Today* (December 29, 2006).

30. Glona Cowan, Cheryl Chase, and Geraldine Stahly, "Feminist and Fundamentalist Attitudes toward Pornography Control," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 13 (1989): 97-112.

31. Examples can be found in evangelical magazines such as *The World* and *Christianity Today*, the Web sites of organizations on the right such as the Salvation Army and Concerned Women for America, and in many other places. Conservative icons William Bennett and Charles Colson, for example, argue that "prostitution and pornography inevitably exploits women, whether they consent to it or not." William Bennett and Charles Colson, "The Clintons Shrug at Sex Trafficking," *Wall Street Journal* (January 10, 2000).

32. Vance, "Meese Commission."

33. Janice Raymond, "Prostitution on Demand: Legalizing the Buyers as Sexual Consumers," *Violence Against Women* 10 (2004): 1175.

34. Ronald Weitzer, "Flawed Theory and Method in Studies of Prostitution," *Violence Against Women* 11 (2005): 934-49.

35. Janice Raymond and Donna Hughes, *Sex Trafficking of Women in the United States*. Coalition against Trafficking in Women (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2001).

36. Weitzer, "Flawed Theory."

37. Cohen, *Folk Devils*; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*.

38. Horowitz, quoted in Blumenfeld, "In a Shift," A16.

39. Ronald Weitzer, "New Directions in Research on Prostitution," *Crime, Law, and Social Change* 43 (2005): 211-35.

40. Martin Monto, "Why Men Seek out Prostitutes," in R. Weitzer, ed., *Sex for Sale: Prostitution, Pornography, and the Sex Industry* (New York: Routledge, 2000), and "Female Prostitution, Customers, and Violence," *Violence Against Women* 10 (2004): 160-68.

41. Raymond and Hughes, *Sex Trafficking*, 25.

42. Weitzer, "Flawed Theory"; Weitzer, "New Directions"; Ine Vanwesenbeeck, "Another Decade of Social Scientific Work on Prostitution," *Annual Review of Sex Research* 12 (2001): 242-89.

43. For example, almost all of the 294 prostitutes interviewed in a Miami study preferred to be called working women or sex workers. Steven Kurtz, Hilary Surratt, James Inciardi, and Marion Kiley, "Sex Work and Date Violence," *Violence Against Women* 10 (2004): 357-85.

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48. Linda Meaker, "A Social Response to Transnational Prostitution in Queensland, Australia," in S. Thorbek and B. Pattanaik, eds., *Transnational Prostitution* (London: Zed, 2002), 61, 63.

49. Jo Doezeema, "Loose Women or Lost Women? The Re-emergence of the Myth of 'White Slavery' in Contemporary Discourses of 'Trafficking in Women,'" *Gender Issues* 18 (2000): 24.

50. Busza, Castle, and Diarra, "Trafficking and Health."

51. Steinfatt, *Measuring the Number*, 24.

52. Rubin, "Thinking Sex," 301.

53. Melissa Farley, "Bad for the Body, Bad for the Heart: Prostitution Harms Women Even if Legalized or Decriminalized," *Violence Against Women* 10 (2004): 1087-125; Dorchen Leidholdt, "Prostitution and Trafficking in Women: An Intimate Relationship," *Journal of Trauma Practice* 2 (2004): 167-83; Raymond, "Prostitution on Demand."

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57. Kamala Kempadoo, ed., *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2005).

58. Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 36-44.

59. Hotaling, quoted in Meredith May, "Sex Trafficking: San Francisco is a Major Center for International Crime Networks that Smuggle and Enslave," *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 6, 2006).

60. Editorial, "Putting the Sex Trade on Notice," *New York Times* (January 9, 2004).

61. Oprah, "Child Sex Slaves in America," American Broadcasting Company (November 2, 2005).

62. See <http://www.unescobkk.org/culture/trafficking>. UNESCO's Trafficking Statistics Project is an ongoing project attempting to assess the scale of the problem.

63. Liz Kelly, "You Can Find Anything You Want: A Critical Reflection on Research on Trafficking in Persons within and into Europe," *International Migration* 43 (2005): 237.

64. Guri Tyldum and Anette Brunovskis, "Describing the Unobserved: Methodological Challenges in Empirical Studies on Human Trafficking," *International Migration* 43 (2005): 17-34.

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66. General Accountability Office, *Human Trafficking: Better Data, Strategy, and Reporting Needed to Enhance U.S. Anti-trafficking Efforts Abroad* (Washington, DC: GAO, 2006), 2, 10.

67. GAO, *Human Trafficking*, 3, 14.
68. Gary Haugen, International Justice Mission, Testimony before Congressional Human Rights Caucus, U.S. House of Representatives (June 6, 2002); CATW: <http://www.catwinternational.org>.
69. Gozdziaik and Collett, "Research on Human Trafficking," 110.
70. Louise Shelley, "The Trade in People in and from the Former Soviet Union," *Crime, Law, and Social Change* 40 (2003): 231-49.
71. Janice Raymond, "Ten Reasons for Not Legalizing Prostitution and a Legal Response to the Demand for Prostitution," *Journal of Trauma Practice* 2 (2003): 322.
72. Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, *Coalition Report* (Amherst: CATW, 2004).
73. <http://www.catwinternational.org>.
74. Raymond, "Ten Reasons," 317, 329.
75. Linda Smith, Testimony before Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Hearing on the State Department's 2002 *Trafficking in Persons Report* (June 19, 2002), 66.
76. <http://www.cwfa.org>.
77. U. S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report, 2005* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2005). In Congressional testimony in October 2003, CATW's co-director called on the State Department to remove the Netherlands and Germany from the top, best-practice tier because they have legal prostitution (Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, *Coalition Report* (Amherst: CATW, 2003)).
78. Transcrime, *Study on National Legislation on Prostitution and the Trafficking in Women and Children*. Report to the European Parliament, 2005, 121. There has also been an overall decrease in prostitution establishments (brothels, window units) since legalization in 2000, arguably because of stricter regulation. See Rode Draad [Red Thread], *Rechten van Prostituees [Rights of Prostitutes]*, report funded by the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs (Amsterdam: Rode Draad, 2006).
79. Kamala Kempadoo, "Introduction: Globalizing Sex Workers' Rights," in K. Kempadoo and J. Doezema, eds., *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 17.
80. Alison Murray, "Debt Bondage and Trafficking," in K. Kempadoo and J. Doezema, eds., *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition* (New York: Routledge 1998), 60.
81. Barbara Brents and Kathryn Hausbeck, "Violence and Legalized Brothel Prostitution in Nevada," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 20 (2005): 289.
82. A. L. Dalder, *Lifting the Ban on Brothels* (The Hague: Ministry of Justice, 2004), 30.
83. Crime and Misconduct Commission, *Regulating Prostitution: An Evaluation of the Prostitution Act 1999, Queensland* (Brisbane, Australia: Crime and Misconduct Commission, 2004), 75, 89.
84. Similarly, the Meese Commission's 1986 report on pornography displayed what two experts called a "schizophrenic dissociation between the research findings and their interpretation by the commission." Hawkins and Zimring, *Pornography in a Free Society*, 99.
85. Ann Ferguson, "Sex War: The Debate between Radical and Libertarian Feminists," *Signs* 10 (1989): 106-12; Annette Jolin, "On the Backs of Working Prostitutes: Feminist Theory and Prostitution Policy," *Crime and Delinquency* 40 (1994): 69-83; Julia O'Connell Davidson, "Will the Real Sex Slave Please Stand Up?" *Feminist Review* 83 (2006): 4-22; Vanwesenbeeck, "Another Decade," Weitzer, "Flawed Theory," Weitzer, "New Directions."
86. William Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest* (Homewood, IL: Dorsey, 1975); Best, *Random Violence*; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 224-29.

87. John Miller, "A Modern Slave Trade," *New York Post* (May 22, 2005).
88. Miller, quoted in Bumiller, "Evangelicals Sway White House."
89. Ditmore, "Trafficking in Lives"; Shapiro, "New Abolitionists"; Penelope Saunders, "Traffic Violations," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 20 (2005): 343-60.
90. The following are some of the formal "coalition members" in the **Rescue and Restore Coalition: CATW, Protection Project, Evangelicals for Social Action, Family Research Council, SAGE, Sex Industry Survivors, Break the Chain Campaign, Religious Freedom Coalition, Focus on the Family, American Conservative Union, Culture of Life Foundation, Christian Medical Association, Concerned Women for America, Restoration Ministries International, and many other Christian organizations. See Attorney General, Report to Congress on U.S. Government Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Fiscal Year 2004** (Washington, DC: Department of Justice, 2005), **Appendix 2.**
91. Mayer Zald, "Ideologically Structured Action: An Enlarged Agenda for Social Movement Research," *Mobilization* 5 (2000): 1-16.
92. J. Robert Flores, "Blind to the Law," *Family Voice* (November 2000), magazine of Concerned Women for America.
93. Patrick Trueman, Testimony before the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Property Rights, United States Senate. Hearing on Obscenity Prosecution (March 16, 2005).
94. Shapiro, "New Abolitionists."
95. Ditmore, "Trafficking in Lives."
96. Thomas Edsall, "Grants Flow to Bush Allies on Social Issues," *Washington Post* (March 22, 2006); Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side: George W. Bush and the Christian Right* (New York: New Press, 2005), 214-18.
97. To cite just a few examples, in FY 2003 and FY 2004, CATW received \$482,000, SAGE \$200,000, the Protection Project \$492,000, Donna Hughes \$158,000, the Catholic Bishops Conference \$600,000, Shared Hope International \$500,000, World Vision \$500,000, and the International Rescue Committee \$2,666,000. See Attorney General, *Report to Congress on U.S. Government Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Fiscal Year 2003* (Washington, DC: Department of Justice, 2004); Attorney General, *Report, 2004*.
98. Raymond and Hughes, *Sex Trafficking of Women*; Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, *Coalition Report* (Amherst: CATW, 2001), 7.
99. GAO, *Human Trafficking*, 25.
100. The TVPA created a new federal crime of "severe trafficking" in persons, which could result in a prison term of twenty years.
101. Dorothy Stetson, "The Invisible Issue: Prostitution and Trafficking of Women and Girls in the United States," in J. Outshoorn, ed., *The Politics of Prostitution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
102. Stetson, "Invisible Issue." Similarly, at the international level in the mid-1990s, CATW and its allies were not particularly successful in gaining acceptance of their claims. At the 1995 Beijing Women's conference, for instance, CATW's proposals were successfully opposed by other feminist and sex worker's rights groups. CATW was somewhat more successful in influencing the 2000 United Nations' *Protocol on Trafficking*, which reflected a compromise between abolitionist feminists and sex work feminists (Sullivan, "Trafficking in Women").
103. The 2003 TVPA reauthorization contained new provisions for combating sex tourism by American citizens abroad, and new eligibility restrictions on organizations receiving government funding.
104. John Miller identified Donna Hughes, Laura Lederer, Michael Horowitz (of the Hudson Institute), Linda Smith (former Republican congresswoman), and Gary Haugen

(president of the International Justice Mission) as involved in drafting the TVPA. See John Miller, Testimony at Congressional Hearing on Trafficking in Women and Children in East Asia and Beyond. Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate (April 9, 2003). In the *Congressional Record*, Rep. Chris Smith noted the contributions to the drafting of the TVPA of Horowitz, Lederer, Haugen, Charles Colson, Gloria Steinem, the Protection Project, Family Research Council, Equality Now, and the National Association of Evangelicals, while Senator Sam Brownback acknowledged the help of Haugen, Lederer, Steinem, Horowitz, William Bennett, the Southern Baptist Convention, Equality Now, and the National Association of Evangelicals (Stolz, "Educating Policymakers").

105. George W. Bush, "Combating Trafficking in Persons," National Security Presidential Directive, no. 22 (December 16, 2002).

106. George W. Bush, "President Bush Addresses United Nations General Assembly," White House Press Release (September 23, 2003).

107. Richard Land, quoted in Bumiller, "Evangelicals Sway White House."

108. Miller, "Testimony."

109. Miller, quoted in P. Parameswaran, "Sex Worker Tag Giving Wrong Impression," *Agence France Presse* (December 16, 2006).

110. Amy O'Neill Richard, *International Trafficking of Women to the United States* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2000), 3.

111. U.S. Department of State, "The Link between Prostitution and Sex Trafficking," (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2004).

112. After the Cambodian Ministry of Planning's *Human Development Report, 2000*, reported that there were 80,000-100,000 *sex workers* in Cambodia, this figure was converted into the number of trafficked "sex slaves" by the Child Rights Foundation of Cambodia, and then by other NGOs and the media. Even the Cambodian government's estimate of the number of sex workers seems a gross exaggeration. In a report for USAID based on fieldwork in Cambodia, it was estimated that there were 18,256 sex workers in 2003, most of whom were neither underage nor trafficked. Steinfatt, *Measuring the Number*, 11.

113. The figures on the American situation contrast sharply with estimates of sex trafficking into Britain, where the range was reported to be between 142 and 1,420 annually. The authors of this report caution that "it is not currently possible with any level of accuracy" to estimate the number of women trafficked within Europe. See Liz Kelly and Linda Regan, *Stopping Traffic: Exploring the Extent of, and Responses to, Trafficking in Women for Sexual Exploitation in the UK*. Police Research Series paper 125 (London: Home Office, 2000), 22, 8. In 2003, police and immigration officers in London found 295 immigration offenders during their routine visits to massage parlors and saunas, only five of whom were identified as victims of trafficking (O'Connell Davidson, "Will the Real Sex Slave?").

114. U.S. Department of Justice, *Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Fiscal Year 2004* (Washington, DC: Department of Justice, 2005), 4. Between FY 2001 and FY 2004, the Justice Department prosecuted 131 persons for sex trafficking offenses, and obtained ninety-nine convictions. Though relatively low for a four-year period, the figures were almost five times higher than during the previous four years, a period prior to the TVPA. See Attorney General, *Report, 2004*, 20.

115. Blumenfeld, "In a Shift."

116. Best, *Threatened Children*.

117. Becker, *Outsiders*.

118. Soderlund, "Running from the Rescuers," 79.

119. National Institute of Justice, *Solicitation: Trafficking in Human Beings Research and Comprehensive Literature Review* (Washington, DC: Department of Justice, 2007), 4.

120. William Fisher, "USAID Sued Over Anti-Prostitution Policy," *Inter-Press Service News Agency* (August 23, 2005).
121. Hughes, "Wolves in Sheep's Clothing," 2.
122. TVPA 2000, Section 103[3]; TVPA 2005, Section 207[3].
123. The first john school was created in San Francisco in 1995 and was designed by Norma Hotaling of SAGE in association with city officials.
124. Hughes received \$108,478 from the State Department to write this report (Attorney General, *Report*, 2004).
125. Donna Hughes, "The Demand for Victims of Sex Trafficking." Unpublished report (University of Rhode Island, 2005), 22, 26.
126. Anthony Verdugo, quoted in Julie Kay, "U.S. Attorney's Porn Fight Gets Bad Reviews," *Daily Business Review* (August 30, 2005).
127. Hughes, "The Demand for Victims," 26.
128. Trueman, "Testimony."
129. U.S. Department of Justice, "Obscenity Prosecution Task Force Established to Investigate, Prosecute Purveyors of Obscene Materials." Press Release (Washington, DC: Department of Justice, May 5, 2005); Richard Schmitt, "U.S. Cracking Down on Porn," *Deseret News* (February 15, 2004).
130. Robert Gehrke, "Nation's Porn Prosecutor Fronts War against Obscenity," *Salt Lake Tribune* (February 26, 2007).
131. Schmitt, "U.S. Cracking Down on Porn."
132. Jan LaRue, "Porn Industry Moans for Good Reason," Concerned Women for America, <http://www.cwfa.org> (February 24, 2004).
133. Weitzer, "New Directions"; Vanwesenbeeck, "Another Decade."
134. Doezema, "Loose Women or Lost Women."
135. William McDonald, "Traffic Counts, Symbols, and Agendas: A Critique of the Campaign Against Trafficking of Human Beings," *International Review of Victimology* 11 (2004): 158.
136. Doezema, "Loose Women or Lost Women," 24.
137. This tendency was also pronounced 150 years ago in the American moral reform campaign: "Most important, images of fallen women in popular literature and moral reform journals channeled the debate on prostitution away from adverse social and economic structures toward cruel seducers and evil agents. . . . [Reformers] could not comprehend the idea that prostitution could be a rational choice for women faced with a field of limited opportunities and options in the labor and marriage markets." Barbara Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 75, 76.
138. Sullivan, "Trafficking in Women."
139. Weitzer, "New Directions."
140. Ronald Weitzer, "Prostitution Control in America: Rethinking Public Policy," *Crime, Law, and Social Change* 32 (1999): 83-102.

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