Perceptions of prostitution: What drives opposition?

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Abstract

Significant research on attitudes towards prostitution exists (Brents & Hausbeck, 2005; Chon, 2015; Jonsson & Jakobsson, 2017), but these studies fail to differentiate between prostitution with all the associated risks/hazards and prostitution with a consensual harm-reduced sex-for-money exchange. The current studies aim to differentiate between prostitution with those presumably negative risk associations and without to better assess perceptions of, and opposition to, prostitution. Study 1 sought to understand lay people's beliefs about prostitution. Online U.S. adults reported ten beliefs about prostitution. Responses were coded for common themes and a chi-square goodness of fit test was conducted to determine if theme proportions significantly differ from 1%. Results suggested that U.S. adults associate prostitution with desperation, STDs, physical abuse, immorality, illegality, drugs, trafficking, disgust, exploitation, sadness, cheating, and enslavement. Using the themes from Study 1, Study 2 examined whether opposition to prostitution stems from opposition to sex for money or from opposition to the negative factors presumed to co-occur with prostitution. U.S. adults were presented with two sex-for-money scenarios. One scenario included negative factors presumably co-occurring with prostitution (negative factors condition); the other scenario mitigated the negative factors (neutralized condition). Participants indicated and rated their opposition to each scenario, and their reasoning for their oppositional stance. Results revealed there was less opposition to sex-for-money exchanges in the neutralized condition relative to the negative factors condition. These studies identified common perceptions of prostitution in the U.S., as well as determined that opposition to prostitution is primarily due to the negative contextual factors presumed to co-occur with prostitution, but 33% of U.S. adults are still opposed to the act of exchanging money for sex for a variety of reasons.

Introduction

Prostitution is currently illegal in almost all fifty states in the United States, but it has a long and expansive history and public opinion has slightly varied through the years (Ditmore, 2011). In 1978, Carol Leigh, an American artist and activist, coined the term "sex work" in order to emphasize the labor aspect of the profession, and this term has gained currency in recent decades suggesting an effort to minimize the traditional moral and legal connotations (Ditmore, 2011).

Definitions

Before diving deep into the literature on perceptions of prostitution, it is essential to define key terminology that will frequently appear throughout this paper. The legal definition of *prostitution* differs from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, but in general it refers to the "exchange of sexual services for goods or money" (Ditmore, 2011 p.xix). The term *sex worker* is more commonly used in contemporary times to refer to prostitutes, but sex work also includes stripping, pornography, and other occupations within the sex industry. Due to the expansive definition of sex worker, this paper will refer to those exchanging sex-for-money as prostitutes.

Additionally, it is important to understand the difference between prohibition, legalization and decriminalization, as well as the different types of decriminalization. Prohibition of prostitution refers to the criminalization of nearly all, if not all, aspects of prostitution (Ditmore, 2011). Prohibition and criminalization of prostitution activate the criminal justice system through arrest, fines, and other punishments for engaging in, or intent to engage in, acts of prostitution. On the opposite end of the spectrum, legalization means that to engage in prostitution is permissible by law. However, legalization is often accompanied by government regulations (Ditmore, 2011). For example, Nevada stipulates mandatory STD checks that the

prostitutes must pay for but does not mandate client testing (Ditmore, 2011). Due to these prostitute-centered regulations, many prostitutes advocate for the decriminalization, rather than the legalization, of sex work (Ditmore, 2011). Decriminalization means that prostitution is not addressed by the criminal code and not subject to additional regulations beyond regular labor and business laws (Ditmore, 2011). Three types of decriminalization exist: (1) full decriminalization, (2) partial decriminalization and (3) de facto decriminalization. Full decriminalization is the type of decriminalization previously explained: prostitution is neither governed by criminal law nor regulated. Partial decriminalization is when the penalties for a crime are reduced, but not entirely eliminated. De facto decriminalization means that prostitution would still be in the criminal code, but the laws surrounding it would not be enforced (Weitzer, 2013). De facto decriminalization might be better understood when comparing state versus federal legalization. Marijuana, for example, can be legalized at the state level but still remain criminal at the federal level. Although marijuana use is federally illegal and in the criminal code, federal law enforcement is advised not enforce the law in states where the practice is legalized.

Regarding my study, I will be using the term sex-for-money exchanges frequently. Sex-for-money exchanges simply refers to exchanging sexual favors for money in return. Additionally, these sex-for-money exchanges are going to either include or neutralize specific negative external factors. These negative external factors are the risks and harms typically associated with prostitution, like exploitation, risk of STDs, enslavement, sex trafficking, and more. The neutralized sex-for-money exchange means that these negative external factors (safety risks) are not a part of that particular exchange.

Different types of prostitution

Not only are there different forms of decriminalization and approaches to the legal status of prostitution, but there are also different types of prostitution. Typically, prostitution is referred to as a single entity, when in reality there are vast differences among the various types of prostitution (Weitzer, 2013). More distinctly, there are significant differences between street prostitution and indoor prostitution, yet most legislation does not differentiate between the two. Indoor prostitution elicits clients that are seeking rapport, trust, and intimacy with sex workers, whereas street prostitution is more impersonal. In street prostitution encounters, conversation is often minimal (proceed to sex quickly), it occurs in cramped or unideal settings, and there's stress of being caught by the police which influences the interaction to be brief (Weitzer, 2013). Additionally, street prostitution is accompanied by more issues than indoor prostitution. Ecologically, the presence and soliciting of prostitutes on the street negatively affects the community's quality of life and property values. Beyond that, street prostitution contributes to public health dangers, sexual exposure to community members and children, and is accompanied by collateral crimes such as drug use, sales, assault, and rape (Weitzer, 2013), whereas indoor prostitution greatly reduces these risks. Potential benefits of indoor prostitution are that it is less accessible and thus less vulnerable to predators that typically engage in street prostitution, clients have more thorough screenings, there is staff to intervene, the workers are shielded from the elements, and ecologically quality of life and status will not be as affected due to increased discreetness (Weitzer, 2013). Although legislation typically targets both indoor and street prostitution as the same entity, there are benefits to legally treating them as separate entities, as well as researching prostitution in multiple different divisions.

Review of the Literature

Research on prostitution focuses on perceptions held by a variety of different populations, as well as finding correlational relationships between attitudes towards prostitution and other variables. Additionally, safety risks and hazards associated with sex work have been examined across different countries, legal statuses of prostitution, interactions between different populations and sex workers, and more.

Sex Workers' Perceptions of Prostitution

Although prostitution remains a topic of extreme controversy even in today's society, sex workers and prostitutes themselves are usually left out of the conversation despite being the population this conversation directly affects. Some researchers try to combat this issue by conducting studies examining sex workers' perceptions of prostitution and approaches they suggest. O'Doherty conducted interviews with ten women who worked as off-street sex workers in the Canadian sex industry in order to examine the effects of criminalization of prostitution on them (O'Doherty, 2011). The women reported that the criminalization of prostitution affects them in terms of health and safety; they are ostracized, not given the same protective services from police, receive misinformation about their rights, have to fear social, legal, and personal consequences for working in the trade, have difficulty managing the risks during work, and are negatively affected by the stress and isolation associated with criminalized sex work (O'Doherty, 2011).

In contrast to this, sex workers have a much higher perception of safety and lower perception of risk in Nevada, a state in which prostitution is legal (Brents & Hausbeck, 2005). Researchers argue that the legalization of prostitution has led to a decrease in interpersonal violence to prostitutes, violence to the community, and violence through the spreading of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) due to the safety procedures implemented by brothel

owners. These safety precautions include panic buttons, audio monitoring, preventative practices, limiting of moving prostitutes, weekly STD checks, and more safeguards (Brents & Hausbeck, 2005) that are typically unavailable to sex workers in places where prostitution is criminalized. Whereas the women in O'Doherty's study reported concerns regarding their health and safety (2011), 21 out of 25 women in the Nevada study reported that their jobs were safe (Brents & Hausbeck, 2005), ultimately suggesting that sex workers feel safer in locations where prostitution is legal rather than illegal.

Sex Worker Client Behaviors

Prostitution literature is heavily focused on the women working in the trade; less is dedicated to the men who purchase sex from sex workers. Milrod and Monto (2017) examined the physical health, sexual behaviors, and non-sexual behaviors of sex workers' male clients, age 60 to 84 years. Results indicated that more than half of the participants reported visiting sex workers thirteen to twenty-four or more times in the past twelve months (Milrod & Monto, 2017), suggesting that the demand for sex work is high. A positive correlational relationship exists between age and the seeking out of sex workers, meaning that as men seeking sexual services increase in age, the more likely they are to more frequently visit sex workers. Additionally, those who did not have a significant other and who had a higher income were more likely to go to sex workers for the "girlfriend experience"; sex is still involved, but has a higher focus on imitating a conventional relationship (Milrod & Monto, 2017), suggesting that there is more appeal to visiting a prostitute than purely sexual encounters. This finding is significant because prostitution prohibition activists portray male clients of sex workers as villainous and predatory (Weitzer, 2013) when in reality there is counterevidence to this claim, such as the previously described study which assesses over 200 U.S. adult men actively registered on sex

worker forums and websites (Milrod & Monto, 2017). In contrast to the anti-prostitution

portrayal of male clientele, Weitzer reports that clients seek out prostitutes for a variety of

different reasons other than to satisfy "animalistic" needs. Rather, some clients enjoy visiting sex

workers to form a romantic and emotional connection along with sex, or as a replacement for sex

altogether (Weitzer, 2013), supporting the "girlfriend experience" mentioned in Milrod &

Monto's study (2017). Additionally, there is no evidence to suggest that a significant amount of

male clientele assault sex workers (Weitzer, 2013), which is another common misconception

about male clientele. Some scholars argue that male clientele are the missing puzzle piece in the

conversation about prostitution (Ditmore, 2011) because their inaccurate representation as

violent and predatory results in contempt of clients and the sex industry as whole, contributing to

the negative stigma around prostitution. More research on male clientele behaviors and

intentions could help to provide more insight into what kinds of men seek sex work.

Another study that analyzed client behaviors is one in which researchers examined the

correlation between abusive police-sex worker interactions and violent client-worker interactions

in Baltimore City, Maryland, where prostitution is illegal (Footer, Park, Allen, Decker,

Silberzahn, Huettner, Galai, & Sherman, 2019). The study staff went to fifteen prostitution zones

and recruited participants to conduct in-person computer-assisted interviews. Results revealed

that 78% of the female sex workers experience life-long abusive interactions with the police,

41% experienced daily or weekly police encounters in general, and 22% reported experiencing

violent interactions with clients in the past three months. Heroin users, who made up about 70%

of participants, reported more violent client and police interactions than non-heroin users (Footer

et al., 2019). Overall, this study suggests that abusive police-interactions and violent client

behaviors tend to occur in the same type of environment. These findings emphasize the need to

treat different types of prostitution as separate entities, rather than use the term prostitution as an all-encompassing term due to the violence experienced by prostitutes in this study in contrast to the experiences reported by Milrod and Monto (2017). Weitzer argues for a two-track policy encouraging political officials to treat street prostitution and indoor prostitution as uniquely different practices. He emphasizes the importance of treating exploitation, job satisfaction, victimization, and other factors as variables rather than constants (2013), recognizing the variation of these between the multiple types of prostitution. Street prostitution is accompanied by the use of drugs, risks of high crime areas, increased risk of perpetrated violence, and lack of access to resources, whereas indoor prostitution allows sex workers to be less vulnerable to street violence and harsh weather while offering staff interventions and screening processes (Weitzer, 2013). Additionally, different types of prostitution elicit demand from different types of customers, especially in regard to indoor versus street prostitution, but ultimately more research is needed to further explore this topic.

Perceptions of Prostitution

Researchers have examined perceptions of prostitution from a variety of different populations (citations). Many studies utilize the Attitudes Towards Prostitution Scale (ATPS; Sawyer & Metz, 2009) to measure perceptions. The ATPS divides items into categories and respondents are asked to report their level of agreement with the statements. The categories are: (1) social/legal support of prostitution (e.g. "Prostitution should be legalized"), (2) beliefs about prostitutes (e.g. "Prostitutes enjoy their work"), and (3) family values related to prostitutes (e.g. "It would be okay if my daughter grew up to be a prostitute"). The ATPS has good factor validity, content validity, face validity, and good item reliability (Sawyer & Metz, 2009), suggesting it to be a good measure of perceptions of prostitution.

Long, Mollen and Smith (2012) used the ATPS to measure perceptions of prostitution among college women in the southern U.S. They defined sex worker as any individual who exchanges sexual intercourse for money or material goods (2012). Additionally, the researchers also measured social desirability and hostility towards women. This research suggests that those who knew a sex worker held less stereotypical ideas about prostitution than those who did not know a sex worker. Participants who knew a sex worker, in contrast to those who did not, were less likely to agree that prostitutes were responsible for STI transmissions, were unattractive, and that laws prohibiting prostitution contribute to a decrease in other crimes. College women who had high social desirability ("need for social approval") and who held more hostile attitudes towards women also held stereotypical views about prostitution more so than those who had low social desirability and less hostility towards women (Long, Mollen, & Smith, 2012).

Perceptions of prostitution can be examined across many populations and compared across many different variables. Jonsson and Jakobson (2017) examined attitudes towards prostitution across eight Western European countries including France, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. This variety of countries allowed researchers to measure views on gender equality and moral attitudes towards prostitution in places where prostitution is legal as well as in places where it is illegal (Jonsson & Jakobson, 2017). Citizens in countries where prostitution is legal tend to be more accepting towards prostitution in comparison to citizens in countries were prostitution is illegal (Jonsson & Jakobson, 2017). This suggests that either the legal status of prostitution influences the acceptance of prostitution, or that citizens of the country where it was legalized were always accepting of prostitution. Additionally, views on gender equality differ in countries where purchasing sex and running brothels are legal as well as in places where doing so is illegal.

Citizens who view gender equality as important in countries where buying sex is legal view prostitution favorably, whereas citizens who view gender equality as important in countries where buying sex is illegal have less favorable views about prostitution (Jonsson & Jakobson, 2017). This suggests that legal status of prostitution influences whether people view prostitution as a step towards or away from gender equality.

Although these studies measure perceptions of prostitution and contribute to the psychological research in the field of study, there are gaps missing in the literature. First, the measures in these studies used predetermined items to assess attitudes and perceptions of prostitution. This approach could guide participant responses and only measures perceptions in regard to researcher-generated topics, whereas the current study (Study 1) took a qualitative approach, which allowed participants to self-generate their own thoughts about prostitution, providing more insight into actual participant beliefs about prostitution. Additionally, previous research fails to differentiate between the specific circumstances of prostitution, and whether or not external negative factors shaped the exchange. This hinders our ability to accurately understand perceptions of prostitution because participant's perceptions are influenced by their pre-conceived notions. For instance, one participant might associate prostitution with physical violence, whereas another participant might not believe prostitution involves violence, thus collecting perceptions on very different variables. My second study address this issue by using an experimental approach which systematically varies the two sex-for-money exchange scenarios and therefore controls for those previously mentioned confounds. This allowed us to more accurately examine the level of opposition among two sex-for-money exchange scenarios in both a qualitative and quantitative angle in an attempt to further analyze the driving factors of opposition.

My research collects self-generated associations with prostitution from U.S. adults, which provides more insights into actual participant beliefs and allowed us to generate a proportion of people who hold specific beliefs about prostitution. Beyond that, my study measures opposition to two different sex-for-money exchange scenarios, one with negative external factors and one without those factors. As a result, I am able to examine whether opposition to prostitution is driven by negative external factors (such as sex trafficking, lack of protection, etc.) that are presumed to co-occur with prostitution or if the act of solely exchanging sex for money is the predominant driving factor for opposition. Not only does this approach uniquely contribute to the psychological research on perceptions of prostitution, but the results of this research can benefit other disciplines as well. Understanding the key factors in opposition to prostitution has implications within the political and criminal justice spheres. If opposition to prostitution is driven by the external negative factors associated with the profession, then the path to legalization or decriminalization could be assisted through specifically targeting and minimizing those concerns. For example, if the general public is concerned that females only engage in sex work due to economic desperation and that circumstance is the driving factor to opposition, then broad solutions that reduce the need for women to engage in prostitution due to financial hardship, such as providing women with access to job training, living wages, and child care, could increase support for the legalization or decriminalization of prostitution. In other words, if legislation is passed ensuring women have access to economic resources and thus are not entering prostitution due to financial hardship, then the general public should be less likely to oppose prostitution. However, if opposition to prostitution is primarily driven by the solitary act of exchanging sex for money, then those in favor of decriminalization or legalization are targeting a moral ideology, rather than specific risks or hazards associated with the work.

Study 1: Perceptions of prostitution: A qualitative study

The goals of this study are to identify U.S. adult associations of prostitution. A qualitative approach was used for this study to allow participants to self-generate their thoughts about prostitution, rather than rating their agreement with researcher generated items. We hypothesized that common associations would be negative and include themes such as pimps, sex trafficking, spread of disease, etc.

Method

Participants & sampling. Using convenience sampling, we recruited 152 U. S. participants using Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Participants included 61% male, 38% female, and 1% other. Mean age was 35, $SD = 10.54$, ranging from 21 to 70. Participants were from various ethnic backgrounds (70% White/European American, 11% Black/African American, 9% Hispanic/Latinx, 3% Asian/Asian American, 3% Other, 4% Unreported). Participants socioeconomic standing ranged from lower class to upper middle class, with the median number of participants falling in the middle class. Participant level of education ranged from a high school diploma or GED to holding a graduate or professional degree, with the median number of participants holding a bachelor's degree as their highest education. In regard to sexual orientation, 84% identified as heterosexual, 14% as bisexual, 1% a gay or lesbian,1% as other, and 1% unreported.

Design & procedure. We chose a qualitative study design and administered an online survey through Qualtrics on MTurk. Participants completed a series of demographic information, were then asked to report up to ten thoughts about prostitution. After completion, they were thanked, debriefed, and paid $1 for participation.

Measures: Perceptions of prostitution. Participants were asked to write down up to ten things they thought of when they thought of prostitution. Allowing for up to ten thoughts per participant rather than just one provides a more rounded understanding of their associations. They were instructed that each unique thought should be its own line and that full sentences were not necessary. Additionally, they were informed that they were not required to fill all ten lines but were prompted to provide as many thoughts as possible.

Coding. I reviewed the responses and identified common or interesting themes. Operational definitions of the themes were created (see Appendix C). Fourteen themes were generated including desperation, STDs, physical abuse, immoral, illegal, drugs, trafficking, disgust, exploitation, sadness, cheating, enslavement, pregnancy, sexual abuse.

After developing the themes, each individual response was coded for the presence (1 = presence, 0 = absence) of each of these themes. Once the responses were coded, variables were aggregated across their 10 responses so that they had code of present or absent for each theme. For example, instead of looking for the average of how many responses included sadness, we created the variable SadANY, which allowed us to compute how many participants had anything to say about sadness in any of their reported thoughts.

Results

A chi-square goodness of fit test ran for each theme to determine whether the proportion of people generating each theme significantly differed from .01; the null hypothesis would articulate that the proportion of people generating each theme = .00, i.e., that a particular belief does not exist, however we substituted the null hypothesis proportion of .01 for .00 because SPSS cannot test against a proportion of .00. The results are summarized in Table 1. All proportions, with the exception of the proportions of themes of pregnancy ($p = .29$) and sexual

abuse ($p = .29$), significantly differed from .01. The most commonly reported themes were

desperation (42%), STDs (38%), and physical abuse (35%). Nearly all participants reported at

least one of the listed themes in their responses (90%).

Table 1

Percent of Participants Mentioning each Theme Study 1 and Whether that Percent Significantly

Differed from 1%

Theme	Percent of Participant Responses	Chi-Square Goodness of Fit
Any Theme	90%	$\chi^2 (1, n = 152) = 12197.52, p < .001$
Desperation	42%	$\chi^2 (1, n = 152) = 2594.20, p < .001$
STDs	38%	$\chi^2 (1, n = 152) = 2045.48, p < .001$
Physical Abuse	35%	$\chi^2 (1, n = 152) = 1761.16, p < .001$
Immoral	26%	$\chi^2 (1, n = 152) = 933.51, p < .001$
Illegal	26%	$\chi^2 (1, n = 152) = 983.99, p < .001$
Drugs	24%	$\chi^2 (1, n = 152) = 790.05, p < .001$
Trafficking	20%	$\chi^2 (1, n = 152) = 539.02, p < .001$
Disgust	18%	$\chi^2 (1, n = 152) = 465.97, p < .001$
Exploitation	17%	$\chi^2 (1, n = 152) = 398.24, p < .001$
Sad	15%	$\chi^2 (1, n = 152) = 278.73, p < .001$
Cheating	9%	$\chi^2 (1, n = 152) = 103.50, p < .001$
Enslavement	8%	$\chi^2 (1, n = 152) = 72.99, p < .001$
Pregnancy	2%	$\chi^2 (1, n = 152) = 1.46, p = .23$
Sexual Abuse	2%	$\chi^2 (1, n = 152) = 1.46, p = .23$

Discussion

This study suggests that the majority of people in the United States hold negative perceptions about prostitution. Beyond this, having participants self-generate their own perceptions has led to the discovery of *specific* negative perceptions about prostitution rather than simply knowing that the perceptions are broadly negative. Most people associate sadness, disgust, immorality, illegality, drugs, STDs, physical abuse, trafficking, enslavement, desperation, exploitation, and cheating with prostitution. However, results indicated that pregnancy and sexual abuse is not a common association with prostitution.

Although all of these themes are negatively-connotated, each one vastly differs in meaning. For example, sadness and disgust are both negative associations of prostitution, but one implies empathy towards sex workers or their situations and the other implies repulsion towards them. Additionally, only sadness, disgust, and immorality explicitly state a *feeling* as an association; the rest of the themes are logic-based. For example, the theme of legality is logic-based rather than emotion-based. The findings show that a significant number of people associate prostitution with its illegal status, which raises the question of whether or not legal status would be as significant of a perception in countries where prostitution was predominantly legal. Another common association that people in the United States have is that of drug usage. This suggests that the general public believes that the majority of sex-for-money exchanges are either participated in to receive money for drugs, or that drugs were involved in or taken within the exchange itself. The highest association with prostitution was that of sexually transmitted diseases, meaning that the general public believes that engaging in sexual activity with a sex worker increases chances of obtaining an STD, assumingly due to the number of clientele the workers also engage in sexual activity with. This association is based in the logical reasoning

that the more people you sleep with, the more likely you are to obtain and pass on an STD, especially if unsafe sex practices are assumed to not be utilized. However, it would be interesting to see if this association holds constant in places where having sex-for-money is legal and regulated, such as in places where workers are frequently mandated to undergo STD testing.

Physical abuse, trafficking, exploitation, and enslavement are all themes have to do with the safety and well-being of the sex worker. The general public identifies prostitution with assumed harm, which is a potential factor explaining why it remains illegal in the majority of the United States. Additionally, the theme of desperation implies that going into prostitution was not an entirely autonomous decision even if they are not physically forced into the trade. To elaborate, lay people believe that women entering prostitution do so because of experiencing forced choice. This concept of a forced choice in terms of prostitution looks as follows: they either live in poverty and risk being homeless or have sex with strangers for money. From the perspective of the public, women are forced to engage in prostitution because the alternatives are so detrimental that no reasonable persons could choose them. However, not every theme revolved around the well-being of the prostitutes. Although not as common as some other themes, cheating was a significant association made with prostitution. Concern that spouses are going to cheat on them with a prostitute could contribute to the negative stigma surrounding prostitution. If the option to hire a sex worker is unavailable because it is illegal, then it becomes less of a concern to people in committed monogamous relationships.

Study 2: Perceptions of prostitution: What drives opposition?

The goals of this study were to determine if U.S. adults are opposed to prostitution due to negative external factors associated with the exchange or the sole act of exchanging sex for money. A combined qualitative and quantitative approach was used for this study to measure the

same constructs from multiple different angles to provide a more thorough understanding of the

results. We hypothesized that opposition to prostitution would be greater in the condition

depicting the sex-for-money exchange including all of the negative factors.

Method

      Participants & sampling. Using convenience sampling, we recruited 231 participants

throughout the United States using Amazon Mechanical Turk. Participants included 60% male

and 40% female. Ages ranged from 21 to 68 ($M = 36.38$, $SD = 10.08$). Participants were from

various ethnic backgrounds (71%% White/European American, 18% Black/African American,

3% Hispanic/Latinx, 2% Asian/Asian American, 2% Other, and 4% Unreported). Participants

socioeconomic standing ranged from lower class to upper class, with the median number of

participants falling in the middle class. Participant level of education ranged from less than a

high school education to holding a graduate or professional degree, with the median number of

participants holding a bachelor's degree as their highest education. In regard to sexual

orientation, 79% identified as heterosexual, 18% as bisexual, 3% a gay or lesbian, and less than

1% as other.

      Design & procedure. We administered an online within-subjects experimental design to

participants from MTurk. First, participants answered a series of demographic questions.

Participants were then randomly presented with either a sex-for-money exchange scenario in

which the common negative external factors assumed to co-occur with prostitution (derived from

Study 1) were present or a scenario in which those assumptions were neutralized (see Appendix

E). After reading each scenario, participants reported whether or not they were opposed to the

scenario and then reported up to ten reason why they opposed or did not oppose the scenario.

Participants were then asked to rate their agreement with items assessing their belief of the

presence or absence of each of the negative external factors within the scenario as well as rate

their agreement with items measuring their support or opposition to the specific sex-for-money

exchange. They then repeated this for the other scenario.

Experimental manipulation. Participants were presented with two sex for money

scenarios; one in which negative external factors commonly assumed to co-occur with

prostitution are included in the scenario and one in which those assumptions are neutralized. All

other content will be identical. The order of the scenario presentation will be randomized.

Scenario with negative factors. In condition with negative factors included, we took the

themes generated in Study 1 and created a sex-for-money scenario with those themes present.

The themes used included cheating, illegal status, trafficking, enslavement, exploitation,

desperation, drug and alcohol use, physical abuse, STD risk, and condom misuse (see Appendix

E). Using themes fully generated by lay people increases the validity of this condition.

Scenario with neutralized assumptions. In the condition with the negative factors

neutralized, we attempted to mitigate all the negative factors typically presumed to be present in

prostitution situations. For example, we neutralized the theme of "sex trafficking" by explicitly

stating that the woman in the exchange was not being sex trafficked.

Measures. *Scenario opposition.* Participants were asked to report whether or not they are

opposed to the presented scenario by selecting either "Yes" or "No".

Reasons for opposition. Participants were asked report up to ten reasons why they

opposed or did not oppose each respective scenario.

Coding. I reviewed the responses and identified common themes. Operational

definitions of the themes were created (see Appendix F). Nineteen themes were generated

including desperation, STDs, physical abuse, immoral, illegal, drugs, trafficking, disgust,

exploitation, sadness, cheating, enslavement, pregnancy, sexual abuse, demeaning,

emotional damage, safety concern, relationship problems, and condom misuse. After

developing the themes, each individual response was coded for the presence (1 =

presence, 0 = absence) of each of these themes. Once the responses were coded, variables

were aggregated across their 10 responses so that they had code of present or absent for

each theme. For example, instead of looking for the average of how many responses

included sadness, we created the variable SadANY, which allowed us to compute how

many participants had anything to say about sadness in any of their reported thoughts.

Negative beliefs about each scenario. Participants were asked to rate their level of

agreement (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither agree nor

disagree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree) with items measuring the presence

or absence of each theme in each respective scenario (see Appendix E). These themes included

cheating, illegal status, sex trafficking, enslavement, exploitation, desperation, drugs, physical

abuse, STDs, and condom use. To measure the absence or presence of cheating, participants

rated their agreement on the following items: 1) at least one of the parties probably has a

significant other, 2). at least one of the parties is probably cheating on their significant other, and

3). at least one of the parties probably has a significant other who does not know about this

exchange. To measure the absence or presence of illegality, participants rated their agreement on

the following items: 1). this exchange is probably a crime, 2). this exchange is probably legal,

and 3). this exchange is probably illegal. To measure the absence or presence of sex trafficking,

participants rated agreement on the following items: 1). the woman is probably not involved in

sex trafficking, 2). the woman is probably being sex trafficked, and 3). The woman is probably

not being sex trafficked. To measure the absence or presence of enslavement, participants rated

agreement on the following items: 1). the woman is probably participating out of her own free

will, 2). the woman is probably being forced to participate, and 3). the woman probably

independently decided that she wanted to participate. To measure the absence or presence of

exploitation, participants rated agreement on the following items: 1). the woman probably gets

to take home all of the money she earns, 2). third party probably gets to take home some of the

profits the woman earns in the exchange, and 3). the woman probably has to give some of her

earnings to someone else. To measure the absence or presence of desperation, participants rated

agreement on the following items: 1). the woman probably has difficulty affording basic

necessities, such as food and shelter, 2). the woman probably has enough money to pay her bills

without concern, and 3). the woman is probably doing this because she needs the money. To

measure the absence or presence of drug use, participants rated agreement on the following

items: 1). the woman probably struggles with substance abuse, 2). the woman was probably

under the influence of drugs or alcohol during the exchange, 3). the woman probably has a drug

or alcohol addiction, and 4). the woman probably does not have a drug or alcohol addiction. To

measure the absence or presence of physical abuse, participants rated agreement on the following

items: 1). the woman probably experienced physical aggression during the exchange, 2). the

woman probably experienced physical abuse during the exchange, and 3). the woman probably

did not experience violence during the exchange. To measure the absence or presence of STD

risk, participants rated agreement on the following items: 1). both parties are probably at risk of

contracting sexually transmitted diseases during the interaction, 2). both parties are probably at

risk of contracting HIV/AIDS during the interaction, and 3). both parties are probably at risk for

contracting other diseases during the interaction. To measure the absence or presence of condom

use, participants rated agreement on the following items: 1). the man probably used a condom

during the sexual interaction, including oral and penetrative sex, 2). the man probably used a condom for the entirety of the sexual interaction, including oral and penetrative sex, and 3). the man probably did not use a condom during the sexual interaction. Using multiple items to measure the same construct allows for better study validity.

The internal consistency of items measuring participant belief the absence or presence of negative external factors in the two conditions were assessed using reliability analyses. Internal consistency for the items measuring belief of the presence or absence of having a significant other in both the neutralized condition and the negative factors condition were highly reliable (α = .93, .85). Internal consistency for the items measuring belief of the illegality of the exchange in both the neutralized condition and the negative factors condition were highly reliable (α = .82, .77). Internal consistency for the items measuring belief of the presence or absence sex trafficking in both the neutralized condition and the negative factors condition were fairly reliable (α = .66, .69). Internal consistency for the items measuring belief of the presence or absence of enslavement in both the neutralized condition and the negative factors condition were highly reliable (α = .73, .79). Internal consistency for the items measuring belief of the presence or absence of exploitation in both the neutralized condition and the negative factors condition were highly reliable (α = .80, .71). Internal consistency for the items measuring belief of the presence or absence of desperation in both the neutralized condition were fair (α = .69) but reliability for the negative factors condition were poor (α = .47). We made the decision to eliminate two out of three items measuring desperation because they were not clear as to whether we were asking if the woman in the exchange was desperate before participating in any sex-for-money exchanges or if she became desperate due to participating in the sex-for-money exchanges, thus not appropriately measuring what we were intending. Due to this change, a

dependent samples t-test was ran to make sure the responses significantly differed between the neutralized (*M* = 4.25, *SD* =1.92) and the negative factors (*M* = 5.04, *SD* = 1.97) conditions; t(194) = -3.96, *p* < .001 *d* = -.28. Internal consistency for the items measuring belief of the presence or absence of drug use in both the neutralized condition and the negative factors condition were highly reliable (*α* = .86, .77). Internal consistency for the items measuring belief of the presence or absence of physical abuse in both the neutralized condition and the negative factors condition were highly reliable (*α* = .81, .78). Internal consistency for the items measuring belief of the presence or absence of STD risk in both the neutralized condition and the negative factors condition were highly reliable (*α* = .90, .84). Internal consistency for the items measuring belief of the presence or absence of condom use in both the neutralized condition and the negative factors condition were highly reliable (*α* = .78, .84).

Opposition extent to scenario. Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree) on items measuring their support of, and opposition to, each respective scenario: I "support/oppose/approve of/disapprove of" the above scenario. Internal consistency for the items measuring opposition extent in both the negative factors condition and neutralized factors condition were highly reliable (*α* = .84, .89).

Results

Did the manipulation of the presence of negative factors influence opposition to the sex-for-exchange situation? We tested this in two ways: comparing the proportion of people opposed to the sex-for-money scenario in each condition using a chi-square test and comparing the extent of opposition to the sex-for-money scenario in each condition using a dependent samples *t*-test.

To test this, we compared the proportion of people opposed to the sex-for-money exchange in the negative scenario to the proportion of people opposed to the sex for money exchange in the neutralized scenario using the McNemar chi-square test. Results showed that the proportion of adults opposed to the sex-for-money exchange scenario significantly differed between the two scenarios, $\chi^2(1, n = 196) = 104.96$, $p < .001$. A greater proportion of adults were opposed to the sex-for-money scenario with the negative factors included (91%) than the proportion of adults opposed to the neutralized condition (32%).

To assess extent of opposition to each scenario between the two conditions we used a dependent samples t-test. Results revealed participant opposition significantly differed between the negative factors ($M = 5.93$, $SD = 1.36$) condition and factors neutralized ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 1.70$) condition; $t(199) = -17.02$, $p < .001$ $d = -1.20$.

Did the manipulation of the presence of negative factors influence the beliefs about factors in prostitution? To test this, we conducted a series of dependent samples t-tests on each belief set between the two conditions to determine whether participants believed the extent to which the negative external factors occurred in the negative factors condition more so than in the neutralized condition. The results are summarized in Table 2. Relative to the negative factors condition, participants were less likely to believe, in the neutralized condition, that cheating occurred, the exchange was illegal, sex trafficking was involved, the woman was exploited, the woman was desperate, one or more parties were on or addicted to drugs, physical abuse occurred, STDs were spread, and condoms were misused.

As a second examination of whether the presence of negative factors changed beliefs about elements in prostitution, we also compared the proportion of people generating each theme between the negative factors condition and the neutralized condition using McNemar's chi-

square test. The results are summarized in Table 3. A greater proportion of people in the negative

factors condition, relative to the neutralized condition, generated themes about desperation,

trafficking, exploitation, enslavement, condom misuse, STDs, physical abuse, immoral, illegal,

drugs, cheating, sexual abuse, sadness, and safety concern. However, themes of pregnancy,

emotional damage, lack of romance, disgust, demeaning, and relationship problems did not

significantly differ between each condition.

Table 2

Participants' Beliefs about the Scenario Between Conditions

	Neutralized Condition		Negative Factors Condition		
Belief	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t*-statistic
Cheating	2.94	1.91	5.86	1.30	$t(199) = -14.78, p < .001, d = -1.05$
Illegal	2.62	1.69	5.80	1.39	$t(199) = -16.15, p < .001, d = -1.14$
Sex Traffic	2.41	1.42	5.34	1.52	$t(199) = -15.54, p < .001, d = -1.10$
Enslavement	2.32	1.35	5.42	1.52	$t(199) = -16.77, p < .001, d = -1.19$
Exploitation	2.59	1.60	5.75	1.32	$t(199) = -16.67, p < .001, d = -1.18$
Desperation	3.31	1.47	5.34	1.26	$t(199) = -12.24, p < .001, d = -0.87$
Drugs	2.56	1.54	5.60	1.27	$t(199) = -16.77, p < .001, d = -1.19$
Physical Abuse	2.57	1.62	5.67	1.42	$t(199) = -15.92 \ p < .001, d = -1.13$
STDs	2.93	1.80	5.84	1.29	$t(199) = -16.06, p < .001, d = -1.14$
Condom Misuse	2.40	1.45	5.43	1.56	$t(199) = -15.15, p < .001, d = -1.07$

Table 3

Themes Between Conditions

Theme	% Generated in Neutralized Condition	% Generated in Negative Factors Condition	Significance
Any	20%	96%	*p < .001**
Enslavement	1%	55%	+
Trafficking	1%	47%	+
Exploitation	1%	36%	+
Condom Misuse	1%	30%	+
Desperation	0%	13%	+
Sad	0%	5%	+
Illegal	6%	53%	*p < .001**
Physical Abuse	5%	49%	*p < .001**
STDs	2%	40%	*p < .001**
Cheating	2%	40%	*p < .001**
Drugs	3%	34%	*p < .001**
Immoral	12%	25%	*p = .001**
Safety Concern	4%	18%	*p < .001**
Sexual Abuse	1%	13%	*p < .001**
Emotional Damage	4%	9%	*p = .180*
Pregnancy	2%	7%	*p = .065*
Lack of Romance	5%	2%	*p = .453*
Disgust	3%	2%	*p = 1.000*
Demean	3%	3%	*p = 1.000*
Relationship Problem	2%	2%	*p = 1.000*

Note. + means that there weren't enough cases in the neutralized condition to test against the negative factors condition.

Discussion

This study suggests that U.S. adults oppose sex-for-money exchanges primarily due to the associated negative confounding factors rather than moral issues. These confounding factors include desperation, trafficking, exploitation, enslavement, condom misuse, STDs, physical abuse, illegality, immorality, drugs, cheating, sexual abuse, sadness, and safety concern. In contrast, U.S. adults were not more or less opposed to sex-for-money exchanges involving and not involving negative external factors due to pregnancy, emotional damage, lack of romance, disgust, demeaning, and relationship problems. That means that opposition to prostitution would decrease if these negative external factors were addressed and risks of these occurrences were minimized. For instance, U.S. adults are opposed to prostitution when the woman engaging in the exchange is doing so out of financial necessity, suggesting that ensuring economic stability so that no woman feels indirectly forced to engage in prostitution due to financial strain would in turn lessen opposition to prostitution. Fear of the women in the exchange being financially exploited also drives opposition to prostitution. However, this concern might be difficult to minimize because even if prostitution was decriminalized or legalized, the sex workers would still have money taken out of their paycheck for taxes, which could be considered exploiting the workers even though it is in a legal fashion. More research is needed to differentiate between those types of exploitation. Additionally, sex trafficking and enslavement are other factor that maintains opposition to prostitution. To mitigate this driving factor for opposition to prostitution, the criminal justice system could find a way to better separate these cases from prostitution as a whole, that would increase favor for prostitution. Risk of STDs, condom misuse, and drug use also drive prostitution opposition. STDs cause a public health issue; condom misuse can lead to unwanted pregnancies as well as increases the risk of transmitting or catching a STD, and drug

use can further jeopardize the safety and consent of the exchange. That being said, opposition

decreases when condom use is required, when both parties get checked for STDs prior to the

exchange, and when drug use is prohibited. Physical abuse, sexual abuse, and general safety

concerns also maintain resistance to prostitution. When effective safeguards are put into place

that can ensure sex worker safety to the best of its ability, the majority of U.S. adults are no

longer are opposed to acts of prostitution. Additionally, the illegal status of prostitution

negatively influences public opinion, as well as the prospect of cheating. When there is no

chance of infidelity by either party in the exchange, people tend to tolerate the exchange of sex

for money. Perhaps this concern could be addressed by mandating that proof of being single is

provided. Overall, opposition to prostitution is primarily driven by the potential risks and harms

involved rather than by the sole exchange of sex for money.

General Discussion

Overall, United States adults' perceptions of prostitution are negative and include

sadness, disgust, immorality, illegality, drugs, STDs, physical abuse, trafficking, enslavement,

desperation, exploitation, and cheating. Additionally, U.S. adult opposition is predominantly

driven by the negative external factors associated with prostitution rather than the act of

exchanging sex for money. This is not only an important contribution to the psychological

literature on perceptions of prostitution, but also in regard to the criminal justice realm of

prostitution. Public perception shapes and influences the law, and this study suggests that a large

proportion of United States citizens are not opposed to sex-for-money exchanges in and of itself,

which could have an impact on the legalization or decriminalization of prostitution. However, in

order for prostitution to become separated from these negative external factors thus gaining

support for its legalization, those factors need to be appropriately addressed and those issues

need to be mitigated. For instance, physical abuse needs to be addressed by ensuring effective safeguards if prostitution was legalized. Another way to increase support for prostitution is to acknowledge the differences and separation of street prostitution and indoor prostitution. Although not exactly, indoor prostitution is more so represented in the neutralized condition than in the negative factors condition; the exchange in the negative factors condition is more representative of street prostitution. Street prostitutes are more likely to be at risk for those external factors like physical violence and spread of STDs. Ultimately, this series of studies emphasizes the importance of treating different types of prostitution or sex-for-money exchange scenarios as separate entities because of the significant difference in public perception across them.

Benefits of the Study.

Benefits of the study include contribution to the psychological literature on perceptions of prostitution. These studies provide a more accurate insight into what U.S. adults actually associate with prostitution, which researchers can now use in further studying the phenomenon. Additionally, my study highlights the importance of differentiating between different types of prostitution scenarios to get a more accurate understanding of what the researchers are trying to measure. For instance, U.S. adults are more so opposed to the negative external factors involved in prostitution rather than the act of prostitution itself, so it is essential to define what instance of prostitution you are measuring peoples' perceptions about. Additionally, the results of this study can help inform the criminal justice system more accurately about public opinion of prostitution. In turn, this can promote legislation addressing the concerns surrounding prostitution, which if done effectively, could potentially lead to more public support for legalizing prostitution.

Limitations of the Study.

Limitations of the study include administering the survey to online participants. Online versions make it more difficult for participants to ask questions, their responses might not always be honest or accurate, and some participants put random things to get to the end and get compensated. Although data was sorted through to address the issue of inappropriate and irrelevant responses, running participants online still has its cons. The online aspect of the study limits our sample to United States adults with access to a computer, internet, and an Amazon Mechanical Turk account which could potentially restrict the generalizability of the study.

Conclusion

These studies examined online U.S. adults' perceptions of prostitution, as well as opposition to two different sex-for-money exchanges; one with risks and harms included and one in which those negative external factors were neutralized. Results from Study 1 indicated that people associate prostitution with sadness, disgust, immorality, illegality, drugs, STDs, physical abuse, trafficking, enslavement, desperation, exploitation, and cheating with prostitution, but not pregnancy and sexual abuse. Findings supported the hypothesis that U.S. adult associations would be primarily negative and include themes such as sex trafficking and risk of STDs. Study 2 results suggests that U.S. adults oppose sex-for-money exchanges primarily due to the associated negative confounding factors, including desperation, trafficking, exploitation, enslavement, condom misuse, STDs, physical abuse, illegality, immorality, drugs, cheating, sexual abuse, sadness, and safety concerns, rather than the sole act of exchanging sex for money. These findings supported the hypothesis that opposition would be greater to the sex-for-money exchange in the negative factors condition due to the risks and hazards associated with it. Future research should attempt to replicate this study to see if findings are consistent across U.S. samples. These findings have important implications for psychological understanding of

perceptions of prostitution, as well as for the criminal justice realm to better understand public

opinion on prostitution.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: STUDY 1 COVER LETTER

Perceptions of Prostitution Study Cover Letter

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Tiffany Abrams and I am a senior double majoring in psychology and criminal justice at Saint Xavier University. I am conducting research for my honor's thesis with the guidance of Dr. Angela Pirlott, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Saint Xavier University.

The purpose of this study is to understand perceptions of prostitution in the United States. If you decide to participate, you will be reporting a series of demographic items as well as providing ten comments about your perceptions of prostitution. You don't have to answer any questions you don't want to answer. Participation will last approximately 5-10 minutes. You will receive $1.00 for participating. You must be at least 18 years old.

In this project, there are no known economic, legal, physical, psychological, or social risks to participants in either immediate or long-range outcomes. It is possible, however, that some of the questions might make you feel uncomfortable, and as in any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified. However, I believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and the potential, but unknown, risks.

Benefits to your participation include payment of $1.00 to your Mechanical Turk account should you decide to submit your survey.

All information obtained in this study is strictly anonymous. The results of this research study might be used in reports, presentations, and publications, but the researchers will not identify you personally. Your name and information will never be directly linked to the data.

Your decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can choose not to answer any questions you don't want to answer, and you can withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature of this study, please contact Dr. Angela Pirlott, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Saint Xavier University at pirlott@sxu.edu or via phone at 773-298-3473. If you have any questions about your treatment as a human subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Saint Xavier University at irb@sxu.edu or Dr. Rick Venneri, Associate Provost and IRB Administrator, Saint Xavier University at venneri@sxu.edu or 773-298-3946.

Thank you for considering helping in this research.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Abrams
Student Researcher

Department of Psychology
Saint Xavier University
Dr. Angela Pirlott
Associate Professor
Department of Psychology
Saint Xavier University

Do you consent to participating in this study?
- Yes, I consent to participating and wish to proceed to the study
- No, I do not consent to participating and wish to exit the study

APPENDIX B: STUDY 1 MEASURES

Demographics

PGender   Please indicate your gender:

1. Male
2. Female
3. Transgender
4. Other, please describe

PSex   Please indicate your biological sex:

1. Male
2. Female
3. Intersex
4. Other, please describe

Age   Please list your age.

RelStat   Please indicate your dating status: (If you are divorced or widowed, please indicate the status that best reflects your dating status)

1. Not dating
2. Dating casually
3. In a serious, exclusive relationship
4. Other, please describe

Prost1   Have you ever paid someone to engage in sexual activity with you?

1. No
2. Yes, please describe
3. Other, please describe

Prost2   Have you ever received money to engage in sexual activity with someone?

1. No
2. Yes, please describe
3. Other, please describe

Race   Please list the race/ethnicity that you feel best describes you

SES   Please indicate your family's social class:

1. Lower Class
2. Lower Middle Class
3. Middle Class
4. Upper Middle Class
5. Upper Class

Edu   What is the highest level of education you achieved?

1. Less than high school

2. High school diploma or GED
3. Some college or Associate's degree
4. Bachelor's degree
5. Graduate or professional degree

Income   What is your annual family household income?

1. Less than $20,000
2. $20,000-29,999
3. $30,000-39,999
4. $40,000-49,999
5. $50,000-74,999
6. $75,000-99,999
7. $100,000-249,999
8. Over $250,000

PolyAtts

1. How would you describe your political ideology on economic issues?
2. How would you describe your political ideology on social issues?
3. How would you describe your overall political ideology?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Liberal			Moderate			Strongly Conservative

SexOrient   Please indicate your sexual orientation:

1.   Heterosexual
2.   Bisexual
3.   Gay/Lesbian
4.   Other, please describe

Perceptions of Prostitution

Please list ten things you think of when you think about *prostitution*. Write down the first things that come to mind.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

APPENDIX C: STUDY 1 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Study 1 Operational Definitions

Theme	Operational Definition
Desperation	lack of alternative options, homeless, poor, need money, need food, and so on
STDs	disease (ex. "HIV") regarding either party
Physical Abuse	any response associating prostitution with violence, assault, murder, death, or danger.
Immoral	sinful, wrong, and anti-religious
Illegal	any response indicating that prostitution is not lawful or is against the law
Drugs	use or addiction regarding either party
Trafficking	sex trafficking, human trafficking, kidnapped
Disgust	any instance or implication of the emotion, including terms such as "ew", "gross", and "yuck"
Exploitation	someone else financially profiting off the prostitute (ex. "pimps")
Sad	any mention of "sad"
Cheating	cheating on a significant other or spouse by either party
Enslavement	being forced into prostitution without consent, autonomy, or free will
Pregnancy	unwanted pregnancy
Sexual Abuse	sex-specific abuse such as rape or sexual assault

APPENDIX D: STUDY 2 COVER LETTER

Study Cover Letter

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Tiffany Abrams and I am a senior double majoring in psychology and criminal justice at Saint Xavier University. I am conducting research for my honor's thesis with the guidance of Dr. Angela Pirlott, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Saint Xavier University.

The purpose of this study is to examine perceptions of and reactions to prostitution in the United States. If you decide to participate, you will first enter demographic information and then read two scenarios describing the context of exchanging sex for money. Then, you will provide your reactions to and perceptions of each scenario. Participation will last approximately 10-15 minutes. You will receive $1.00 for participating. You must be at least 18 years old for each study.

In this project, there are no known economic, legal, physical, psychological, or social risks to participants in either immediate or long-range outcomes. It is possible, however, that some of the questions might make you feel uncomfortable, and as in any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified. However, I believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and the potential, but unknown, risks.

Benefits to your participation include payment of $1.00 to your Mechanical Turk account should you decide to submit your survey.

All information obtained in this study is strictly anonymous. The results of this research study might be used in reports, presentations, and publications, but the researchers will not identify you personally. Your name and information will never be directly linked to the data.

Your decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can choose not to answer any questions you don't want to answer, and you can withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature of this study, please contact Dr. Angela Pirlott, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Saint Xavier University at pirlott@sxu.edu or via phone at 773-298-3473. If you have any questions about your treatment as a human subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Saint Xavier University at irb@sxu.edu or Dr. Rick Venneri, Associate Provost and IRB Administrator, Saint Xavier University at venneri@sxu.edu or 773-298-3946.

Thank you for considering helping in this research.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Abrams
Student Researcher

Department of Psychology
Saint Xavier University
Dr. Angela Pirlott
Associate Professor
Department of Psychology
Saint Xavier University

Do you consent to participating in this study?
- Yes, I consent to participating and wish to proceed to the study
- No, I do not consent to participating and wish to exit the study

APPENDIX E: STUDY 2 MEASURES

Demographics

PGender   Please indicate your gender:

5. Male
6. Female
7. Transgender
8. Other, please describe

PSex   Please indicate your biological sex:

5. Male
6. Female
7. Intersex
8. Other, please describe

Age   Please list your age.

RelStat   Please indicate your dating status: (If you are divorced or widowed, please indicate the status that best reflects your dating status)

5. Not dating
6. Dating casually
7. In a serious, exclusive relationship
8. Other, please describe

Prost1   Have you ever paid someone to engage in sexual activity with you?

4. No
5. Yes, please describe
6. Other, please describe

Prost2   Have you ever received money to engage in sexual activity with someone?

4. No
5. Yes, please describe
6. Other, please describe

Race   Please list the race/ethnicity that you feel best describes you

SES   Please indicate your family's social class:

6. Lower Class
7. Lower Middle Class
8. Middle Class
9. Upper Middle Class
10. Upper Class

Edu   What is the highest level of education you achieved?

6. Less than high school

7. High school diploma or GED
8. Some college or Associate's degree
9. Bachelor's degree
10. Graduate or professional degree

Income   What is your annual family household income?

9. Less than $20,000
10. $20,000-29,999
11. $30,000-39,999
12. $40,000-49,999
13. $50,000-74,999
14. $75,000-99,999
15. $100,000-249,999
16. Over $250,000

PolyAtts

4. How would you describe your political ideology on economic issues?
5. How would you describe your political ideology on social issues?
6. How would you describe your overall political ideology?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Liberal			Moderate			Strongly Conservative

SexOrient   Please indicate your sexual orientation:

5.   Heterosexual
6.   Bisexual
7.   Gay/Lesbian
8.   Other, please describe

Neutralized Factors Condition Scenario & Negative Factors Condition Scenario

Neutralized Condition	Negative Factors Condition
An adult man and adult woman decide to arrange an exchange of sex for money.	An adult man and adult woman decide to arrange an exchange of sex for money.
The woman agrees to provide sexual services for the man and the man agrees to pay the woman a previously decided monetary amount.	The woman agrees to provide sexual services for the man and the man agrees to pay the woman a previously decided monetary amount.
Both people are currently single and not in a romantic relationship.	Both people are currently in committed romantic relationships with other people which are presumed to be monogamous; neither person's romantic partner knows about the sexual exchange.
In this area, sex-for-money exchanges are fully legal between consenting adults, and this exchange was fully legal.	In this area, sex-for-money exchanges are completely illegal and this exchange was illegal.
The woman was not and is not being human trafficked, meaning that she was never kidnapped or forced to engage in sex-for-money exchanges against her will.	The woman was kidnapped and taken to a different location, far away from her home, and is forced to engage in sex-for-money exchanges against her will.
The woman voluntarily chose to engage in sexual exchanges for money with full autonomy and free will over all sexual exchanges.	The woman was forced to engage in sexual exchanges for money without choice, free will, or autonomy over the sexual exchanges.
The woman takes home all of the money from the exchange; she does not have to pay any portion of her earnings to anyone else.	The woman does not take home all of the money from the exchange; she has to pay a significant portion of her earnings to others.
The woman is financially independent and financially secure, and is fully able to afford the lifestyle she desires.	The woman struggles to make ends meet financially, including obtaining stable access to housing, food, employment, transportation, etc.
Use of drugs and alcohol or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol during the sexual exchange is strictly prohibited. Both parties need to pass a drug and alcohol test before entering into the sexual exchange. Neither person was under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and neither person had ever	Both parties were under the influence of drugs and alcohol, and the woman is currently dealing with drug addiction.

used illegal drugs or illegally obtained prescription drugs.	
Physical aggression is strictly prohibited and both parties have access to an alert system if they need help. Neither person used physical aggression toward the other person during the sexual exchange.	The man used physical aggression toward the woman during the sexual exchange.
Prior to the exchange, both parties are required to be tested for STDs and are required to come back "clean" with medical documentation. Neither the man nor the woman had any STDs or HIV/AIDS. Medical documentation was provided.	Neither party is required to be tested for STDs and HIV/AIDS.
Condoms are required to be used at all times and the man wore a condom during the entire sexual exchange.	Condoms are not required to be used and the man did not wear a condom during the sexual exchange.

Scenario Opposition

Are you opposed to the above scenario?

1. Yes
2. No

Reasons for Opposition

Please list up to ten reasons why you are opposed or not opposed to the above scenario.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Negative Beliefs about Each Scenario

Please rate the extent of your agreement with the following statements:

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree

Cheat1. At least one of the parties probably has a significant other

Cheat2. At least one of the parties is probably cheating on their significant other

Cheat3. At least one of the parties probably has a significant other who does not know about this exchange

Legal1. This exchange is probably a crime

Legal2. This exchange is probably legal

Legal3. This exchange is probably illegal

Traffick1. The woman is probably not involved in sex trafficking

Traffick2. The woman is probably being sex trafficked

Traffick3. The woman is probably not being sex trafficked

Enslave1. The woman is probably participating out of her own free will

Enslave2. The woman is probably being forced to participate

Enslave3. The woman probably independently decided that she wanted to participate

Exploit1. The woman probably gets to take home all of the money she earns

Exploit2. A third party probably gets to take home some of the profits the woman earns in the exchange

Exploit3. The woman probably has to give some of her earnings to someone else

Finan1. The woman probably has difficulty affording basic necessities, such as food and shelter.

Finan2. The woman probably has enough money to pay her bills without concern.

Finan3. The woman is probably doing this because she needs the money

Drugs1. The woman probably struggles with substance abuse

Drugs2. The woman was probably under the influence of drugs or alcohol during the exchange

Drugs3. The woman probably has a drug or alcohol addiction

Drugs4. The woman probably does not have a drug or alcohol addiction

PhysAb1. The woman probably experienced physical aggression during the exchange

PhysAb2. The woman probably experienced physical abuse during the exchange

PhysAb3. The woman probably did not experience violence during the exchange

STD1. Both parties are probably at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases during the interaction

STD2. Both parties are probably at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS during the interaction

STD3. Both parties are probably at risk for contracting other diseases during the interaction

Condom1. The man probably used a condom during the sexual interaction, including oral and penetrative sex

Condom2. The man probably used a condom for the entirety of the sexual interaction, including oral and penetrative sex

Condom3. The man probably did not use a condom during the sexual interaction

Opposition Extent to Scenario

Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree

I support the above scenario

I oppose the above scenario

I approve of the above scenario

I disapprove of the above scenario

APPENDIX F: STUDY 2 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Study 2 Operational Definitions

Theme	Operational Definition
Desperation	lack of alternative options, homeless, poor, need money, need food, and so on
STDs	disease (ex. "HIV") regarding either party
Physical Abuse	any response associating prostitution with violence, assault, murder, death, or physical danger.
Immoral	sinful, wrong, and anti-religious
Illegal	any response indicating that prostitution is not lawful or is against the law
Drugs	use or addiction regarding either party
Trafficking	sex trafficking, human trafficking, kidnapped
Disgust	any instance or implication of the emotion, including terms such as "ew", "gross", and "yuck"
Exploitation	someone else financially profiting off the prostitute (ex. "pimps")
Sad	any mention of "sad"
Cheating	cheating on a significant other or spouse by either party; adultery
Enslavement	being forced into prostitution without consent, autonomy, or free will
Pregnancy	unwanted pregnancy
Sexual Abuse	sex-specific abuse such as rape or sexual assault
Demeaning	Disrespectful, demeaning, lowering self, loss of respect
Emotional Damage	Potential or experienced psychological, mental, or emotional harm
Safety Concern	Any unspecified safety concerns (ex. Danger, unsafe) that do not fit into any other categories
Relationship Problems	Occupation causes problems with significant others, friends, and family
Condom Misuse	Lack of condom use or ineffective use of condoms