
Sex Work And Perspectives Of Gender And Public Policy

This topic of sex work fits within the broader perspectives of gender and public policy as it aims to address the impact of Canadian prostitution laws on those involved in the sex industry. The Supreme Court of Canada's case, *Bedford v Canada*, is a ruling related to sex work in Canada. Applicants, Terri-Jean Bedford, Amy Lebovitch, and Valerie Scott argued that Canada's prostitution laws were depriving sex workers of their rights to security by giving them no other option but to work secretly. The 3 main prohibitions from the Bedford case were operating common bawdy-houses, which forces sex workers to engage in price negotiation in private areas, which are typically unsafe spaces where prostitutes can be victimized.

Living on the avails of prostitution is also illegal and this forbids prostitutes from creating a safe workplace such as hiring bodyguards or taking security measures. The third major prohibition is communicating for the purpose of prostitution in public. This creates a barrier to form a family and have children. These laws ultimately force sex workers into unsafe situations, and could have led to further victimization as crimes against prostitutes would go unreported due to a fear of dual-criminalization. Former Justice Minister, Peter McKay has introduced Bill C-36 on December 6, 2014. Prior to that date, the sex industry was regulated through the Criminal Code of Canada. The motivations for this bill are to protect sex workers and people purchasing sex by criminalizing the purchase of sex, gaining material benefit from sex work, advertising sexual services, and communicating of the purpose of sex work.

This objective makes prostitution illegal. Sex work, specifically prostitution policy is becoming a critical issue in Canada as it explores organized crime, health safety, human trafficking, abuse, and violations of Human Rights. This issue needs to be addressed by policy makers and representatives at a national and international level in order to create equal laws to ensure the safety of sex workers. Despite the health and safety concerns for sex workers, women in Canada do not have proper legal measures to work due to the criminalization of sex work from Bill C-36 creating disadvantages and marginalizes sex workers with a punitive attitude towards prostitutes, the jurisprudence of prostitution constructs victims of abuse and dangerous conditions, and the stigma surrounding sex work lessens the legitimacy of the career. *Canada v Bedford* is a ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada regarding Canada's laws surrounding sex work. Former Justice Minister, Peter McKay introduced Bill C-36 in 2014, which criminalized aspects surrounding sex work such as purchasing bodyguards, working in public spaces, and communicating for the purpose of prostitution in public.

Without the decriminalization of prostitution, there will not be government funding to ensure the financial support of these women, there will not be any regulation of brothels and mental health

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support. The jurisprudence of prostitution creates hazardous working conditions where sex workers are forced to work illegally. Working in private areas with no security and government regulations initiate an easier access to physical and mental abuse from pimps and customers. This also creates a more accessible environment for drug and alcohol substances to be admitted into the prostitute's body. The stigma surrounding prostitution weakens society's view of the legitimacy of sex work. Media spreads this image of prostitutes as dirty, nasty, drugged, and involved in crime. This view on women in the sex industry has customers believing that prostitutes are of less worth than them, thus dominating the workers through financial means or violence. This is a very significant topic to explore the policy and the impact it has on those involved in prostitution and other related acts. Since the drafting of Bill C-36, there has been an increasing debate regarding the legitimacy of prostitution, and related acts. Many researchers and representatives have justified with and against prostitution; however, it is not just a legal issue but a concern of safety.

The criminalization of prostitution has deterred legal support from Canada, thus those engaging in such acts will be risking their lives to work. This happens in the form of violence, abuse, dangerous working conditions, and more. Prostitutes, usually women, are victims of sexual abuse and economic exploitation by men. This is the concept that prostitutes are victims of prostitution. This results in a change of attitude within citizens towards sex workers, as it shifts the blame toward the victim instead of the accused. The media portrays the typical prostitute as a woman who was drugged and corrupted; thus making customers treat sex workers like toys. Pimps have notoriously dominated prostitutes physically and mentally by purchasing women, fraudulent job offers, romance, and forcing workers to give all or most of their earnings. Issues such as Canada's prostitution laws can be changed and amended to create healthier, safer, and stabler lifestyles for sex workers. The criminalization of prostitutes constructs an unstable relationship between the government and the sex industry with a lack of resources, information, regulation, and funding. Decriminalizing prostitution ensures a healthier, safer, and stable lifestyle for the sex industry.

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