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Red light at the intersection:
The stigma of sex work and the double oppression inflicted upon
trans sex workers.

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ABSTRACT

Trans persons face structural barriers to access education and employment worldwide. They experience extreme adverse social-economic conditions, which ultimately lead to high rates of engagement in sex work as their main source of income. The majority of States around the world currently impose restrictions or criminal sanctions to at least one party involved in sex work activities, in an attempt to abolish the practice, assumed to be inherently exploitative.

Cisgender women are usually the target of sex work legislation and academic literature on the issue. This approach can overlook a significant group of people also subdued by gender norms. This thesis will focus on the experiences of sex workers of any gender, with an emphasis on trans individuals. It will incorporate post-modern feminism, queer theory and intersectionality concepts to investigate the negative impact of abolitionist sex work legislation and demonstrate how it creates a reality of powerlessness, accentuating the marginalisation of gender-oppressed groups in society.

This thesis argues for the adoption of decriminalisation strategies, thus recognising sex work as a legitimate form of labour, and claims for the implementation of legislation and public policies which primarily aim at protecting sex workers from human rights violations and abuse.

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