“Buying Sex Is Not a Sport” – a Campaign against Trafficking in Women

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Abstract
In this article I present the use of the broad concept of trafficking in the “Buying Sex Is Not a Sport” campaign, launched by the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) against German regulation of prostitution configuring prostitution as sex work. I trace the development of this 2006 campaign in which conservative and social-democratic parties, churches and anti-globalization organizations joined together at the international level. Finally, I trace the ideological and political reasons for the convergence of left-wing and right-wing forces, along with the analysis of some leftist theoretical texts on prostitution.

“Comprar sexo no es un deporte” – la coalición contra el tráfico de mujeres
En este artículo analizo el concepto amplio de tráfico en la campaña “Comprar sexo no es un deporte”, lanzada por la Coalición Contra el Tráfico de Mujeres en contra de la regulación alemana de la prostitución, que equipara ésta al trabajo. Analizo la evolución de la campaña del 2006 en la que partidos conservadores y socialdemócratas, iglesias y organizaciones anti-globalización se juntaron al nivel internacional. Doy cuenta de las razones ideológicas y políticas para la convergencia de fuerzas de derecha e izquierda y analizo algunos textos teóricos de la izquierda acerca de la prostitución.

“Acheter du sexe n’est pas un sport” – la Coalition Contre le Trafic de Femmes
Je presente le concept du trafic de sexe qui a été lancée par la Coalition Contre le Trafic de Femmes contre la régulation allemande de la prostitution comme travail de sexe. Je retrace le développement de cette campagne 2006 dans laquelle les partis conservateurs et sociales-démocratiques, les églises et les organisations anti-globalisation se sont rejoints au niveau international. En conclusion, je retrace les raisons idéologiques et politiques de la convergence des forces de gauche et de droite, en incluant l’analyse de quelques textes théoriques de gauche sur la prostitution.

Keywords
trafficking, prostitution, abolitionism
Introduction

A century after the first international campaigns against the ‘white slave trade’ in the 1880s, the debate around trafficking for prostitution resumed in the 1990s, accompanying another wave of international migration. What is common to both periods is that new technology had lowered the cost of travel. Another common feature is impoverishment and lack of social protection, in Europe, China and India at the end of the nineteenth century, and in the former Soviet block at the end of the twentieth. Citizens of the former Soviet block and of impoverished underdeveloped countries can now travel across borders that were previously sealed. The 1880s and the 1990s thus have been called the first and the second globalization – that is a boom in the movements of goods, capital, people, and culture across borders on a worldwide scale. The media also played a role in the two periods.¹ In the first period, this is evident in a series of articles in the Pall Mall Gazette, “The maiden tribute to modern Babylon.”² In the second case the media generalizes about the women as victims, whereas, in fact, most migrants who end up in prostitution are aware of what awaits them, and consider prostitution a way to improve their situation.³

The campaigns about the ‘white slave trade’ culminated in international agreements on its suppression, signed by many states in 1902, 1904, and 1910. In 1933, a new convention against trafficking was signed in Geneva, and for the first time the definition of the crime of trafficking did not recognize the possibility of consent of the (presumed) victim.⁴ Again in the 1949 agreement, Convention for the Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and the Exploitation of Prostitution of Others, the possibility of consent was ignored. The exploiter was defined as someone who profits from the prostitution of someone else. It did not matter whether the exploited person agrees or not. The 1949 agreement enabled states to criminalize people who rented rooms and homes to be used for prostitution, as well as employees of prostitutes or even partners and adult sons.

In 2000, after decades of silence on these issues in international conventions, the Palermo Protocol was signed, and it included the clause “consent of the victim does not matter.” Neo-abolitionist propaganda and lobbying were surely a substantial force behind this choice of words: the main goal of

¹ Doezema 2000.
² Sweet 2001, p. 65.
³ Agustin 2005.
⁴ Farrior 1997.