

## **Legalizing Prostitution: Providing Equality Amongst Men and Women in the Criminal Justice System through a Socialist Feminist Framework**

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**Abstract :** This paper challenges the criminal justice system's traditional stance regarding prostitution. Historically, the acceptance and morality of prostitution within the United States has fluctuated depending upon the social attitudes of the era. Today, prostitutes are allegedly viewed as victims; however, they are treated like criminals throughout the criminal justice system and society. Dominant patriarchal narratives within the United States has resulted in woman lacking autonomy over their bodies and diminished their ability to choose their own career. Even though prostitutes are deemed victims, many times, they are convicted of crimes, a practice that results in further victimization. Utilizing the socialist feminist theory to understand these juxtaposing positions on whether to legalize prostitution facilitates a greater understanding of how patriarchal capitalist arrangements ensure the oppression of women throughout the criminal justice system. The legalization of prostitution will alleviate some of this oppression and ensure a more equal treatment of women in the criminal justice system and society at large.

**Keywords :** equality, feminist theory, prostitution, sex work

**Conference Title :** ICFST 2021 : International Conference on Feminist Sociological Theory

**Conference Location :** Montreal, Canada

**Conference Dates :** May 24-25, 2021