

Prostitution: Is there anything wrong with selling sex?

Video transcript for 'Around the world', with Anita Rani

Countries around the world tackle prostitution in very different ways.

The laws surrounding prostitution in the Netherlands, for example, are very different to those the UK.

In general, UK laws are aimed at protecting the young and keeping sex work out of sight.

But some argue that they're making women, particularly those working the streets, vulnerable.

Crimes of violence often go unreported by prostitutes for fear of being criminalised themselves.

So, many believe women would be safer if they were allowed to work in groups.

In contrast, Germany and the Netherlands take a far more lenient approach: in an attempt to regulate it, they've legalised prostitution.

In Germany, for example, sex workers can demand health insurance and even pay into a pension scheme.

Opponents argue that legalising prostitution encourages human trafficking.

Not only that: but women parading themselves in shop windows sends out completely the wrong messages to society, as well as being degrading.

Scandinavian countries have adopted something called 'The Nordic Model'.

In this system selling sex isn't criminalized, but the buying of sex is illegal.

So it's the client who is the criminal.

While advocates say this policy reduces prostitution, opponents say it actually makes it more dangerous by driving it underground.

In Middle Eastern countries, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, prostitution is a serious criminal offence.

Anyone caught offending can face heavy penalties, including flogging and imprisonment.

Whatever your opinions on how to legislate prostitution, the laws not only affect women but men and transgenders too.

Some go the sex industry voluntarily, and some don't.