

Troubling prostitution

Exploring intersections of sex, intimacy and labour

17th and 18th April, 2015
Vienna, Austria

Proposals by 1st October 2014

Confirmed speakers: Helga Amesberger, Barb Brents, Laura Oso Casas, Rebecca Pates, Birgit Sauer, Jane Scoular, Ine Vanwesenbeeck, Ron Weitzer

Call for Papers

This conference takes as its starting point the need to explore how sex which involves forms of commercial exchange can be understood within broader cultural and social contexts. More specifically, it invites an examination of prostitution, its shifting meanings and governance, by focussing on the contested intersection of activities designated sex, the intimate sphere, and activities designated labour.

Tenacious social and cultural norms have been, and continue to be in place to maintain a net separation between the spheres of sex and intimacy on the one hand *and* labour, money or market on the other. In this field of enduring tensions, laws and policies are increasingly used to control, discipline and punish prostitution as a troubling encounter between sex, intimacy and commerce. Whilst the application of the law itself is not new, what appears to be shifting is the body of values, norms and beliefs that inform the regulation of prostitution. Exclusionary access to labour mobility and citizenship, economic and social inequalities, however, continue to account for the vulnerable and exploitative conditions in which many operate in the commercial sex sector. In light of these complex and globally diversified landscapes, a key question underpinning the conference is: How can we trouble the ways in which prostitution is conceptualised, approached and regulated by exploring the contested intersections of sex, intimacy and labour?

With a focus on prostitution we also seek to address these questions:

What is the role of laws and policies in structuring the intersection of sex, intimacy and labour? And vice versa, how are these intersections shaping laws and policies? How and why are these intersections viewed as troubling and problematic, and by whom? How are the intersections of sex, intimacy and labour shaped by, and how do they shape relations of gender, race, class and sexuality? What are the spaces where these intersections take place, and why do they matter?

How do processes of neo-liberalisation impact on shaping prostitution policies, politics and practices? What are the implications of broader socio-political, economic, and cultural processes on the lived experiences of people involved in the sex industry? How does the functioning of prostitution markets interact with and impact on prostitution regulation and its enforcement? Which practices exist to resist or reinforce restrictions and tensions in the representation and regulation of prostitution? What are the methodological challenges and possibilities of researching prostitution, its contexts, markets and regulation?

We invite proposals for papers that address these questions and the broad theme of the conference. We particularly welcome papers which are interdisciplinary and comparative in method and approach.

Submission Guidelines

Please submit individual paper proposals of 200-300 words, including 3-5 keywords, along with a short biography of 100 words.

Proposals for panels of three or four related papers should include a 200-300-word description as well as individual paper proposals (200-300 words each, including 3-5 keywords). Please also provide a short 100-word biography for each presenter.

Email submissions to: conference@prospol.eu by **1st October 2014**. Acceptance decisions will be communicated by the end of October 2014.

Registration to the conference will cost approximately 40 Euro per delegate, including lunches and coffee/tea breaks.

The working language of the conference is English.

'Troubling Prostitution: exploring intersections of sex, intimacy and labour' is a two-day conference organised by COST Action *ProsPol* (www.prospol.eu) in collaboration with the University of Vienna and the Institute of Conflict Research, Vienna.

