States have traditionally tried to curb prostitution for a variety of reasons, such as preserving morals, maintaining public order, containing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), or to protect women from sexual exploitation. The early 1970s witnessed the rise of a vastly expanding sex industry, and soon evidence emerged that women were being brought from developing countries to provide sexual services for male clients in the affluent Western nations. Since then—partly due to improved transportation and communication networks—migration and trafficking have grown immensely on a worldwide scale. It has led to a different composition of the sex work labor market in the West and has renewed interest in women being trafficked from the poorer countries to provide these services. By the mid-1980s, trafficking and prostitution were back on the political agenda of many states and supranational institutions, such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU).

These developments have led to widespread and often ferocious debate about the nature of prostitution and its relationship to trafficking—recruiting and transporting women across national borders for work or services by means of violence or threat or abuse of authority or other forms of coercion. Prostitution usually refers to the exchange of sex or sexual services for money or other material benefits; as feminist theorists have pointed out, it usually occurs within unequal gendered power relations (O’Connell Davidson 1998, 9).
Theorists and activists disagree on what should be done about prostitution: Should it be abolished, or regulated in some way, thus accepting it as sex work no different to other types of labor? Is all “trafficking” forced or is it prostitution-related migration? This article focuses on women’s movement organizations’ involvement in these debates. It examines the context in which the debates arose and the widely diverging positions developed by women activists and feminists in the course of those debates. It will discuss how these have been operative in the political arenas of Western democratic states, the UN, and the EU, where competing women’s movement organizations have been attempting to make their discourse hegemonic and influence policy.

The Reemergence of the Issues

Prostitution and trafficking had become linked at the end of the nineteenth century in Europe and North America when industrialization, urbanization, and the unequal distribution of wealth led to increased migration, with accompanying worries about the free movement of women. It also became a major rallying point for feminism, which demanded the abolition of state regulation of brothels and an end to all prostitution. After widespread public upheaval about “white slavery”—the recruitment of white women into sexual slavery in the 1880s—the trafficking of women was outlawed in international law in 1904. It was defined as bringing women across borders for purposes of prostitution and was enacted into many national legal systems. The culmination of this trend was the UN International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons (1949). It called on all states to suppress not only trafficking but also prostitution, regardless whether they occur with the consent of the woman involved. The Convention superseded the earlier international agreements and set the standard for the next decades, although many states did not ratify it, partly because of its abolitionist intent. There was little pressure on implementation, as trafficking faded from the public eye and prostitution ceased to be a major political issue.

With the increase in international tourism and migration (Truong 1990), the growing prosperity and liberalization of the sexual mores in the West since the mid-1970s, prostitution and the trafficking of women returned to the political agenda of most states by the mid-1980s. Evidence of trafficking started to emerge at the beginning of the 1980s. At first, trafficked women in Western Europe came from Southeast Asia (Thailand and the Philippines), but by the 1980s the supply started to come from Latin America and the Caribbean
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(mainly Brazil, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic), as well as West Africa (Brussa 1991). After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of communism in Eastern and Central Europe, the bulk of the women trafficked into Western Europe came from these states. In Australia, trafficked women came mainly from Southeast Asia, and in the United States the major recruitment was from Latin America and Asia. The discovery of the AIDS epidemic in the early 1980s—which gave further fuel for societal worries about the health hazards of sex—also reinforced the need for prostitution and trafficking to be on the political agenda for these states. Prostitutes were always seen as sources of contamination, and authorities were keen to control their activities.

The dynamics of trafficking are best explained by migration theory, which uses an economic perspective to analyze the flow of human migration in terms of demand-pull factors, such as the level of economic development and prosperity, access, and employment perspectives, which make affluent regions like the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) states attractive for migrants (Uçarer 1999). Demand for sex led to a proliferation of new forms of sexual services, such as escort services, telephone sex, and peep shows, as well as the expansion of more traditional types of prostitution, such as street walking and room-renting in cheap hotels. This led to citizens’ complaints, putting pressure on local authorities to act. Once the existence of trafficking had been established by research (often provided by feminist nongovernmental organizations [NGOs]), national governments were also compelled to take the issue seriously.

Supply-push factors in the countries of origin are bad economic conditions, political instability, and social breakdown. Women bear the brunt of poverty and seek ways to migrate to the more prosperous countries, where they have become a major source of “typical female” labor in such sectors as domestic services, care work, and sexual services (Agustín 2003). This makes the migration market a highly gendered affair. Many networks operate in between, transferring migrants from one region to another, which include women who are being trafficked for the sex industry (Truong 2003).

The second wave of feminism, emerging in the late 1960s and early 1970s, also “rediscovered” trafficking and prostitution. Although the movement in general disagreed about the definition of prostitution or its link to trafficking and rarely gave it high priority, issuespecific women’s movement groups developed in many countries who demanded reform of national prostitution regimes. Also, probably for the first time, women in prostitution started to articulate a new public voice and formed their own interest groups, giving rise to

Many groups were able to have considerable impact on the outcome of new legislation or were successful in preventing measures unfavorable to their demands; by 2000 many states had revised their prostitution laws in several ways (Outshoorn 2004a). A number of countries already did so early in the 1970s, as part of the international mood to modernize criminal law in a humanitarian and more liberal spirit. For instance, Australia, Canada, Sweden, and Finland all repealed their vagrancy laws, which indicted prostitutes. Britain abolished their criminalization in the early 1970s. Spain removed articles from the old Franquist Penal Code in the 1990s, which stipulated that prostitutes be sent to detention camps and only defined forced prostitution as a crime, allowing for legal prostitution. In that same decade, France reformed its Penal Code by providing clearer definitions of pimping and soliciting that were more favorable to prostitutes. The Netherlands and some states of Australia (Victoria, New South Wales, and the Australian Capital Territory) repealed the ban on brothels and regulated prostitution as sex work in the course of the 1990s. Austria and Germany also recognized sex work and granted sex workers social security and equitable taxation. Sweden and the city of Helsinki in Finland took the unique move of criminalizing the client in prostitution. In the United States, however, no changes occurred in prostitution policy—all states, except Nevada, prohibit prostitution and make prostitutes, and those living off the income earned from prostitution, liable to prosecution.

After 2000 many states, under the influence of renewed UN and EU activity, also adjusted their criminal law in the area of trafficking, usually broadening the definition of the offense to include the trafficking of boys and men, and refining the concepts of deceit and coercion used to recruit and hold women in sexual exploitation. They also raised the penalties for traffickers. Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Spain have started to provide aid to victims of trafficking, providing temporary residency permits to those women willing to testify against their traffickers up to and during the trial.

The Feminist Debate on Prostitution and Trafficking

The renewed interest of women’s movement organizations in prostitution and trafficking, however, never led to a consensus among activists on these issues: There are deep divisions within feminism about what prostitution is and its relationship to the trafficking of
women. During the first wave of feminism in the latter half of the nineteenth century, most women activists agreed to the abolitionist goal of ending state regulation of brothels and deploying state power to stop all prostitution practices. The prostitute had to leave the work and was to be “saved.” Major abolitionist associations, often with strong connections to the Roman Catholic Church as well as women’s organizations (particularly from Southern Europe), still subscribe to these basic tenets. Second-wave feminism spawned two new major discourses: One is compatible with traditional abolitionism and originated in radical feminist thought; the other is the new discourse framing prostitution as sex work, which developed from liberal and socialist feminist thought.

The radical feminist discourse, which can be called “the sexual domination discourse,” views prostitution as the epitome of women’s oppression (e.g., Barry 1979, 1995; Hughes and Roche 1999; Jeffries 1997). Prostitution is sexual slavery and the extreme expression of sexual violence against women, making it essential to abolish it and penalize all those profiting from sexual exploitation, except the prostitute herself. She is portrayed as a victim, who requires help to escape slavery and set up a new, prostitution-free life. To those holding this position, prostitution is forced by definition, making the concept of forced prostitution a pleonasm. Adherents therefore reject the notion of voluntary prostitution, holding that no woman would prostitute herself by choice or free will. In recent years this case against prostitution and trafficking is being framed in terms of the violation of women’s human rights. This framing has little to say about the causes of prostitution and trafficking and does not provide an economic analysis of the sex industry or the market for sexual services. It focuses primarily on the consequences of prostitution for women, but offers little explanation of its causes.

The other major discourse that emerged was the prorights or sex work approach, which sees prostitution as a possible option or a strategy of survival taken by women, which should be respected (Bell 1994; Chapkis 1997; Pheterson 1989, 1996). It aims for the legalization of prostitution, which usually entails removal of prohibitive articles in criminal codes and some kind of labor regulation to normalize the sex trade and guarantee prostitutes’ rights. Women have the right to sexual self-determination and to work as a prostitute. She should be able to work in decent labor conditions and migrate to do sex work elsewhere. Stigmatization of prostitutes (in this discourse called sex workers) should be combated. Prostitution itself is therefore not the problem, but the context within which women engage in prostitution—such as forced prostitution and trafficking, as well as the often bad conditions under which the work is done—is problematic.
Adherents to this position focus on fighting forced prostitution and improving working conditions—strategies firmly rejected by those who see all prostitution as forced. An important weakness of the sex work frame is that it often is hard to draw the line between forced prostitution and sex work as a choice.

Underlying the difference between the two positions are conflicting views of male and female sexuality. In the sexual domination discourse, male sexuality is the problem, being seen as intrinsically connected to violence and domination. In the sex work discourse, male sexuality is a given. Both views share an essentialist conception of male sexuality and the male sexual drive, which implicitly is held to be unchangeable and ever present. Here lies a parallel with traditional abolitionism, which also regards the male sexual drive as a given but also as a natural and potentially dangerous trait that needs to be controlled. As to female sexuality, in the sexual domination discourse it is denied—women are seen as passive victims of male lust, whereas the sex work discourse allows for sexually active women. Here again, the parallel between the sexual domination discourse and traditional abolitionism should be noted, because both deny active female sexuality. These parallels have enabled the strong alliance between traditional abolitionist organizations and feminists adhering to the sexual domination frame.

It should be noted that not all those adhering to the sex work position set prostitution within the same feminist framework. Some are radical liberals who celebrate sexual variety and free choice (e.g., Bell 1994; for the different shades of feminism here, Zatz 1997), whereas others, while analyzing prostitution as (sexual) service work, maintain a feminist critique by contextualizing prostitution within unequal relations of sexual economic exchange (e.g., O’Connell Davidson 1998; Phetersen 1996).

The divide between the two perspectives also structures the way trafficking and the migration of women in sex work is viewed. As trafficking was originally defined in criminal law as the forced transfer of women across (inter)national borders for the purposes of prostitution, it was intrinsically linked to prostitution. The focus was very much on how women were recruited into sexual exploitation. In the sexual domination view, trafficking of migrant women is always seen as against their will; they are by definition victims of trafficking. Trafficking is seen to be caused by prostitution, making the best way to fight trafficking the abolition of prostitution. In this view, legalizing the sex trade leads to new demands for prostitutes and thus to more trafficked women. As noted by Doezema (2002, 25), some holding this position actually suggest that the best way to stop trafficking is to prevent young women from traveling.
For those adhering to the sex work position, women can be victims of trafficking, but not all women sex workers crossing borders are victims of forced prostitution. Many women migrate to work in the sex industry to make a living. Here the unequal distribution of wealth on a global scale is seen as the causal factor for sex commerce. In this view, trafficking women for prostitution is perceived as undesirable only when a woman is trafficked and forced into prostitution against her will. Much of what is called trafficking is actually the smuggling of human beings, which enables undocumented people to migrate to other countries to make a living in better circumstances. Among those smuggled, there are women who intend to work in the sex industry. Although the smuggling of aliens is a crime against the destination state, the trafficking of women against their will is violence against women and is an infringement of their basic human rights (Wijers 2001).

Some scholars and activists who adhere to the sex work position stress that trafficking for the sex industry is no different than coercing people into forced labor or slavery and can best be fought as such (Bindman 1998; Doezema 1998; Murray 1998). In this way trafficking is disconnected from prostitution and disappears as a separate offense. It is a move that degenders the issue, as the link to prostitution reminds us that it is usually women who are trafficked for the purposes of men’s sexual gratification. The link between trafficking and prostitution creates a space to debate about the origin of male sexual demand on the sex market and thus about the construction of masculine sexualities. Those favoring the forced labor perspective acknowledge the degendering but justify it by pointing out that the continual focus on women and girls will reproduce gender-specific repression, because it will lead to the policing of women’s mobility. It also acknowledges that boys and men are also being trafficked for sexual purposes. They also expect that their framing makes for more effective strategies against trafficking practices, given the strong (inter)national rulings on labor and slavery.

The sex work position has been strengthened in recent years by a new postcolonial critique that sees abolitionism as a Western, white, middle-class women’s movement seeking to “protect” women from non-Western countries, a position taken by Doezema (1998, 2001). Agustín has called the concern about trafficking “obsessive” and indicative for Western feminists’ attempt to “help” and “save” migrant women (Agustín 2003, 378). She argues that many women working in the sex industry in the rich industrialized countries are little different than those women migrants working in domestic labor or the entertainment business as waitresses, barmaids, or dancers. Only if one sees sexual contact as utterly different from other kinds of
body contact can one isolate sex work from other types of services providing care for the body, such as hairdressing, nursing, or massage. According to Agustín, many young women from the developing countries are in fact travelers, working their way around the world, and sometimes that work involves sex work. Occasionally this brings them into abusive situations or even sexual slavery (Agustín 2002). Agustín’s strength is that she provides fruitful insights about the construction of demand for sexual services on the market. She links it to Western ideas about sexual liberation and the search for a personal sexual identity (2004, 390). Indeed, the term trafficking, with its suspect genealogy in the “white slavery” dispute in the nineteenth century and its strong link to abolitionism, can perhaps better be replaced by the term prostitution-related migration (Outshoorn 2004b).

What is missing in Agustín’s analysis is the presence of intermediary actors involved in prostitution-related migration who recruit sex workers and arrange transportation, documents, and jobs in various parts of the sex industry. Many scholars (e.g., Truong 2003), NGOs like La Strada in Europe, and authorities such as EUROPOL, have provided evidence of the existence of international criminal networks—running the whole range from a small, family-run operation to large-scale crime syndicates—involved in international sex commerce. They provide the infrastructure for the increasingly global sex market, which renders too simplistic the framing of prostitution-related migration as a matter of women traveling and looking for a livelihood. Though Agustín’s analysis of the gendered character of service work and its development in a European context is excellent, she pays little attention to a gender analysis of the push-factors in the sending countries. Truong (2003) and Kligman and Limoncelli (this issue) rightly stress the consequences of structural adjustment policies in developing countries and the introduction of markets in Eastern Europe. These have redrawn gender segregation lines on the labor market, destroying women’s skills and job opportunities and often making their care work for their families their sole responsibility.

The International Political Arena

The opposing positions in the debate have led to two different transnational alliances against prostitution and trafficking: the abolitionist U.S.-run Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), in which the well-known U.S. feminists Kathleen Barry and Janice Raymond play an active role, and the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women (GAATW), founded in 1994 and based in Thailand, which subscribes to the distinction between forced and voluntary prostitution, allowing for sex work. It calls for decriminalization of
prostitution and the combat of trafficking and forced prostitution. The latter position was also backed by the International Committee for Prostitutes’ Rights (ICP), the first transnational manifestation of prostitutes’ rights movements, which is in favor of legalising prostitution to improve sex workers’ position. It is, however, critical of the distinction between forced and voluntary prostitution, as it still relies on state regulation and does little in the way of rights for sex workers (Doezema 2002, 25).

Debates in the UN were reignited with the adoption of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. It calls on states “to suppress all forms of traffic in women and the exploitation of prostitution.” According to pro–sex work activists, this was not to be taken that prostitution per se should be combated (Wijers and Lap-Chew 1997, 24). Because no definition was provided of exploitation, it could be interpreted to allow for nonabolitionist positions. Since then, every new UN treaty or convention on these issues invites a new round of debate.

After the end of the cold war, the UN agenda was able to expand to include the women’s movements’ campaign on violence against women. The UN Vienna Declaration (1993) on the elimination of violence against women marked the first shift away from abolitionism; it only condemns forced prostitution and trafficking, and not prostitution per se. In 1995 the Platform for Action adopted at the Beijing UN Women’s World Conference called for fighting forced prostitution and trafficking. In 1998 trafficking and prostitution, reframed as human rights issues, became part of the battle to fight transnational crime (Gallagher 2001, 976). Two years later the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime was agreed in Palermo, along with a Protocol on Trafficking and a Migrant Smuggling Protocol.

The Protocol defined trafficking as the recruitment and transfer of persons by means of the threat or use of force or coercion, fraud, deception, or abuse of power for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes the prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs (Nationaal Rapporteur 2002, 44). The Protocol requires state parties to penalize trafficking and to protect victims of trafficking and grant them temporary or permanent residence in the countries of destination. Predictably, the debates centered on the definition of trafficking. One of the issues that was hotly contested was whether the offence can occur irrespective of the consent of the person involved (Gallagher 2001, 985). Those opposed to the distinction between forced and voluntary prostitution were in favor of its inclusion in the protocol, which, according to the supporters of the distinction, would in turn
blur the distinction between the smuggling of persons and the trafficking of persons. The CATW entered into an alliance with other abolitionists in the International Human Rights Network, and they opposed any kind of legalization of prostitution. They insisted on including the end purpose of trafficking as prostitution or sexual exploitation, thus maintaining the link between the two issues. The GAATW formed an alliance with the International Human Rights Group in the Human Rights Caucus to oppose criminalization of consensual sex work. It was also backed by the ICP. The Caucus backed the proposals of the UN Convention Committee, who wanted to broaden the end purpose to include forced labor, debt bondage, and forced marriage.

The Protocol is open to several interpretations. The final text defines *trafficking* as:

> the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of giving or receiving payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal or organs. (Protocol 2000, 2)

CATW maintains the Protocol holds that any migration that involves sex work now falls under trafficking and that all migrating sex workers can be treated as victims of trafficking (Raymond 2002). The Caucus holds that the Protocol intentionally does not define “the exploitation of prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation,” as a compromise between the conflicting positions. It interprets the Protocol as a departure from the 1949 Convention because it permits states to focus only on forced prostitution and to deal with all adult prostitution in other ways than abolition (Sullivan 2003).

The Protocol has therefore not ended the debates on trafficking and its relationship to migration, slavery, or prostitution. It remains to be seen how far it will lead to more effective policy against forced prostitution. It has provided a new definition and confirms existing rights, but it does contain a number of weaknesses in its instruments, leaving too much to the ratifying states and lacking mandatory protection for victims (Gallagher 2001, 1004). At the beginning of 2003, nearly 150 states have ratified the Convention, and 105 have ratified the Trafficking Protocol (Uçarer 2003, 18, n5, n6).
Within the EU, prostitution and trafficking have been on the agenda since 1986. After a successful feminist lobby in the European Parliament (EP) on violence against women, a new framing of prostitution allowed for a distinction between forced and voluntary prostitution in an official report (Outshoorn 2004b). Trafficking remained linked until the early 1990s, when feminists of the Greens in the EP united with feminist researchers and activists from prostitutes’ rights organizations. They took the sex work position, and it resulted in an EP resolution, calling on member states to protect victims of trafficking, set up witness protection programs, and provide temporary residency permits for those willing to testify against their traffickers (Resolution 1993). There was no mention of taking measures against prostitution.

This delinking was also in evidence in subsequent report measures of the EP and later the European Commission (EC). The important Colombo Svevo Report (1995) on trafficking of human beings accepted the distinction between voluntary and forced prostitution and that many trafficked women were in fact migrants. It did not call for eliminating all prostitution. Despite opposition from conservative and religious members, the EP resolution backed the report (Resolution 1996). That same year the EC could no longer bypass the issue of trafficking. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the ensuing increase of trafficking and migration from Central and Eastern Europe forced it to confront the issue. With the decision of the enlargement of 2004, the EC realized it would soon also be responsible for women there, and the EU would no longer just be at the receiving end of the trade.

The Dutroux murders of four young girls in Belgium, which came to light in 1996, also provided a triggering device, as well as the accession of Sweden, Finland, and Austria in 1995, with their tradition of equality policy. Swedish Euro-Commissioner Anita Gradin acted as policy entrepreneur, setting up the first EU conference on trafficking in Vienna in 1996 and initiating the STOP and DAPHNE programs for funding projects on violence against women. Her position in the prostitution debate was abolitionist, and she also opposed moves to disconnect trafficking and prostitution.

Gradin found an ally in the European Women’s Lobby (EWL). This large platform organization was formed in 1990 on instigation of the EC, which wanted to concentrate women’s lobby groups in one organization. It now organizes more than 3,000 women’s organizations from member states, including all the traditional and religious ones. The EWL is officially recognized and funded by the EC. Prior to the Beijing conference, it did not have a position on the issues. Confronted with the Platform for Action with its focus on forced prostitution that allows room for the recognition of sex work,
it chose an abolitionist position. Traditional French abolitionists united with Swedish left-wing feminists against the increasing support for sex work and the delinking of trafficking and prostitution. It resulted in a strong resolution of the EWL condemning both in 1998. Soon after it joined forces with the CATW, and this led to a second resolution in 2001 that called on members to lobby their national states and push for client criminalization (Outshoorn 2004b). Although it has considerable support in the Committee of Women’s Rights, many other MEPs accept the idea of forced prostitution and sex work, as well as delinking these from trafficking. In this they are strongly favored by the various treaties of the EU, which make trafficking a transnational issue under the jurisdiction of the EU, whereas prostitution remains under national jurisdiction.

The EC and later the Council of Ministers consequently focused only on trafficking, such as in the 1997 Joint Action of the Council of Ministers on trafficking (Joint Action 1997). It obliged member states to penalize the trafficking of persons, pass measures to prosecute profiteers of trafficking and confiscate their profits, and support and protect victims of trafficking. The disconnection of the issue is also in evidence in all later measures taken by the EU. The Council of Ministers Framework on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in 2001, which replaces earlier measures, calls on member states to outlaw trafficking, to protect victims of trafficking, and to develop a common policy against illegal migration (Council of Ministers 2001). Again there is no mention of prostitution per se; it allows for voluntary prostitution. However, the focus of the Framework is very much on fighting illegal migration, which is likely to impact on women migrating to earn money in the European sex industry.

It is unlikely that the abolitionists will give up their lobby. Recently an abolitionist report was accepted after a fierce debate by the Committee on Women’s Rights by a narrow margin; but it was shelved by the EP last spring (Outshoorn 2004b). With a new EP elected in May 2004, now including members from the new member states, the debate about forced prostitution, voluntary prostitution, and trafficking is likely to continue.

Conclusions

Since the reemergence of the issues of prostitution and trafficking, women’s movement groups developed two new frames that have informed debates at the state and supranational level. Alongside the older abolitionist position, which sets out to fight the selling of all sexual services, end state regulation of prostitution, and help get women out of prostitution, second-wave feminism spawned two new
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positions. The sexual domination frame, developed from radical feminism, regards all prostitution as oppression of women or as an act of violence against women. Trafficking is caused by prostitution, and therefore its abolition is regarded as the necessary condition for putting an end to trafficking. The similarity between the sexual domination position and old-style abolitionism has made for a strong international alliance to fight the competing frame of sex work. This second position, developed from second-wave feminism, accepts sex work as a strategy enacted by women to avoid poverty and it opposes forced prostitution; “trafficking” often includes women migrating to work in the sex industry. It allied with the novel phenomenon of prostitutes’ rights organizations, who claim equal rights for prostitutes and the right to sexual self-determination.

Within Western national states there has been a gradual move from the 1970s to legalize prostitution by decriminalizing the prostitute and allowing certain types of prostitution, and a number of states have regulated it as sex work. At the UN and the EU level, the continual conflict between the two positions marked the international debates on measures to combat trafficking. Abolitionists have tried to retain the linkage between trafficking and prostitution, fighting the concept of forced prostitution, whereas those who fight trafficking aim to allow for prostitution if the sex worker does so voluntarily. At the EU level the latter position has informed EU measures—helped by the fact that prostitution is national states’ jurisdiction—at the UN level, but these measures form an unstable compromise that will inevitably lead to renewed fights over future policy. What all these policies share (at least in their intentions) are stiffer penalties for traffickers. However, the other side of the coin here is that these provisions make life harder for migrating sex workers, because they are increasingly regarded as illegal migrants. Women’s movement organizations will have to come to terms with the realities of international migration and to new definitions of the interests of women when addressing the old question of prostitution and its historical link to trafficking.

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