

## **A TALE OF THREE CITIES: REGULATING STREET PROSTITUTION IN SCOTLAND**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this research has been to describe and account for the differences in attitudes and approaches to the regulation of street prostitution in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow. The research findings show that significant differences exist and offer an explanation of the reasons for this. The analysis of these findings may feed into policy debate about potential alterations of Scottish legislation on prostitution.

The models described in this article offer a framework within which policy formulation may take place. Despite there being different approaches across Scotland, there is sufficient common ground to suggest successful legislation and policy changes, if care is taken to build on issues of convergence and consensus. This article demonstrates where areas of potential compromise exist, and makes suggestions for policy approaches that will exploit the areas of common opinion.

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## **CONTEXT**

The regulation of street prostitution has been extremely topical in Scotland for the last five years. While legislation regulating prostitution is Scotland-wide, in practice local authorities have been free to exercise discretion. This has led to rather different patterns emerging in different places. Different practice has been acceptable in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow and until recently there had been little pressure for change. However, pressure from development of new housing in Edinburgh led directly to a move of the city's informal Tolerance Zone from Leith's Coburg Street to nearby Salamander Street and the subsequent collapse of the zone in 2001.

The loss of the Tolerance Zone resulted in prostitutes moving away to work in nearby residential streets which caused problems for local residents, including increased debris and rubbish, increased street traffic and the harassment of local women by kerb-crawlers. In the wake of the publicity surrounding the problems in Leith it became apparent that a review of citywide policy was required. Prompted by complaints and threats of legal action from local residents, Lothian and Borders Police called on Margo MacDonald MSP to organise a steering group to recommend future policy for the regulation of street prostitution in Edinburgh. This steering group included representatives from the City Council, the police and local businesses. As a result of the work done by this group, Margo MacDonald introduced into the Scottish Parliament the **Prostitution Tolerance Zones (Scotland) Bill 2002**. The Bill was introduced on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2002, and defeated by 86 votes to 11 on February 27<sup>th</sup> 2003.

The main premise of the Bill was that 'while street prostitution is not desirable, it is endemic in a number of areas of the major cities of Scotland'. The stated objectives of the Bill were: 'To enable the police, health boards and local authorities to ensure that prostitution is practised in as orderly, secure and tolerable a manner as is possible; to minimise the opportunities for associated criminal behaviour; to maximise the practice of safer sex and to promote public health policies'. (Policy Memorandum 2002, p. 1).

The Bill was designed to be an enabling Bill. It sought to enable local authorities throughout Scotland to 'designate areas as zones within which loitering, soliciting or importuning by prostitutes is not an offence under section 46(1) of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982'. Importantly, the Bill contained no compulsive element which would require any local authority to adopt the measures contained therein. The fact that the Bill was

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defeated meant that those people who were opposed to the powers conferred by the Bill were able to prevent those who wanted these powers from having a legal basis for creating Tolerance Zones.

It is also important to recognise that the Bill and the changes in law it would have created applied only to the prostitutes, not to their clients. This would have meant that the police would have retained the power to arrest clients as they saw fit under Breach of the Peace powers. No new legislation concerning the behaviour of prostitutes' clients was proposed.

### **METHODS**

Various methods were used in this research. A critical examination of the Bill and the accompanying documents provided a basis for a more directed review of literature and agency publications. Examination of evidence submissions from interested parties and the minutes of all relevant Parliamentary Committee meetings highlighted areas for more detailed research, and demonstrated broad trends in attitudes of key stakeholders. Observation of all relevant Committee meetings was also used to provide further insight into attitudes and divisions.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of the three City Councils, the three Police Forces, voluntary organisations working with women involved in prostitution in all three cities, representatives from two Health Boards, and the Member of the Scottish Parliament who introduced the Bill. Interviews were loosely structured to allow interviewees to elaborate on their areas of expertise, while providing comparable data on important aspects of prostitution in Scotland.

### **THE SCOTTISH SITUATION**

It became clear in Parliamentary Committee meetings examining evidence for the Bill that Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow had adopted very different approaches, and that the key stakeholders in each city were often unable to agree with their counterparts in the other cities. In order for any nationwide policy on the regulation of street prostitution to succeed, policy makers need to understand why such differences have developed, and also what common ground exists.

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There was disagreement between interviewees about the cities' differences in attitude to prostitution; some believed that there was indeed a fundamental split while others claimed that the cities' approaches are not dramatically different. This divergence of ideas may be partly attributed to the interviewees' very different professional roles. For example, the representatives of the three police forces all believed that the differences were not as great as they appeared at face value. This was in stark contrast to the more 'political' interviews, such as the voluntary sector manager who claimed that 'there's a more fundamental philosophical split between Glasgow and Edinburgh'.

In practical terms, the three cities are not as different as they might seem to be. Aberdeen is experiencing success with its relatively new Tolerance Zone. Edinburgh still adopts a policy of discretionary policing where possible, despite losing the official Tolerance Zone. Glasgow maintains that it does not operate, and has never operated a Tolerance Zone, but there are nonetheless areas in Glasgow where prostitutes are known to work, and because of priorities in policing in Glasgow they are often not bothered by the police. All three cities also have services in place to help prostitutes leave prostitution and provide assistance with other problems they might have, such as drug use or housing difficulties. Thus, the policies are not significantly different in practice; the main difference between the three cities lies in the philosophy behind the policies.

### **UNDERSTANDING THE DIVISION**

In order to understand some of the policies adopted in Scotland, it is useful to understand the attitudes towards this issue in terms of three different models of the way societies or organisations view prostitution, prostitutes and the appropriate regulation thereof.

It is useful to understand the issues in terms of the three models described below because 'policy-makers fashion policies on the assumption that those affected by the policies will behave in certain ways and they will do so because they have certain motivations. ... Conscious or not, these assumptions will determine the way that welfare institutions are constructed.' (Le Grand 1997, p. 153). This reflects the way that policy makers view the behaviour and motivation of prostitutes and construct their policies accordingly. By using the models it is possible to identify subtle differences in approach between Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

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**Table 1**  
**Three approaches to the regulation of prostitution**

MODEL	ATTITUDE	POLICY APPROACH	FAVOURED LEGISLATION
REGULATORY	TOLERANCE	Health and safety Harm reduction Labour rights	Range from Tolerance Zones to decriminalisation to legalisation Management and regulation
POLICING	ZERO TOLERANCE	Public health Public morality Law and order Legalistic	Extension of powers of arrest of clients, kerb crawling legislation Harsher sentencing
ABUSE DISCOURSE	ZERO TOLERANCE	Social welfare Social inclusion Feminist Encouraging and helping prostitutes exit prostitution	Removal of gender imbalance Social attitudinal change Policies to prevent women becoming involved and exit help

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The three models may be identified as the *regulatory* model, the *policing* model, and the *abuse discourse* model. The models describe definitions of prostitution and policy approaches as well as the preferred legislation. Table 1 below demonstrates the key characteristics of each model.<sup>1</sup>

The differences between Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow can be understood in terms of each city basing their policies upon different models. These models are not mutually exclusive, but it is likely that the more one model dominates, the less influence the others will have. However, while these models are not mutually exclusive, neither are they entirely complementary; they compete with one another for dominance. While characteristics of more than one model are likely to be evident among policy makers, one model appears to dominate in each case. The internal logic of any of the models 'tends to drive the characteristics of the others from the field as it works itself out in concrete situations'. (Mashaw 1983, p. 23).

### **APPLYING THE MODELS TO SCOTLAND**

As well as providing a useful guide as to where and why divisions exist, these models can also be used to chart the progress of policy making in Scotland, and even to suggest how a policy might be created that satisfies all the stakeholders. Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow do not fit neatly into categories, but it is possible to attribute certain characteristics to these cities which ally them more with certain models than others. As the models are competitive but not mutually exclusive it may be that institutions or organisations subscribe to more than one model, but it is nevertheless true that one model seems to be dominant in each of the three cities.

Aberdeen is primarily a regulatory city. The Tolerance Zone is working well, and there had been very little opposition to its creation. The City Council, Police and the primary agency working with prostitutes (Drugs Action) are all in favour of the zone. There has been good public consultation about the Tolerance Zone, which has been remarkably successful in helping to avoid any bad feeling in the area. There has also been effective multi-agency

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<sup>1</sup> *These models were created with information about Scotland from this research, as well as theoretical analysis from Le Grand, Kagan and Scholz, and Mackay and Schaap.*

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working and funding, with a new drop-in centre planned with support from several different organisations. Aberdeen's approach encompasses the harm reduction, health and safety and social justice approaches to policy, and representatives of agencies in Aberdeen also emphasised the need to work with prostitutes in order to find a successful policy.

Glasgow, in contrast, has favoured the abuse discourse model. Policy is centred around the Routes Out of Prostitution Social Inclusion Partnership (funded by the Scottish Executive) which 'views prostitution as harm to women' (Routes Out submission to the Local Government Committee of the Scottish Parliament). The primary characteristics of the abuse discourse model encountered in Glasgow are the rejection of the idea that prostitution is inevitable, and the insistence on attitudinal change as the main objective in the battle against prostitution. Glasgow also has the most sophisticated multi-agency group, in the Social Inclusion Partnership, of any of the three cities.

Glasgow also uses a policing approach in conjunction with the Routes Out Partnership, to reduce the public annoyance caused by prostitution in the residential Glasgow Green area of the city. This is not the primary model in Glasgow because, as a senior officer from Strathclyde Police said, in evidence to the Justice 1 Committee of the Scottish Parliament, 'it was an expensive waste of time to send prostitutes to HMP Cornton Vale'. However, Glasgow policy is to remove prostitutes where possible, as demonstrated by an anti-prostitution drive (in Autumn 2002), during which many women were arrested. The approach in Glasgow is a twin track approach, with the abuse discourse model dominating.

Edinburgh is unusual because, since the transfer of the Coburg Street zone to Salamander Street and its subsequent collapse, there has been a shift in *behaviour* from a primarily regulatory approach towards policies more akin to a policing approach. Some of the *characteristics* have remained the same, and Edinburgh has always followed policies that reflect the assumption that prostitution is inevitable. However, the attitude in Edinburgh remains primarily a regulatory approach. This dual approach in Edinburgh has occurred mainly because, while the philosophy has remained the same, the behaviour in Edinburgh is being affected by the growing disquiet among residents in affected areas, and the police are now increasingly active in moving prostitutes out of these areas.

So, the differences between Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow are fundamentally attitudinal and philosophical, as the actual policies are not

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significantly different. In the words of a senior officer at Grampian Police, in terms of policy the three cities are ‘not a million miles apart at all’. However, given that, in terms of philosophy, the cities primarily exemplify the models as described, it is important to understand the reasons why the cities have developed such different philosophical stances on the regulation of street prostitution, and how this analysis may affect the creation of policy and legislation.

### **REASONS FOR THE DIFFERENCES**

In order to recommend or implement new legislation or policy, it is necessary to understand the reasons for the three cities’ different philosophies. This question was addressed in this research through the interviews with key stakeholders in the debate over prostitution. The interviewees identified a range of possible reasons for the differences: historical, geographical, philosophical and cultural. The suggested reasons fit into three categories: the people and organisations involved; the practical details of the prostitution scenes; and the characteristics of the cities.

#### ***The people and organisations involved***

Key individuals have had enormous influence over policy over the last two decades, as emphasised by several interviewees. The same is true today, where many specific areas of policy in each city can be attributed to one person or a small group of like-minded individuals.

Groups and organisations can also be extremely influential to policy making. One important difference among Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow is that in each city the primary service providers for prostitutes have very different agendas. In Aberdeen the primary service provider is Drugs Action, which follows many typical drug agency approaches, such as working on a case-by-case basis and rejecting having an overarching political or moral agenda. In contrast, the primary service provider in Edinburgh is the Scottish Prostitutes’ Education Project, a rights group set up by and for sex workers. In Glasgow, the primary service provider has been Social Work-run Base 75, which has been a key partner in the Routes Out Partnership, and follows the Routes Out ethos in their practice.

City Councils also have the power to affect a city’s policies and attitudes. The best example of this is in Glasgow, where the City Council was responsible

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for creating a policy on prostitution in Glasgow, and also for setting up the Officer Working Group that co-ordinated the creation of the Routes Out Partnership.

As the main agency dealing with the legal aspects of prostitution, the three police forces have also been instrumental in not just implementing but also formulating the cities' policies. An interviewee from Grampian Police said that the Tolerance Zone in Aberdeen developed incrementally, as police contained the street prostitutes within a small area to minimise offence.

#### ***The practical details of prostitution scenes***

There have been different patterns of prostitution in each of the cities, and this has impacted upon the development of policy. The number of prostitutes, as well as the areas they and their customers frequent and the history of the cities, have all affected the attitudes taken towards prostitution. In Aberdeen and Edinburgh prostitution gathered around the dock and harbour areas of the cities. In Glasgow, however, the 'drag' areas are in the city centre, and in the residential Glasgow Green and Gallowgate areas. For these reasons, prostitution has caused more public offence and nuisance in Glasgow, which has contributed to the 'zero tolerance' attitude, and the influence of the policing model. In Edinburgh, prostitution was tolerated while it remained in its 'natural' area, but as soon as development increased and the Tolerance Zone was moved, public nuisance increased and policy moved towards a policing model.

The extent of drug use among prostitutes has had a large impact on policy and attitude. In Glasgow a larger proportion of prostitutes are intravenous drug users (estimated 95%) compared to Edinburgh (estimated 50%), and this has made it impossible for Glasgow to accept Edinburgh's argument of informed consent and choice among prostitutes.

Also important has been the differing rate of spread of HIV/AIDS in the three cities, which has had an enormous impact on the formulation of prostitution policy in Scottish cities. The Edinburgh Tolerance Zone, and indeed Edinburgh's attitude to the regulation of prostitution resulted in part from the 'explosion of HIV and AIDS in the peripheral housing schemes' (interviewee from Lothian Health Board). In Edinburgh in the early 1980s between a third and a quarter of Edinburgh's drug users were infected with HIV, compared to just under 5% in Glasgow, for various reasons. The concern about prostitutes

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becoming infected and exacerbating the spread of the virus certainly contributed to the harm reduction outlook in Edinburgh at the time.

#### *Characteristics of the cities*

During this research, one interviewee commented that the difference between Edinburgh and Glasgow was like ‘the difference between **The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie** and Billy Connolly’. It is hard to define the ‘cultural’ differences between the three cities, although many interviewees mentioned them as a contributory factor to the differences in prostitution policy.

As well as culture, some interviewees also mentioned religion (or at least religiosity) as a possible reason for the cities’ different attitude. Although this is also rather hard to prove, census data confirms that many more people in Glasgow define themselves as religious, and people in Aberdeen and Edinburgh are much more likely to report that they have no religion.

Socio-economic trends in the cities also affect not only the trends in prostitution numbers and scenes, but also the attitudes of individuals and agencies considering policy and legislation. Glasgow has a higher proportion of people who are unemployed and of people have no formal qualifications than Aberdeen or Edinburgh. The lower level of socio-economic prosperity in this city may contribute to the Routes Out view that women involved in prostitution believe they have no choice but to become involved in prostitution, and do so out of desperation. Conversely, higher prosperity in Aberdeen and Edinburgh helps to support the opposing view, that prostitutes do have a choice, and should be supported and managed in their work until they choose to leave it.

Lastly, political culture may have an impact upon city-wide policy. In Glasgow there has certainly been a much stronger feminist influence (and possibly a more explicit gender awareness), notably from the City Council, the Health Board and voluntary organisations, than in Aberdeen and Edinburgh. This may also have had some influence on the development of the abuse discourse model, as opposed to a more ‘rights-based’ regulatory approach favoured elsewhere.

#### *Explanations for the cities’ attitudes*

Edinburgh’s adoption of a regulatory approach has been largely influenced by the city’s history of prostitution, which has always been ‘out of sight, out of mind’, with discreet brothels largely accepted by society, as long as no one

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admitted they were there. With the added issue of the HIV/AIDS epidemic of the early 1980s, and the input from Scotpep, together with key players in the city who favoured pragmatism, it is not surprising that the regulatory model seemed so attractive. Even since the recent collapse of the Tolerance Zone, and the accompanying public calls for increased police involvement, the key players in Edinburgh have retained a regulatory attitude, even though agency behaviour has been forced towards a policing model.

Aberdeen has been attracted to the regulatory model even more gradually, and perhaps naturally. The history and geography of street prostitution in the city have ensured that it has remained in the same area, which has very little residential property. In addition to this, key individuals have been supportive of the Tolerance Zone, and the main service-providing agency has been one that acts on individual cases' merits, rather than a principled agenda. These factors, as well as the relatively small scale of prostitution, have meant that Aberdeen has successfully followed a regulatory model.

In Glasgow, policy has been much more strongly informed by the City Council than by service providers, and the police have been keen to take a similar stance. This police attitude has been encouraged by the fact that street prostitution in Glasgow has not been confined to a non-residential area. The feminist influence has been strong, particularly within the Routes Out of Prostitution Social Inclusion Partnership, which is funded by the Scottish Executive. The scale of the problem, as well as the characteristics of the prostitutes (particularly with regard to the levels of drug dependency), have also encouraged key stakeholders to adopt an abuse discourse attitude, believing that the women involved in prostitution have not made a true choice to undertake such an activity, and that they need help to exit above all else.

## **THE IMPACT ON POLICY OF RESEARCH**

After the Bill was rejected, plans were made for an Expert Group to consider whether a change in legislation relating to prostitution is needed and to report to the Justice Department of the Scottish Executive. Stakeholders interviewed for this research agreed that there is a need for change in the law, although some qualified this by emphasising the need for a whole range of measures, not merely legislative change.

### ***Could anything work nationwide?***

Interviewees gave a clear indication of why no single policy is likely to be acceptable and successful nationwide. Interviewees from Glasgow were keen to argue that the abuse discourse model could translate to other cities, but interviewees from Aberdeen and Edinburgh were reluctant to agree. For regulatory policy to be successful, both in terms of prevention and enforcement, it should not be based on a single assumption about motivation for non-compliance. This means that legislators should aim to formulate legislation that will be effective regardless of what motivates behaviour, and regardless of the principles underpinning policy implementation.<sup>2</sup>

Any policy based on tolerance of prostitution would be unacceptable in Glasgow as the model there, based around the Social Inclusion Partnership, is an abuse discourse model. Such a policy might also be unacceptable in Edinburgh, where there has been public pressure for greater emphasis on the policing model. Conversely, a policy based on zero tolerance would not sit well with key stakeholders in Aberdeen, who believe that some women see prostitution as a job they have to do and that as such the local authority should adopt a regulatory role. Similarly, a zero tolerance approach would run into considerable opposition in Edinburgh where it is widely believed that if agencies (in particular the police) clamp down too hard prostitution will be driven underground.

What is needed, given that a change in legislation or policy has been welcomed, is a range of strategies that will be acceptable regardless of which model is dominant, be it regulatory, policing or abuse discourse. Using the

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<sup>2</sup> *For further discussion see Kagan and Scholz (1980), and Le Grand (1997).*

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three models of attitudes and approaches towards the regulation of street prostitution, certain predictions can be made about how the three cities would like to see the law changed.

#### ***Recommendations for the future***

Given that Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow hold such different attitudes about street prostitution, there may be some difficulty in finding policies that are 'robust' and can satisfy those who follow an abuse discourse on one hand, and the regulators on the other. This research has shown that the differences between the cities are philosophical in nature, and can be attributed to a number of historical, geographical, social and political factors. It is extremely unlikely that there will be a significant change of heart in any of the cities. The conclusion is, therefore, that policy makers and legislators should attempt to find policies that do not conflict with attitudes to prostitution that are associated with any of the three models. Otherwise, there is likely to be strong opposition (possibly including a challenge on the basis of human rights legislation), and potentially poor or incomplete implementation of policy. A number of factors must be taken into account in order to avoid this outcome.

For example, there is support from service providers for consultation with women involved in prostitution. It has been suggested that without co-operation of people involved in the sex industry, no legislation could be fully effective. Co-operation and consultation with women involved in prostitution, if carefully structured, should be acceptable to all policy makers, and would further understanding of the needs, wants and experiences of prostitutes.

Better and more extensive research is needed into the issue before policy should be finalised. This was mentioned by interviewees and in Parliamentary Committee meetings. Research is needed to demonstrate and explain the trends in, and reasons for, indoor prostitution, to examine the emotional impact of prostitution on prostitutes, and to explore prostitutes' motivation for becoming involved. It is important that any future research and legislation also considers the issues faced by prostitutes in other areas of sex work, such as saunas, brothels and private flats. The issue of trafficking of women and children into prostitution in the UK is also one which has become of prime importance and urgency, and should be taken into account during any discussion of prostitution in Scotland.

It was mentioned by several of the stakeholders interviewed for this research that the Prostitution Tolerance Zones (Scotland) Bill 2002 was inappropriate

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because, by focusing solely on street prostitution, it failed to take into account a broader picture of prostitution in Scotland.

#### **WHAT CAN BE DONE?**

Using the three models, it is clear that there are certain common characteristics in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow. The models are competitive but not mutually exclusive, and although each city adopts one model as the dominant model, characteristics of each model are present, and it is these areas of overlap that should be exploited to provide the basis for robust policies. The analysis of the models has shown that certain characteristics are present in all three models, such as the acceptance that women who do not want to be involved in prostitution should be assisted to exit. By using these models it is possible to find points of agreement in order to formulate robust policy.

Despite their differences over some issues, interviewees all agreed that there is a place for harm reduction measures designed to protect women involved in prostitution and members of the public. This might include sexual health advice, free condoms, improved street lighting etc. All of the models accept that harm reduction is necessary, although there is tension over whether this approach is appropriate in the long term.

All the interviewees also agreed that the prostitution of underage children is child abuse and must be stopped. This echoes the predictions made by the models, as children cannot be viewed as criminals or citizens capable of consent. The only appropriate approach to ending child abuse through prostitution must involve effective partnership working between relevant individuals and agencies. Similarly, all attempts must be continued to end the trafficking of women and children into prostitution.

#### ***Social Inclusion measures***

By following policies of social justice local and national government have a role in reducing the incentives for women to enter prostitution. These policies may include: improvement in housing provision; removal of the 'benefits trap'; improving employment prospects (through demand- or supply-side policies as appropriate); and improved services for substance users. Implemented successfully, these policies could remove some of the motivating factors which lead to people becoming involved in prostitution.

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### ***Partnership***

It might also be beneficial for Aberdeen and Edinburgh to create more formal partnerships in the style of the Routes Out of Prostitution Social Inclusion Partnership. Edinburgh and Aberdeen would certainly benefit from the levels of funding made available to such partnerships, although the abuse discourse of the Glasgow partnership would be unacceptable in Aberdeen and Edinburgh.

### ***Legislation***

Several of the interviewees for this research, particularly those from Glasgow, called for legislation that would remove the ‘unfairness’ of prostitutes being criminalised while people who attempt to buy sex are not. Legislation which criminalised prostitutes’ customers would certainly be welcomed by the residents in areas where women who are not working are being approached and sometimes intimidated by kerb-crawlers. This would be unlikely to appeal to anyone advocating a regulatory approach for two reasons: firstly, it might change the customers’ behaviour in a way that would potentially endanger prostitutes, and secondly it would not do anything to remove the stigma for the prostitutes themselves.

Another possible legislative change, suggested by a representative of Glasgow City Council, would be to change the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act so that women who have been charged for soliciting do not then have a sexual offence record that might be a barrier to exiting prostitution. This would be welcomed by both an abuse discourse approach as the removal of a potential exit barrier, and by the regulatory approach as a removal of one form of stigma for sex workers. This shows that by interpreting legislation using the three models of approach to regulating prostitution it is possible to anticipate reactions to possible changes in the law.

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite the fact that the Prostitution Tolerance Zones (Scotland) Bill 2002 was rejected, the interviewees for this research believed that the debate had been largely useful, and that it was a promising start to a more extensive consideration of the issue. As one interviewee said, ‘the Bill has failed only in the technical sense that it is not law. It’s been spectacularly successful in terms of getting people to consider the reality of prostitution’. The good work

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that has been started by the Bill must continue until all the key stakeholders are satisfied that the issue has been given the attention it deserves.

The most important result of the introduction of the Prostitution Tolerance Zones (Scotland) Bill was the debate that has been initiated. Although the Bill was not passed, the discussion that took place within the Scottish Parliament has ensured that prostitution will no longer be a taboo subject for public debate. Some protagonists in the debate suggested that prostitution could follow the same path as drink-driving and domestic abuse and become at the same time talked about yet utterly condemned. While this change may not be imminent, certainly some of the reluctance to talk about the issue has been broken down.

That is not to say that a solution will follow easily. There is a need for further public debate and extensive research to shed light on the questions raised by recent discussions.

This research was completed in 2003, and therefore has included no comment on the progress or debate of the revised Prostitution Tolerance Zones Bill. Once the second Bill has been progressed through Parliament, and accepted or rejected, there will be scope for further research on the matter, and for policy recommendations to be made.

However, since the completion of this research the Expert Group on Prostitution has published its first report about street prostitution in Scotland. Early conclusions recommend the creation of a national strategy framework, accompanied by local planning; 'corporate and multi-agency responsibility'; a monitoring framework for the implementation of policy; policies aimed at influencing and education public opinion; and law enforcement. The Expert Group has recommended that the law should be changed to focus on offensive behaviour by either prostitutes or their clients rather than criminalising only the prostitute's soliciting behaviour. (1<sup>st</sup> report of the Expert Group on Prostitution 2004). The Prostitution Tolerance Zones (Scotland) Bill (version 2) remains at the initial Committee stage of progress in the Scottish Parliament.

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