



## Upholding patriarchy? Why only some women?

Bbc Woman's Hour have run a series on sex work this week. They hosted the arguments on Monday & Tuesday and you can listen [here](#).

I'm not sure where I stand on the criminalisation of the purchase of sex. I'm very conflicted, because I know women who say they choose to sell sexual services, and I believe them. I believe them, because I believe women. I also believe the women who say that they were coerced into selling sexual services; either via violence or the threat of it, or because they didn't have any other choices available to them. I know that it's ok to believe both of these groups of women, because we all have individual experiences and these will not be the same as another women, even if the circumstances are very similar.

Perhaps, as a woman who has never sold sex, I don't need to have an opinion! But I've never been one to say that you can't have a view if you've never experienced a particular situation, just that your view can't be considered that of an expert in the field. You're just someone with an opinion - and let's face it, in these times of social media, everyone has an opinion and most of them wouldn't be considered experts in any shape or form - whatever they are expressing their views about.

Whether it's ok for me to have an opinion on sex work or not, I do have real concerns about some women being held to a higher standard than others. In the Woman's Hour interview on Tuesday, Jane Garvey spoke to 3 sex workers from Glasgow and stated to one of the women that "[she] couldn't be doing anything that perpetuates the patriarchy more than sex work".

According to the interviewer, this woman, who chooses to sell sex, is perpetuating the patriarchy more than violent men? More than men who sexually abuse their children? More than men who traffic and force women to be raped by other men?

We all uphold patriarchy. It's impossible for us not to - we live in a capitalist patriarchy!! We can choose to spend our lives with women, choose to resist (as much as we can) the patriarchal standards of beauty and body image, but we can't avoid it completely. Well - I can't, at least. And I've tried - I make women the centre of my world, spend most time with women, read books written by women and talk about sexism and how it impacts my world with the (few!) men I spend time with. But I'm not perfect - and neither is anyone else. We're all doing what we can to survive, under a Capitalist Patriarchy. Sometimes, survival means buying into every thing it stands for - and that's ok. I'm not going to make some women more responsible than others for a society where they are faced with oppression.

I don't think women should be blamed for "upholding patriarchy". I don't think some women are more equal than others. I don't think women who choose to sell sex (regardless of your views on that choice) should be held to a higher standard than a a woman who is a business leader, a journalist, a teacher, a stay at home parent, a childless woman.

I don't think women should have the accusation of "upholding patriarchy" thrown at them during



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an interview. Especially not for a radio show that is satisfied with an hour a day to discuss issues affecting women. How's that for "upholding patriarchy"?