

Summary

Prostitution could be found in the oldest cultures of the world (Lew-Starowicz, 2001), in all social strata. It had a sacred and secular character, accompanied rulers, priests, average citizens and the poorest. It operated in the light of law, on its outskirts or outside of it. Representatives of this profession lived in poverty, others had to wear special clothes and live in strictly defined areas of cities; for some of them this involved greater access to resources and independence. Attitudes towards prostitution were varied, from full acceptance, through tolerance to prohibition or punishment. In the population of these women, as in the lens, various social, economic and ideological processes and mechanisms were reflected.

The book devoted to this subject consists of four parts. In the first one, the phenomenon of prostitution was characterized at the systemic level. The existing definitions have been reviewed based on the factors describing them. The book tried to show that the very process of conceptualization had often a world-view character and was rooted in the prevailing socio-cultural conditions. Attempts have also been made to present the social history of prostitution along with its variations occurring in different epochs. They indicated what roles it played in each described period and also what the social attitude towards it were.

In the third text referring to legal aspects, issues related to legislative issues and various positions on existing solutions in Europe related to (de) legalization and (de) criminalization were raised. In this context, one of the embarrassing examples, appearing on the pages of history, explicitly circumventing the law in relation to women practicing prostitution resulting from existing stereotypes and prejudices is also thoroughly described. It was based on the belief that this profession includes unconditional consent to sex (in any situation and form) and prostituted women were considered „widely available“ for men. According to this dehumanizing view, women who were raped while working were deprived of the possibility of protection and fair treatment in court. Such discriminatory practices, as it is easy to guess, did not concern only prostitutes, but were also extended to women who were characterized by immoral behavior in the eyes of the court (men).

This part of the publication, despite the fact that it's a small part of the whole work, seems very important to the author, because it indicates how dangerously easy it is to identify groups of people who will be excluded and deprived of protection of the law (exclusion as a result of a different lifestyle than the general one). It also indicates how often gender discrimination appears camouflaged. The Special UN Rapporteur on violence against women speaks and writes about it: „If it is considered that the woman's sexual behavior is incompatible with the canons in the community, she can be punished (...). In most

societies, a woman's right to choose in questions of sexual activity is limited to marriage with a man from the same society. A woman who makes a choice without social approval or maintains sexual relations with a man, without being married ... is usually a victim of violence and degrading treatment „(Amnesty International Report, 2006, p. 63). At the end of this subsection examples of the so-called good practices aimed at changing the general state of knowledge and awareness about sexual violence against women (also in the area of the judiciary).

The second part of the work was devoted to the main characters of these narratives and thus directly to women in prostitution. Presented over the years were leading ideas and views referring to the reasons for taking such a way of life. Presented are considerations and analyzes referring to the issue of the identity (including social) of employees of the sex business sphere in connection with such contexts as equality / inequality, freedom of choice / coercion, sexual violence. As Miluska writes (1996 p. 9), identity is „a synthesis of dialectical relations between stability and change, between individual, group, social and cultural, between cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of human functioning, between conscious and unconscious, between evolution and the crisis“. Reflections on the phenomenon of prostitution raise, among others, questions about the causes, motivations but also about the „individual and social nature of man, the possibility of personal creation of his own psychological existence in the world and interaction with the outside world“ (Miluska, 1996 p. 5). The second part also attempts to present the phenomenon of trafficking in women (including minors) for prostitution. Such analyzes seem to be extremely necessary but at the same time difficult to describe in a most reliable and scientific way one of the most cruel forms of exploitation and violence.

The third part opens with a text devoted to the discussion of research results relating to the population of women providing sexual services. To accomplish this, a thorough review of empirical works of both Polish and foreign authors was made. The scope of exploratory research was elaborated in detail to describe individual categories referring to biography, lifestyle, and psychosocial functioning. Thanks to this, the image of this social group was drawn out thanks to research over several decades. This subsection became the starting point for the analyzes undertaken in the fourth chapter. At the same time, it was emphasized how difficult it is to conduct reliable research in this area, because, as Weitzer (2005) writes, there is probably no second such topic in the field of social sciences, which would be influenced to such an extent by ideology.

Referring to the present raised in the title of the third chapter, a widespread contemporary range of sexual services offered is outlined. In the modern world, where almost everything is for sale, you can buy company, virginity, erotic image or even sex with a robot. A futuristic sounding vision of replacing a man with a machine in the context of an intimate relationship becomes reality. The author reflects on the causes and consequences of such actions, trying to determine at the same time how much they can be identified with prostitution. The next subsection refers to an extremely important topic, namely sexual assistants in contact with people with disabilities. Tabooing the sex of this social group in public space is tantamount to depriving them of the right to express their needs in this area. In the social discourse, the aspect of their sex (gender) is often blurred, let alone sexuality. The author in this text also writes about the existing solutions in the world in the implementation of sexual needs, especially for those who can not satisfy them alone. It is also a discourse on the benefits, possibilities, limitations of sexual accompaniment. There is no unambiguous answer or thesis. On the other hand, the main problem areas and the possibilities of solving them are indicated along with the simultaneous awareness of their limitations.

The leading idea, accompanying the author, was the desire to present the phenomenon of prostitution against the background or in the light of the social processes taking place, which were important for the scope and form of prostitution. At the same time, due to the psychological and sexological interest rooted in education, it seemed important to identify concepts, theories and research relating to the perspective of individual choices, factors or issues related to the lifestyle and identity of these women. The aim of the work was first and foremost a deep insight into the phenomenon together with the accompanying macro and micro contexts. At the same time, in accordance with the previously adopted paradigm, about which Grzonka (2013), among others wrote, it was assumed that this is a part of reality that should be learned and analyzed (to understand it) and not be valued.

As indicated in the subtitle, women who undertook this profession were first placed in the sphere of the sacred, then profanum to, in the light of the latest approaches, refer to them as persons performing a certain professional work. The latter aspect is influenced, inter alia, by changes related to contemporary customs, which is associated with the postulated freedom of having one's body. We are currently living in a time of global changes regarding sex life. This is evident in the sphere of popular culture, the transformation of relationships, marriages and families (Giddens, Anthony, 2007, Izdebski, Paprzycka, and Mianowska, 2014). Contemporary „confluent love” is, as Giddens writes, „active, insecure love, and as such it clings to such traits of romantic love as” forever „or” one and only one „. „Sexuality becomes more and more the property of the individual, the more life project refers to itself and the more the identity is treated as a reflection of self-organized effort” (Giddens, 2007, pp. 61, 248).

It is related to three categories of changes: post-industrial revolution (equality changes, smaller number of births), life cycle revolution (life expectancy) and revolution in psychological education (strengthening of the partner model) (Skolnick, Skolnick, 2007, Szlendak, 2010). This „new era in intimate relations” manifests itself in the processes of individuation which, according to Ulrich Beck and Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim (1995), characterize, as Izdebski, Paprzycka and Mianowska write (2014, p. 14), „the liberation from traditional, historically given social forms and ties, loss of stability as a consequence of rejection of traditional beliefs about action, faith and norms and reintegration, or the emergence of a new type of social ties. These three dimensions are closely related to the life situation and self-awareness and manifest themselves on the one hand in the disintegration of earlier social forms, and on the other in the requirements of individuals (...). As a result of these changes, the number of morally and practically possible choices of life forms has risen and contemporary biographies become „self-reflective” constructs.

The subtitle „sacrum - profanum - sexual work” also contains a hidden assumption about the desire to present the phenomenon of prostitution in relation to the past, present and future (with the simultaneous indication that these contexts intermingle each other).

In order to avoid placing the phenomenon of prostitution in the area of deviance (which was related to the purpose of the work: describing, examining, analyzing, and not evaluating), theories regarding the role of protective factors and risk factors in biographies were accepted and used in the work. Such a construction allows to indicate in the course of education and upbringing those factors and mechanisms that favor the process of positive adaptation, and also enable coping in situations related to the threat. It is an attempt to develop a theoretical model related to building during the development of resources, which would allow in the future to function also in the area of difficult sexual work.

The author tried to make the work interdisciplinary, and the analyzes carried out were a reliable multi-faceted narrative in the field of humanities and social sciences.

(tłum. Karolina Perez)