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## **The Prostitution of Women – A Conscious Choice of a Life Path or Economic Duress**

Prostytucja kobiet – świadomy wybór drogi życiowej czy przymus ekonomiczny

**Streszczenie.** Etiologia zachowań nierządnych jest problemem wielozakresowym. Nie sposób wyjaśnić uwarunkowań prostytucji odwołując się jedynie do koncepcji monokausalnych. W dotychczasowych, tradycyjnych ujęciach etiologicznych dominuje podejście symultaniczne wskazujące na powiązane ze sobą układy czynników zawierających się w środowiskach wychowawczych, wynikających z kondycji ekonomicznej jak i zmian kulturowych, które modyfikują podejście do sfery obyczajowości, seksualności, moralności. Jednak zmieniający się obraz współczesnej prostytucji wymaga poszukiwania także innych czynników warunkujących to zjawisko, a znajdujących niejako poza tradycyjnymi obszarami eksploracji. Uwzględniając fakt, że prostytucja powiązana z patologią środowisk rodzinnych i autentycznym ubóstwem stanowi margines zjawiska, zainteresowanie badawcze skierowano na sferę temperamentu człowieka, a w szczególności na potrzeby stymulacyjne.

*Cel i metoda:* Głównym celem opracowania była analiza zróżnicowanych czynników, jakie towarzyszyć mogą podejmowaniu decyzji o uprawianiu prostytucji, a także wskazanie możliwości przeciwdziałania zjawisku. Dla uzyskania pełnego obrazu sytuacji życiowej omówiono także wybrane elementy profilu osobowościowego oraz poziom reaktywności. W badaniach wykorzystano metodę przeszukiwania źródeł wtórnych.

*Rezultaty:* W opracowaniu przedstawiono trzy stanowiska prezentujące zróżnicowane poglądy na etiologię prostytucji. Pierwsze z nich odwołuje się do tradycyjnego układu czynników warunkujących zjawisko prostytucji zawierających się w przede wszystkim w środowiskach wychowawczych oraz w warunkach kulturowych. Multikausalne syndromy czynników warunkujących prostytucję obejmują głównie przejawy patologii rodziny, dysfunkcyjności rodzin, obiektywne ubóstwo lub subiektywne poczucie niedostatku, a także silnie stymulujące, choć w niektórych przypadkach demoralizujące, wpływy środowisk rówieśniczych i oddziaływania mass mediów kreujących konsumpcyjny styl życia. Ostatnia kategoria czynników w sposób szczególny wpływać może na postawy i zachowania młodych ludzi akceptujących nieograniczony konsumpcjonizm. W tej części opracowania przywołano wyniki badań

reprezentujące model multikauzalny, m.in. badania: J. Kurzępy, M. Kowalczyk-Jamnickiej, J. Moczydłowskiej. Druga omówiona perspektywa etiologiczna odwołuje się do ujęcia psychoseksualnego, w którym wskazuje się na rolę specyficznych cech osobowości oraz doświadczeń seksualnych jako czynników predestynujących do uprawiania nierządu. Zwolennicy tej perspektywy wskazują na niezależność czynników psychoseksualnych od zmieniających się warunków społeczno-ekonomicznych, dzięki temu nabierają one cech uniwersalnych. Dla poparcia tego stanowiska przytoczono badania J. Sztobryn-Giercuskiewicz, J. Pabian i Z. Izdebskiego. W ujęciu psychoseksualnym podkreśla się rolę traumatycznych doświadczeń seksualnych i zaburzonych cech osobowości kobiet prostytuujących się, które to czynniki mogą ze sobą korelować. Ostatnim zaprezentowanym stanowiskiem jest ujęcie stymulacyjne. Stanowi ono alternatywę etiologiczną dla wcześniejszych tradycyjnych ujęć. Kładzie się w nim nacisk na zróżnicowane zapotrzebowanie na stymulację ludzi, co powoduje, że niektóre osoby oczekują silnych bodźców, które utrzymują ich stan pobudzenia na wysokim poziomie. Z tego względu osoby te są bardziej skłonne do podejmowania ryzykownych zachowań, do których zaliczyć można także uprawianie nierządu. Ujęcie stymulacyjne pozwala na wyjaśnienie przyczyn uprawiania prostytucji przez osoby, które nie wywodzą się ze środowisk niewydolnych wychowawczo, a gratyfikacje materialne uzyskiwane w trakcie uprawiania nierządu nie są jedynym czynnikiem inspirującym. Opracowanie kończy omówienie możliwości podejmowania oddziaływań profilaktycznych, które uwzględnić powinny zachodzące zmiany kulturowe i społeczne oraz wychodzić poza tradycyjne schematy związane z restrukturyzacją środowisk spatologizowanych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** prostytucja, czynniki ryzyka, osobowość prostytutka, potrzeby stymulujące ujęcie symultaniczne.

**Summary.** Aetiology of indecent behaviours is a multidimensional issue. It is impossible to explain the conditions of prostitution while only referring to mono-causal concepts. In the previous traditional aetiological approaches, the simultaneous perspective is dominating and this emphasises the interrelated systems of factors found in educational environments and resulting from the economic conditions and cultural changes which modify the attitudes towards mores, sexuality and morals. However, the changing image of contemporary prostitution requires other factors determining this phenomenon and being found beyond the traditional areas of analysis. Considering the fact that prostitution connected with the dysfunctionality of family environments and authentic poverty is only incidental to the phenomenon, the research interests were focused on the sphere of human temperament and, especially, needs of stimulation.

*Objective and method:* The main objective of the article was analysing different factors that could accompany the decision on practising prostitution and showing the possibilities of counteracting the phenomenon. In order to obtain a complete picture of a life situation, the selected elements of the personality profile and level of reactivity were discussed. The research used the method of browsing through secondary sources.

*Results:* The article introduced three perspectives related to different approaches to the aetiology of prostitution. The first one refers to the traditional system of factors determining

the phenomenon of prostitution that could be found in educational environments and cultural conditions. The multi-causal syndromes of factors determining prostitution mainly include the symptoms of family dysfunctionality, objective poverty or a subjective feeling of neediness, as well as the strongly stimulating, yet, in some cases, also depraving, influence of peer groups and the mass media promoting consumerism. The last category of factors may especially influence the attitudes and behaviours of young people accepting unlimited consumerism. That part of the article mentioned research results representing the multi-causal model. Among others, those were the studies of J. Kurzėpa, M. Kowalczyk-Jamnicka, and J. Moczydłowska. The second discussed aetiological perspective refers to the psychosexual approach, which indicates the importance of specific personality traits and sexual experiences as the factors predestining women to practise prostitution. Followers of this perspective emphasise the independence of psychosexual factors of the changing social and economic conditions; therefore, these factors become universal. To support this approach, the research studies of J. Sztobryn-Giercuskiewicz, J. Pabian and Z. Izdebski were mentioned. The psychosexual perspective emphasises the role of traumatic sexual experiences and the distorted personality traits of prostituting women; these factors can be correlated. The last presented approach was the stimulation perspective. This constitutes an aetiological alternative to the previous traditional perspectives. It emphasises that people have different demands for stimulation; therefore, some need strong stimuli which will maintain their excitement level on a high level. Some people are more inclined towards trying risky things, including prostitution. The stimulation perspective enables one to explain the reasons for practising prostitution by people who do not come from families with upbringing inefficiency, and material advantages obtained thanks to prostitution are not the only inspiring factor to them. The article ends with a discussion concerning possibilities of preventive measures which should take cultural and social changes into consideration and go beyond traditional patterns connected with reorganisation of dysfunctional environments.

**Keywords:** prostitution, risk factors, simultaneous perspective, personality of the prostitute, stimulating needs.

## 1. Introduction

The phenomenon of prostitution, although seemingly well known, changes constantly. There are new forms appearing. Ranges of sex services are changing, the age of people prostituting themselves is reducing, and the dynamics of the phenomenon increases periodically. The only unchanging factor is the demand for these services. Therefore, one could ask whether present prostitution practices are only the symptoms of moral degradation, economic duress or social margins' ill practices. Perhaps, if prostitution were practised also by people who were not marginalised, these could also be the source of satisfying one's needs, looking for specific experienc-

es, or conscious choices of a life path. It has been 10 years since the last author's in-depth study concerning female prostitution. It is a long period of time, considering the speed of social transformations occurring within it. Therefore, the issue of prostitution is worth re-analysing, taking the changes which have occurred in this scope and which require multidimensional assessment into consideration.

This article aims at attempting to perceive the phenomenon of prostitution from the perspective of different situational and personal contexts. These will be deliberations concerning different possible dimensions connected with prostitution practice, which will enable one to answer the question mentioned in the article's title.

## **2. Objective and method**

The issues of women working as prostitutes will be discussed on the basis of the related theoretical and empirical studies. The main objective of the presented research is determining the reasons and motives of women who decide to practise prostitution, as well as their expectations connected to this ill practice.

Accordingly, the analysis of the discussed issues will be based on determining the following matters with the use of literature on the subject:

1. discussion on reasons for and motives connected with making the decision concerning going into prostitution, and factors related to a life situation increasing the risk of prostitution;
2. indicating the types of needs satisfied in relation to clients;
3. introducing basic characteristics of personality profiles of women who are in prostitution.

As was mentioned earlier, the study is of a theoretical nature; therefore, the used method is the analysis of literature on the subject (secondary sources) (Rubacha, 2008).

## **3. Conditions of prostitution from the perspective of previous research**

The changing picture of prostitution is inextricably linked with changing reasons and risk factors related to this phenomenon. This part of the artic-

le describes the most significant assumptions of the most often mentioned aetiological perspectives.

### 3.1. Traditional perspective: a simultaneous one

From the traditional, simultaneous perspective, the pathological phenomena, including prostitution, are perceived in view of conditions of, most of all, educational background having their impact on an individual. These conditions create a multi-causal syndrome of factors having their impact on an individual at approximately the same time and characterised with cause-and-effect relationships. The traditional perspective most often emphasises the impact of a dysfunctional family, peer group, as well as disharmony between expectations and actual economic possibilities. Systems of factors perceived as directly connected with practising prostitution were those characterising a dysfunctional family, especially within the scope of a procreative function (social loneliness of children), a care and education function (parental negligence and upbringing inefficiency), a socialisation function (handing down anti-social behaviours), a psychohygienic function (emotional dysfunctionality, loosening or breaking emotional ties in a family), family conflicts, and family pathologisation (drinking problems, multi-range forms of violence)\*. These factors were usually accumulated while showing a dysfunctional picture of a family and causing the acquisition of destructive behaviour patterns by children. However, according to the current research, deep family dysfunctionality is of marginal significance in relation to the origins of prostitution. This challenges the concepts which show a prostitute as a woman coming from a dysfunctional environment solely. Another element of the simultaneous model is economic discomfort, which is the result of unrealised material aspirations. Initially, this factor was being strongly related to other symptoms of a situational syndrome connected with practising prostitution, that is, mainly pathologisation and dysfunctionality of families (Jasińska, 1967, p. 20–28; Bielecki, 1959/3, p. 430–432). On

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\* The issues of environmental conditions of prostitution included in the simultaneous perspective are discussed more extensively by, among others, M. Jasińska (1967), *Proces społecznego wykołajenia nieletnich dziewcząt*; M. Kowalczyk-Jamnicka (1998), *Społeczno-kulturowe uwarunkowania prostytucji w Polsce*; J. Moczydłowska, *Rodzinne uwarunkowania prostytucji nieletnich dziewcząt*, „Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze” 1996, no. 10, p. 14; J. Kurzępa (2005), *Młodzież pogranicza – „świnki”, czyli o prostytucji nieletnich*, p. 189–196, 213, and K. Charkowska (2010), *Zjawisko prostytucji w doświadczeniach prostytuujących się kobiet*, p. 105.

the other hand, since the 80s, researchers have started to analyse a subjective feeling of neediness experienced by women working as prostitutes instead of real and difficult life conditions (Antoniszyn, 1985, p. 95; Kowalczyk-Jamnicka, 1998, p. 97; Kurzępa, 2005; Kurzępa, 2008/7–8). Women and girls still decide to work as prostitutes for economic reasons; however, one should emphasise that they are most often motivated by the need of having access to luxury goods. The simultaneous model also assigned a significant role to a peer group, which, by performing important functions in the process of socialisation, becomes a creator of aberrant behaviours. In the research study conducted by Małgorzata Kowalczyk-Jamnicka (1998) and Jacek Kurzępa (2005), behaviour patterns manifested by a group completed negative family patterns effectively. Peer groups promoting quite diverse moral standards encourage their members to take risks and make morally questionable choices. Therefore, there was an accumulation of reasons channelling the process of moral corruption which, as a consequence, led to prostitution (Moczyłowska, 1995/10, p. 4–6; Kowalczyk-Jamnicka, 1999/1, 1998, p. 152; Kurzępa, 2005, p. 135). The mentioned perspectives, because of their certain one-sidedness and simplistic perspective of the issue of aetiology of prostitution, did not give a possibility of explaining the reasons for prostitution practised by girls coming from the so-called good families.

The simultaneous perspective cannot ignore the cultural area, which shows changes occurring in mores, morals and attitudes towards sexuality. In connection to these factors, J. Kurzępa assigns a special role to the mass media which influence young people in a very evocative style in long-range and incidental areas. The first area concerns behaviour and attitudes of the recipient. These are mostly unfavourable, since they stimulate the need of possession and unlimited consumption. The second area refers to showing the patterns which should be applied by the recipients (Kurzępa, 2005, p. 190). The fashion and patterns promoted by the mass media may have an influence on everybody, both young people coming from environments characterised with upbringing capability and those from environments with considerable upbringing inefficiency.

### **3.2. Psychosexual perspective**

Another perspective in the area of aetiology of prostitution indicates specific psychical and sexual features which could predestine women to practise prostitution. These factors are the most stable group of conditions, since they are not dependent on social or economic transformations; still, they

usually show the consequences of deeply concealed dramatic experiences from childhood. The literature mentions the notion of the “prostitute personality”, which is characterised by an ill-developed attitude towards herself, distorted assessment concerning a woman–man relation, as well as immaturity, emotional disorders, specific moral relativism, and an inability of establishing and maintaining normal emotional ties (Sztobryn-Giercuskiewicz, 2004, p. 37; Pabian, 1973/103, p. 542–556). However, the dysfunctional features that could be related to the above-mentioned prostitute personality are defined quite vaguely. Regardless of the possibility of distinguishing certain distinctive features characterising the prostituting individuals, the cause-and-effect sequence cannot be determined. Therefore, one cannot tell whether the mentioned features constituting the profile of “prostitute personality” are of a primary nature – they may condition the inclination towards prostitution, or a secondary nature, which results from the practice of prostitution. On the other hand, in relation to the sphere of sexuality, the previous research has suggested that there are considerable disorders found in prostitutes (Kowalczyk-Jamnicka, 1998, p. 157 and further). Once again, one could ask whether this is a cause or an effect of prostitution. In many girls practising prostitution, the mentioned sexual drive disorders are the effects of an early sexual initiation and these intensify under the influence of intense sexual activity. The reason for these disorders and development of the prostitute personality may be the experience of sexual abuse, even if it is driven out of the consciousness. It is always a strongly traumatic experience having the influence on the development of personality. Children forced to participate in sexual behaviours feel guilty, ashamed, humiliated, and lose self-respect. In this way, the first negative sexual experiences have an effect on further experiences in this sphere, blocking the development of higher emotionality and having its impact on the nature of relations with men. The relation between sexual abuse and the victim’s future practice of prostitution has not been analysed in full yet. It is said that sexual abuse results in separating emotions from a sexual activity. As the result of sexual abuse, a girl starts to perceive herself as an abject person deserving humiliation, and this has an effect on her self-identification as a prostitute; however, other researchers suggest that this effect is only indirect, since not all victims of sexual abuse will become prostitutes in the future (Sztobryn-Giercuskiewicz, 2004, p. 107).

These clinical findings are negated by Zbigniew Izdebski and his research study which does not show that the sexual initiation of women prac-



tising prostitution is of a more traumatic nature related to sexual abuse compared to initiations of other women (Izdebski, 2012).

### 3.3. Stimulation perspective

The above-mentioned traditional aetiological areas are mainly focused on exploring different ranges of dysfunctionality which can be related to practising prostitution according to the causality principle. Therefore, the previous research findings are based on the assumption that prostitution, as a symptom of dysfunctionality, is generated by other phenomena and signs of dysfunctionality. However, one cannot rule out the possibility that prostitution is not only the effect of depraving conditions of a particular individual's growing-up and functioning, but also the method of providing herself/himself with the optimal level of stimulation, thrills and excitement. Consequently, an interesting direction of looking for factors connected to the practice of prostitution could be the reference to the specific character of human temperament and the need for stimulation. People differ in their needs for stimulation, which means that the particular intensity of stimuli can be burdening to some and boring to others. Therefore, stimulation determines the intensity of stimuli that a particular person must receive to maintain his/her excitement on more or less the same level, enabling him/her to cope with stress and difficult situations. A feature, which expresses the tendency of searching for or avoiding stimulation, is determined as "sensation seeking", that is, looking for diverse, new, complex and intensive feelings and experiences, as well as being ready to take physical, social, legal or financial risks in order to experience such sensations. However, the source of stimulation is not the physical value of stimuli but rather their significance conditioned by individual experience (Strelau, 2013, p. 238).

Both sexual actions themselves and observation of their effect could be important for stimulation. A risky sexual behaviour, which, undoubtedly, the practice of prostitution is, becomes attractive and obtains autonomy in a form of a need. It becomes the source of physical, social and, in case of people taking advantage of sexual services, also financial risk. Sexual behaviours may also help an individual to get rid of his/her own uncertainty. This is connected with the fact of associating rendering sexual services with pleasure. This may be used to explain the motives of practising prostitution which are seemingly unclear and hard to explain only with the need of economic bonuses. Therefore, the occurrence of "an immanent need of establishing diverse sexual contacts" is rooted in the structures of person-



ality. This is about a certain minimum of sensory excitement, which is an essential element of human functioning. Stimuli and events from the outside world, as well as an individual's actions, are becoming the main sources of stimulation. According to Marvin Zuckerman (1979), sensation seeking may include four factors: thrill seeking, experience seeking, disinhibition, and boredom susceptibility (Zuckerman, 1979, as cited in Strelau, 2013, p. 238). The first of the factors, that is, thrill and adventure seeking, may be visible in the desire for practising extreme sports or taking up other physically risky actions. On the other hand, experience seeking is visible in a non-conformist lifestyle, engaging the mind and senses, and the example is doing drugs and associating with unconventional people. Disinhibition is a preference of blowing off steam and relaxing with such forms of risky behaviours as drinking alcohol, having sex, gambling, and leading a riotous life. The last factor is boredom susceptibility, which is visible in aversion to any routine activities or boring people. Here, monotony creates anxiety and the need for searching for the sources of stimulation (Zuckerman, 1979, as cited in Strelau, 2013, p. 238). Sensation-seeking people prefer situations and actions which are new, strongly stimulating, connected with high risk, and satisfying hedonistic needs, regardless of the fact of whether they are socially accepted or not, considered normal or abnormal. According to Zuckerman, the percentage of alcoholics, drug addicts and criminals is higher among people showing inclination towards sensation seeking than among those who have little demand for stimulation. Therefore, one can assume that the demand for stimulation is quite often connected with anti-social behaviours (Strelau, 2013, p. 240). Risky sexual behaviours, including both rendering and using sexual services, fit the described pattern of the demand for stimulation. People, especially women working as prostitutes, are aware of physical and sexual risks connected to their activities; nevertheless, they do not see the need for ending this ill practice. On the contrary, one can have an impression that people are attracted to the mentioned risk, realised and real, and it cannot be only explained by attractiveness of material advantage. What is more, one cannot state that this is only the strong demand for stimulation, that is, low reactivity of a certain person, which is "responsible" for the preferred way of life. As was mentioned above, the environment has an influence on the specific style of actions of an individual. Therefore, one can assume that a multi-attribute approach, taking the demand for stimulation into consideration, will give a new possibility of explaining the motives of making decisions concerning the practice of prostitution.

This is confirmed by research studies in which authors indicate the high level of acceptance of chosen behaviours by prostituting individuals and the fact of deriving sexual satisfaction from contact with numerous partners. The research of Andrzej Marek and Michał Antoniszyn on the prostitutes of Gdańsk–Sopot–Gdynia Tricity and Wrocław confirmed that, apart from the economic motives, the analysed prostitutes mentioned hedonistic motives accompanying the practice of prostitution, indicating “having fun” (24 respondents) and the liking for changing partners frequently (12 respondents) (Antoniszyn, 1985, p. 107–108). Environmental factors, among which the authors mentioned drinking problems in a family home or in relations with partners, other symptoms of family dysfunctionality and, especially, family conflicts, were mentioned only by few female respondents (Antoniszyn, 1985, p. 108). Despite the fact that this research was conducted at the beginning of the 80s, it considerably modifies the image of prostitution included in simultaneous concepts. The authors emphasised that in the traditional image of prostitution, the dysfunctionality of family life, breaking up a family, and conflicts and unfavourable upbringing atmosphere are no longer dominating factors in the process of demoralisation of girls and women; still, they do not depreciate the factors connected with the past of the female respondents (Antoniszyn, 1985, p. 58). The mentioned findings show that women practising prostitution, apart from economic reasons, also take pleasure in numerous sexual contacts, and even if they are the source of risk, it is not an argument for quitting this ill practice. Similar conclusions were also formulated by Kazimierz Imieliński. Referring to the reasons for practising prostitution, he indicated that these reasons can be looked for also in the sphere of sexual experiences of prostituting individuals, among others, in the need for a change, desire for sexual adventures, or aspiration for freedom in the scope of sensual experiences. “Desire for sexual pleasure and the need of getting sexual satisfaction combined with seeking for pleasure in general and the need of living in luxury may be one of the frequent factors leading to the practice of prostitution” (Imieliński, 1990, p. 125). Therefore, the practice of prostitution most often joins economic and stimulating factors. Experiences derived from diverse and often risky sexual contact constitute the source of extreme sensations to this category of people. Many women practising prostitution are focused not only on meeting clients’ needs but also on satisfying their own needs and making their fantasies come true. This more often concerns women looking for a sponsor in exchange for sexual services, since that kind of relation gives many more opportunities of choosing a client and, in this way, present-

ing one's own sexual preferences. Among others, in the research study conducted by M. Kowalczyk-Jamnicka, the reasons for practising prostitution were the perspective of a better and interesting life (31,7% of the analysed prostitutes of different categories), sexual dissatisfaction (16,3% of the respondents), and numerous and diverse sexual contacts (15,4%) (Kowalczyk-Jamnicka, 1998, p. 193). To sum up, one can state that the possibility of obtaining material goods is constantly the strongest magnet for women in connection to prostitution. However, there are also other motives such as striving for satisfying hedonistic needs, making one's own sexual fantasies come true, and "living on the edge", which become so important that they even compensate for the risk of social rejection.

The above-mentioned deliberations show that in the case of prostituting women, the factors inviting to prostitution may occur in various configurations, and the desire for pleasure and risk inviting to prostitution may turn out to be one of these. On the other hand, in the case of clients using the services of prostitutes, one could assume that striving for satisfying the needs of stimulation is the main reason. Sexual contact with prostitutes associated with wantonness and readiness to make clients' sexual fantasies come true is unequivocally identified by the need for crossing borders and experiencing risk and new sensations.

### **Question instead of conclusion – are there any preventive measures for prostitution?**

Finding the answer to the question of why women and girls currently decide to be prostitutes is not easy. The changing reality also has its influence on women's motivation concerning the decision on practising prostitution. According to British sexologist Lesley Perman-Kerry, prostitution is assuming the proportions of "cultural" behaviours specific to the present times: "people are working longer and longer and think they do not have enough time to develop long-lasting relationships. Still, they do not want to give up sexual intercourses" (as cited in Jędrzejko, 2006, p. 120). In the light of the above-mentioned deliberations, it is hard to definitely defend the thesis that prostitution is a symptom of risky behaviours specific to people from a social margin burdened by numerous environmental dysfunctions and personality disorders. Therefore, one should wonder why some women, who are not under the pressure of poverty and dysfunctionality of the closest surroundings, risk being exposed to social rejection, as well as physical and,

most probably, psychical damage. Perhaps the possibilities given by prostitution constitute a sufficient equivalent to these social costs. Perhaps the perspective of having better access to luxury goods, the possibility of visiting places, which, under other conditions, are inaccessible, the possibility of satisfying sexual needs, and the variety of experiences and clients make prostitution more of a choice of an attractive life path than a necessity. Moreover, one can notice that the mentioned social rejection is not necessarily unequivocal. According to many men, prostitution is more of an acceptable way of satisfying one's sexual needs. Consumerism and judging other humans by their material status make it easier and justified. Obviously, adopting such a perspective changes the perception of the possibilities of support activities.

The phenomenon of using sexual services is growing for a number of reasons. It is supported by the aforementioned destigmatisation of prostitution and many other factors, e.g.:

- growing number of sex visualisations (e.g. in advertising) and sexualised behaviours which are addressed to younger and younger viewers;
- development of pornography industry, consolidating the manner of treating a woman like an object;
- existence of only formal moral resistance to prostitution, which is the weakest in metropolitan areas;
- sex is not an element of a romantic relationship anymore, only a part of social activity (Jędrzejko, 2006, p. 121–122).

The above-mentioned factors may constitute indications of creating the broadly taken preventive measures for prostitution.

Counteracting prostitution in Poland mostly consists of legal and repressive measures. Preventive initiatives are not numerous, since it is hard to distinguish a clear group of recipients. Undoubtedly, prostitution could be limited by broader educational activities connected with preparing the youth for sexual life and, especially, entering into adulthood. This is especially important in relation to adolescent boys who start their active sexual life earlier than girls. Initiating or expanding educational activities, especially for boys showing the attitude of treating women like objects and expressing opinions that sex without love is normal, seem to be justified. From the perspective of educational needs or requirements, implemented during adolescence, as well as social needs, the mentioned authors consider the following actions to be advisable:

- expanding adolescent boys' and girls' knowledge of human sexuality and, especially, its non-physical dimension: ethical and moral issues;
- disseminating knowledge of somatic and psychical consequences of promiscuity; discussing health threats which constitute the consequences of out-of-control sexual behaviour;
- emphasising the problem of treating a human being like an object in the practice of prostitution;
- counteracting destigmatisation of prostitution, mainly through the consistent policy of revealing the identity of people responsible;
- showing the impact of prostitution on the professional and private life of people practising it (social exclusion, stigmatisation, future partners and families suffering the consequences);
- expanding the knowledge of teachers and educators (psychologists) who teach Family Life Education classes in junior high schools and high schools;
- discussing these issues in the process of university education and teaching in closed-form institutions (armed forces, police) (Jeźdrzejko, 2006, p. 123–124). Similar initiatives will be helpful also in single-sex environments.

Preventive measures should take cultural factors into consideration, especially the impact of the media, which play an opinion-forming role. The role of the Internet and magazines for teens is clearly underestimated in relation to opinion and behaviour forming of young users and readers. Therefore, one cannot ignore their influence when applying preventive measures. An important area of activities, which provides not so much prevention but assistance to people involved in prostitution practice, concerns the initiatives of different kinds of non-profit organisations. Street workers representing these organisations (e.g. Stowarzyszenie im. Marii Niepokalanej Na Rzecz Pomocy Dziewczętom i Kobietom [*Mother of God Association Helping Girls and Women*]) help prostituting girls by reaching out to them, recognising their needs, and intervening if necessary by informing where to seek assistance. Their activity may sometimes be related to preventive actions – they protect young people from choosing the path of prostitution thanks to their activity in highly dysfunctional environments.

Practising prostitution leads to many, usually unrealised, consequences. It leads to physical, psychical and social degradation, regardless of the motives for choosing this life path. This profession leaves a permanent trace

on the psyche and health of prostituting people and they will suffer the consequences even after quitting prostitution. On the other hand, prostitutes who hesitate to quit, unfortunately, start the mechanism of a downward spiral. Reducing the problem of prostitution, especially juvenile prostitution, is impossible as long as there is the demand for sexual services rendered by increasingly younger girls. Therefore, the only way in which to proceed is an all-embracing perception of prostitution and multi-range actions. Prostitution involves a trio: prostitute, client, and person profiting from other people's prostitution. Only this wider perspective enables one to see all of the threats connected to this phenomenon.

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