

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

Department of Humanities



Bachelor Thesis

Sex work in Ukraine: Public attitudes and legal frameworks

Roman Groza

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BACHELOR THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Roman Groza

Economics and Management
Economics and Management

Thesis title

Sex work in Ukraine: Public attitudes and legal frameworks

Objectives of thesis

This work will examine and describe the issues and attitudes related to a possible change of the legal status of prostitution in Ukraine. While sex work is widespread, it is not often talked about. Political instability and lack of interest prevent effective action being taken.

This work aims to explore the current situation in Ukraine and review different legal models, their ethical implications and practical outcomes. The practical part will investigate the expectations and beliefs of Ukrainian citizens.

Methodology

In this work, cases of different legal models will be reviewed and compared to the current situation in Ukraine. It will be done through a literature review of reports and statistical data.

The practical part will consist of interviews with people of the southernmost region of Ukraine. It will describe the reaction of the public to the possible changes that can be introduced. The attitudes revealed by the interviews will be compared with existing legal models and experiences of their application.

The proposed extent of the thesis

40-50 pages

Keywords

Sex Work, Exploitation, Ukraine, Ethics,

Recommended information sources

- PYVOVAROVA, N.P, A. O. (2020). Change of legal status of sex work in Ukraine: public opinion, opinion of sex workers (Sociological perspective). Ukr. socium, 74(3), 124–141.
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[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2014/493040/IPOL-FEMM_ET\(2014\)493040_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2014/493040/IPOL-FEMM_ET(2014)493040_EN.pdf)

Expected date of thesis defence

2020/21 SS – FEM

The Bachelor Thesis Supervisor

Daniel Rosenhaft Swain, Ph.D., MA

Supervising department

Department of Humanities

Electronic approval: 4. 3. 2021

prof. PhDr. Michal Lošťák, Ph.D.

Head of department

Electronic approval: 5. 3. 2021

Ing. Martin Pelikán, Ph.D.

Dean

Prague on 06. 03. 2021

Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled "Sex work in Ukraine: Public attitudes and legal frameworks" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 13.03.2021

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Daniel Rosenhaft Swain, Ph.D. for his supervision and readiness to guide me through the work whenever I felt lost. Also, I would like to thank the people I interviewed for their honest opinions and willingness to help. Finally, I would like to thank my mother, who did not doubt my capacity to carry out this work, not even for a second.

Sex work in Ukraine: Public attitudes and legal frameworks

Abstract

This work aims to inquire into the topic of sex work in the southern city of Ukraine – Odessa. The primary goal is to find out about the public's attitude to the phenomenon of sex work. Odessa is a place where sex work is prominent due to it having a seaport and being a city of seasonal tourism. Sex work has been a controversial topic for a long time and is not often addressed. Simultaneously, the law that makes it illegal is a legacy of the Soviet Union that is 33 years old.

Literature Review is mainly situated around the legal frameworks and ethical concepts that concern sex work. Legal frameworks are described, and cases of their application are reviewed with brief outlooks on results. Also, this part includes a brief discussion on the issues of exploitation, harmfulness of sex work, impacts on society, and whether sex work can be recognized as a valid form of employment.

The Practical Part is situated mainly around the opinions derived from the semi-structured interviews and statistical data. The interviews were conducted with inhabitants of Odessa with the goal to learn about their attitudes to sex work and their preferred way of treatment of sex work in terms of a legal model. The 11 respondents range from 53 to 17 years old and represent different parts of society. The current state of sex work and the problem of human trafficking, in particular, are reviewed. Including a description of the current attitudes and a brief description of the possible roots of those attitudes.

The Results and Discussion part briefly discusses the possibility of adopting either one of the approaches with respect to the opinions expressed in the interviews and the academic papers written specifically on this topic. And why the application of either of the most successful models – would still be a very challenging task.

In Conclusion, the attitudes of the interviewees are summarized around the key points and contrasted with what was expected. The change is presented as a shift in the attitudes that evolved with respect to the profession's modern-day view. The legal model preferred by the interviewees is presented.

Keywords: Sex Work, Exploitation, Ukraine, Ethics.

Sexuální práce na Ukrajině: Postoje veřejnosti a právní rámce

Abstrakt

Cílem této práce je prohledět téma sexuální práce v jižním městě Ukrajiny - Oděse. Hlavním cílem je zjistit, jaký je postoj veřejnosti k fenoménu sexuální práce. Oděsa je místo, kde je sexuální práce prominentní kvůli tomu, že má přístav a je městem sezónní turistiky. Sexuální práce je kontroverzním tématem již dlouhou dobu a není často řešena. Současně zákon, který jej činí nezákonným, je zároveň dědictvím Sovětského svazu, který je starý 33 let.

Literature Review se soustředí hlavně na právní rámce a etické koncepty, které se týkají sexuální práce. Tady jsou popsány právní rámce a případy jejich aplikace jsou přezkoumány se stručnými výhledy na výsledky. Součástí této části je také krátká diskuse o otázkách vykořisťování, škodlivosti sexuální práce, dopadech na společnost a o tom, zda lze sexuální práci považovat za platnou formu zaměstnání.

Praktická část je zaměřena především na názory odvozené z polostrukturovaných rozhovorů a statistických údajů. Rozhovory byly vedeny s obyvateli Oděsy s cílem dozvědět se o jejich postojích k sexuální práci a jejich preferovaném způsobu zacházení se sexuální prací z hlediska právního modelu. 11 respondentů se pohybuje od 53 do 17 let a představují různé části společnosti. Přezkoumává se zejména současný stav sexuální práce a problém obchodování s lidmi. Včetně popisu současných postojů a stručného popisu možných kořenů těchto postojů.

Results and Discussion část stručně pojednává o možnosti přijetí některého z přístupů k názorům vyjádřeným v rozhovorech a akademických pracích napsaných konkrétně na toto téma. A proč by aplikace jednoho z nejúspěšnějších modelů byla stále velmi náročným úkolem.

Závěrem lze shrnout postoje dotazovaných ke klíčovým bodům a kontrastovat s tím, co se očekávalo. Změna je prezentována jako posun v postojích, které se vyvíjely s ohledem na moderní pohled této profese. Je představen právní model upřednostňovaný dotazovanými.

Klíčová slova: Sexuální práce, Vykořisťování, Ukrajina, Etika.

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1 Introduction

Prostitution has been with us since very long ago. It is one of the most fundamental professions that has its part in society but is stigmatized and disregarded. Because of its controversial nature, this profession largely remains in the shadows, where it is easier for us not to notice it, even when made legal.

It seems that in the Eastern part of Europe, this profession gets neither the recognition nor the right treatment by legal institutions. It leads to prostitution not being eradicated or regulated, but to worsening of working conditions for those who still choose to or have to work in this profession. Such a suspended state leads to prostitution not getting the benefits of regulation or a total ban. It just exists, and it just does not.

Specifically, in Ukraine's southern region, prostitution is still in demand, but the situation is dire due to sex work not being a priority right now. Prostitution is seen as a necessary profession, but at the same time, it is condemned by the public and under-regulated by the government. Imagine being an electrician, on whom people rely on performing the work that keeps their preferred lifestyle in check, but those same people still disrespect you for some reason. Moreover, prostitution is highly criminalized, with police paid to overlook the situation, while the image of a prostitute is unchanged since the times of the Soviet Union. All things combined, make sure that people who do not accept prostitution will not accept it any soon.

Where is this attitude coming from, and can the situation be resolved so the public would accept more? In this work, I would like to get an insight into what people think, using qualitative interviews, and finding out why prostitution is in such a state. Additionally, the most successful legal models for prostitution will be reviewed and compared to what people of Odessa would like to see be done with prostitution. As a country, Ukraine aspires to be a part of the EU. Prostitution may seem unnecessary in the question of the European future, but it touches on many aspects that are relevant outside prostitution: corruption, state of social services and police, and people's attitudes to delicate questions.

2 Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Objectives

This work will examine and describe the issues and attitudes related to a possible change of the legal status of prostitution in Ukraine. While sex work is widespread, it is not often talked about. Political instability and lack of interest prevent effective action being taken.

This work aims to explore the current situation in Ukraine and review different legal models, their ethical implications and practical outcomes. The practical part will investigate the expectations and beliefs of Ukrainian citizens.

2.2 Methodology

In this work, cases of different legal models will be reviewed and compared to the current situation in Ukraine. It will be done through a literature review of reports and statistical data.

The practical part will consist of interviews with people of the southernmost region of Ukraine. It will describe the reaction of the public to the possible changes that can be introduced. The attitudes revealed by the interviews will be compared with existing legal models and experiences of their application.

3 Literature Review

The Merriam-Webster dictionary describes prostitution as “the act or practice of engaging in promiscuous sexual relations especially for money.” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)

While there are many stances on this particular matter and many different points of view, it is necessary to stress that prostitution possibly was around since before the time we learned to record the life of our societies. (Jeness, 1990)

In this work, I would like to look into different legal models that were successful to a certain degree, judging by our current standards. And then, go deeper into the problems of prostitution in Ukraine since this work is about Ukraine's southern seaport – Odessa.

As one person I interviewed said, we need to stop using the word "prostitute" as the first step to changing people's attitude to the profession and people working in it. The world wakes up the negativity that is instilled in us, she said. I somewhat agree with her. I do not feel any negative emotions towards the people or the profession. However, as a person raised in the post-USSR society, every time I write or say this word, something deep inside me clicks violently as I have just offended the person I was talking about or all the people working in this profession.

In this work, I will mostly use the terms "sex work" and "workers" to not change their meaning but to strip the words that address this profession of their negative connotation.

3.1 Ethical question

This section will discuss two ethical approaches that are part of a discussion about sex work. Also, the topic of exploitation will be addressed and the possibility of consent in sex work. These topics were briefly discussed in the interviews I conducted.

In her article *Markets in Women's Sexual Labor*, Deba Satz discusses two popular ethical concepts of how sex work can be viewed: the Economic approach and the Essentialist approach. (Satz, 1995)

3.1.1 The Essentialist approach

This approach is based on the concept that selling sex is inherently harmful to a human being. Selling sex equals a sex worker to an object that can be used at any time by surrendering a sum of money while a sex worker, almost always a woman, provides her body. Satz brings forth an argument by *Elizabeth Anderson*, who describes sex as a shared

good that both parties enjoy and is based on a mutual attraction. However, by buying sex, a man can have access to the good at any time by paying money, while a sex worker, a woman, is worse off because she has surrendered her body. Thus, the sex worker has it worse than her client because she becomes good in this situation. And by treating a human being as someone whose definition tips to the side of being viewed as a commodity – cannot be good in any way for that person. (Elizabeth Anderson, 1993)

The Essentialist approach is usually associated with legal frameworks that prohibit or regulate sex work heavily. It corresponds with the notion that sex work must not appeal to potential workers and decrease the industry's size as much as possible.

This approach does not recognize sex work as a matter of free choice because the choice cannot be made under the circumstances under which women usually enter sex work. These are usually described as poverty, absence of other possibilities, violence, coercion. And the sex work itself is mere exploitation of women. (Shrage, 2004) (Gerassi, 2016) It is evident why abolitionists want to see the end of sex work. According to *Farley et al.*, 89% of 785 people from nine countries wanted to escape sex work, and 60% to 75% were raped in sex work. (Melissa Farley, 2004)

3.1.2 The Economic approach and the Regulatory approach

The Economic approach focuses on the nature of cost and benefit of the transaction between a sex worker and a client: "...economic approach, attributes the wrongness of prostitution to its consequences for efficiency or welfare. The important feature of this approach is its treatment of sex as a morally indifferent matter: sexual labor is not to be treated as a commodity if and only if such treatment fails to be efficient or welfare maximizing." (Satz, 1995, p. 64) This approach is more of a quantitative nature. It does not consider the inherent value attributed to a human being by the Essentialist approach that is qualitative. Not to say that the Economic approach is diminishing the value of a human being. Both these approaches try to understand and at least try to solve the problems of sex work but in a dissimilar manner.

The pro-sex work approach is shifting from the attempts to eliminate sex work and help the workers escape sex work to the regulation of sex work and providing decent working conditions to the workers. Also, there are calls to separate the definitions of sexual exploitation and consensual sex between two individuals, and that abolitionism involves as much exploitation of women since it is intended to take away the possibility to choose

what women can do with their bodies if it means becoming a sex worker. (Erika Schulze, 2014) (Gerassi, 2016)

“While protagonists of the regulatory approach strongly insist on the ability of women to decide freely on what they want to do with their body and on their sexuality, abolitionists take the view that agreement to selling sex can never be voluntary and that, therefore, prostitution in general equals sexual exploitation.” (Erika Schulze, 2014, p. 24)

Satz herself proposes her Egalitarian approach that states that the sale of sex work is wrong because it supports gender inequality. She argues that sex work is not inherently great, but it must not necessarily lead to the total ban. She argues that sex work would not be something out of the ordinary under different circumstances, and the discussion on whether to ban it or not – just shows the lack of imagination. (Satz, 1995)

This particular argument was represented in the interviews that I will discuss later in the thesis. The majority of respondents believes that sex work is not inherently good for the human being or society, but they refuse to see it remain illegal or criminalized even more.

3.2 Prostitution or Sex work

Sex work today takes on new and different forms. The Internet brings new possibilities to people who are willing to work in this profession. Potential sex workers have an opportunity to work for themselves without the need to be a part of the conventional scheme of sex work. However, the conventional scheme has not vanished and still is alive and well today.

According to *Fondation Scelles*, there are between 40 and 42 million prostitutes globally. (Fondation Scelles, 2011) According to their recent report, two-thirds of all prostitution is done nowadays with the Internet's involvement. (Fondation Scelles, 2019)

Debra Satz in *Markets in Women's Sexual Labor* has described three scenarios of the conventional sex work that portray it pretty well:

"1. A fourteen-year-old girl prostitutes herself to support her boyfriend's heroin addiction. Later she works the streets to support her own habit. She begins, like most teenage streetwalkers, to rely on a pimp for protection. She is uneducated and is frequently subjected to violence in her relationships and with her customers. She receives no social security, no sick leave or maternity leave, and, most important, she has no control as to whether or not she has sex with a man. That is a decision that is made by her pimp.

2. Now imagine the life of a Park Avenue call girl or a highly paid “escort” to wealthy powerful men. Many call girls drift into high-class prostitution after “run of the mill promiscuity,” led neither by material want nor lack of alternatives. Some are young college graduates who upon graduation earn money by prostitution while searching for other jobs. Call girls can earn between \$30,000 and \$100,000 annually. These women have control over the entire amount they earn as well as an unusual degree of independence, greater than in many other forms of work. They can also decide whom they wish to have sex with and when they wish to do so. There is little resemblance between their lives and that of the streetwalker.

3. Finally, consider the small but increasing number of male prostitutes. Most male prostitutes (but not all) sell sex to other men. Often the men who buy such sex are married. Unfortunately there is little information on male prostitution; it has not been well studied as either a historical or a contemporary phenomenon. What we do know suggests that, like their female counterparts, male prostitutes cover the economic spectrum. Two important differences between male and female prostitutes are that men are more likely to work only part-time and that they are not generally subject to the violence of male pimps because they tend to work on their own." (Satz, 1995)

The examples above do not represent all the possible ways that lead people to sex work. There are still situations today where people have to prostitute themselves to eat or pay for medical bills. This type of work is highly stigmatized and effectively separates people involved from the rest of society and from other types of sex workers that are part of the same society.

3.3 Harmfulness of sex work

To examine this topic fully, it would mean to devote a significant chunk of this thesis. I am, by any means, not trying to diminish the seriousness of this topic. I recognize the hardships that some women in this type of work may endure in the form of violence, rape, and social alienation. And the external costs imposed on society in the form of spread of diseases, impact on people’s marriages, and promotion of women as objects. (Satz, 1995) (Melissa Farley, 2004)

Satz describes ‘moralisms’ as the most influential externalities imposed by sex work. “... ‘moralism’ seems to denote a biased, ideological or inflexible thinking, where moral references are exaggerated, redundant or shallow and block rather than further critical-

ethical enlightenment.” (Brinkmann, 2001, p. 313) But I cannot define moralism as the most influential externality since the point of view can always be changed under suitable circumstances, eliminating the externality conceived by that same person and resolved by that same person. In comparison, externalities in the form of sexual addiction to buying sex from the workers and disease spread cannot be mitigated just by changing your opinion.

However, to address this topic, I would like with the words of Ronald Weitzer, who inquired into this in his article: "...Victimization, exploitation, choice, job satisfaction, self-esteem, and other dimensions should be treated as variables (not constants) that differ depending on the type of sex work, geographical location, and other structural and organizational conditions." (Weitzer, *The Mythology of Prostitution: Advocacy Research and Public Policy*, 2010)

3.4 Is sex work a job?

The debate on this topic is complex and includes many other important topics like the nature of sexual relationships between males and females and what can be called a job. By the state of the market of sexual services in the country, assumptions can be made about that particular country. In terms of singular definition – there is not one. Some argue that sex work is a profession as worthy as other professions and needs to be addressed and appropriately regulated in order for workers to get the benefits provided by the country (Pitcher, 2014). Additionally, there is an argument that the criminalization of prostitution, which is supposed to eradicate it, - does not eradicate it at all but further affects women by giving more control of their sexual capacity to men. (Satz, 1995) The approach described above is labeled as the *Empowerment paradigm*.

On the other side, there is a debate that sex work is inherently wrong for a human being and occurs instead because of a lack of choice rather than as a choice. It also depicts prostitution as a problem of male domination and exploitation of women. Prohibitionists adopt this point of view. It includes arguments that prostitution must be criminalized in one way or another because decriminalization or legalization would bring more demand and incentivize illegal trafficking of human beings, mostly women, to meet the demand. (Fondation Scelles, 2019) This approach is labeled as the *Oppression paradigm*.

There are also points of view that accept parts of both approaches, but the consensus is yet to be reached.

However, *Ronald Weitzer* argues that we are too concentrated on conventional prostitution represented by street workers and illegality questions. He argues that it distorts our view of the world of commercial sex, and we need to shift our attention to problems that do not receive enough attention. "A major shift in the research agenda is needed, focusing on actors and structures that have received insufficient attention—namely, indoor workers, male and transgender workers, male and female customers, managers, organizations, and legal systems. Likewise, sociological examinations of the pornography and telephone sex industries are almost nonexistent. Further research on these sectors should have the cumulative effect of producing a more nuanced, multidimensional, and comprehensive understanding of sex work than what currently exists." (Weitzer, *Sociology of Sex Work*, 2009)

To summarize whether sex work is actually a job, I would say – it depends. It depends on a person's particular view of the question, background, and social status. It depends on what approach is closer to a particular person's view of the world and particularly the question of sex. Sex work – is a type of engagement that brings particular questions, like disease control and sex workers' rights, to the table.

To again represent the main sides of the discussion would be to touch the abolitionist and regulatory approaches. According to the abolitionists, sex work cannot be considered a type of work because of its inherent promotion of male domination and violence that workers endure. They often label sex workers as survivors, implying that they had to be rescued and lived through a horrible experience. On the other hand, those in favor of the regulatory approach argue that selling sex is a form of employment and response to limited employment options. They recognize the current shortcomings of sex work, particularly that sex work is often done by marginalized individuals. (Weitzer, *Sociology of Sex Work*, 2009)

However, sex work itself is different from other economic activities that are recognized as professions today. Stigmatization and connection to such phenomena as human trafficking put it into a different category that does not precisely fit the usual job's conventional definition. However, definitions can change and be adjusted in order to reflect reality properly.

3.5 Possible models of sex work

I want to address the approaches to sex work and legal models attributed to those approaches in this part. These approaches will be discussed in order from most allowing to most prohibiting, judging by the accessibility of services of sexual character.

Generally, there are two ways to approach prostitution – regulation and prohibition.

3.5.1 The regulatory approach

Under the regulatory approach, two distinct legal frameworks are attributed to it. They closely resemble each other but still have differences that are important and have to be mentioned. These frameworks are Decriminalization and Legalization.

3.5.1.1 Legalization

When sex work is legalized, it is recognized as an economic activity and needs to be regulated as other economic activities. The industry of sexual services is enabled to grow, while activities as the operation of brothels and pimping also become legal. Sex work becomes embedded into the country's economy and provides tax revenue from market transactions. Workers receive benefits and recognition, even though the latter might not be in their best interest because, in the countries like Ukraine, where sex work is stigmatized, recognition may lead to additional difficulties in social life. To send your child to a kindergarten would be considerably more difficult, for example, if you state sex work as your employment.

The government may even choose to promote the selling of sexual services as an experience for interested tourists, as in the case with Amsterdam's De Wallen district and Hamburg's Reeperbahn district. These districts are both known for their nightlife and sexual services advertised on the official websites of these cities.

“Today, the Reeperbahn and the surrounding area are still packed with nightclubs, bars and restaurants as well as art galleries, cabarets and theatres ... And the district's red-light days aren't over completely. Herbertstraße just off the Reeperbahn is off-limits to women and minors because of... well, you'll figure it out.” (Reeperbahn Nightlife District, n.d.)

“...The area is also known as the red-light district because of the three hundred one-room cabins rented by prostitutes who advertise their wares in red-lit windows. But there is much more to De Wallen than its red-light reveries. The neighbourhood is a fantastic

juxtaposition of historic churches, age-old architecture and late-night pursuits.” (De Wallen, n.d.)

I included these excerpts from these two cities' websites to demonstrate the integration of sex work into cultural and social life. They recognize sex work as part of their cities' life and provide alternatives in the form of other attractions like restaurants, galleries, and theatres, as opposed to the services of sexual character. Among them, a hotel in De Wallen, where Quentin Tarantino is rumored to stay while writing his Pulp Fiction.

However, a street where sexual services are provided in Reeperbahn is off-limits for women and children. In De Wallen, it is strictly prohibited to take photos of the women, drink alcohol in public, and be drunk. Security cameras monitor the streets, and sex workers have police protection, their own union, and information center. Both districts have frequent testing to prevent the spread of diseases.

3.5.1.2 Decriminalization

Under decriminalization, laws and penalties related to sex work are lifted. Criminal prosecution of sex work is removed. Local governments now must manage prostitution. Pimps and brothels may still be not decriminalized, so the local governments must take legal action. (Ane Mathieson, 2015)

New Zealand adopted this model with the passage of the Prostitution Reform Act. It was the first case of decriminalization of sex work by the country in the world. Decriminalization was performed without an open endorsement of sex work, unlike in the Netherlands and Germany. The model acknowledged sex work as a service and made it possible for sex workers to have legal rights as any other occupational group. (Abel, 2014) The model was adopted with moderate success, which will be addressed later in this part. As of today, only a handful of countries use this model.

3.5.2 The Abolitionist approach

This approach is based on the assumption that sex workers are likely to be subjected to violence and illegal trafficking, and there is often no choice whether to become a sex worker or not. So, by this standard, sex work or parts of it must be criminalized to minimize the damage inflicted on human beings. Historically, this approach was the first to be implemented in the 19th century to eradicate sex work and all the activities related to it.

There are generally three legal frameworks associated with it: Abolitionism, Neo-abolitionism, and Criminalization.

3.5.2.1 Abolitionism and Neo-abolitionism

Abolitionism and Neo-abolitionism, or the "Nordic model," are similar in nature. Abolitionism allows prostitution, but not third-party involvement (organization), assuming that sex work is a choice but should not impact the public. This model is adopted by many countries and operates under the assumption that a person can be a sex worker by choice, but sex work itself is morally wrong and should not influence anybody. The result of this model being used in Spain will be discussed later in this part.

Neo-abolitionism, or Nordic Model, is also used by many countries. This model criminalizes all the demand and procuring while selling sex stays legal. It is built on the assumption that entering sex work is not a free choice, and it violates basic human rights. In this model, a buyer is viewed as a male who oppresses a female by seeking sexual gratification from her. This model is often regarded as one of the most efficient and is exported to countries other than Sweden. (Ane Mathieson, 2015)

However, the criticism of the Nordic model is also plenty. There are arguments that this model can exist as it should be only in Sweden, while countries where this model is exported to implement it with slight alterations according to their laws. In this case, The Nordic model can only exist in Sweden, where it was designed and implemented first. Additionally, it is argued that this model fails to recognize the research that shows that not only men pay for sex, but women and couples too, and that men and trans people work as sex workers. (Sarah Kingston, (2019)

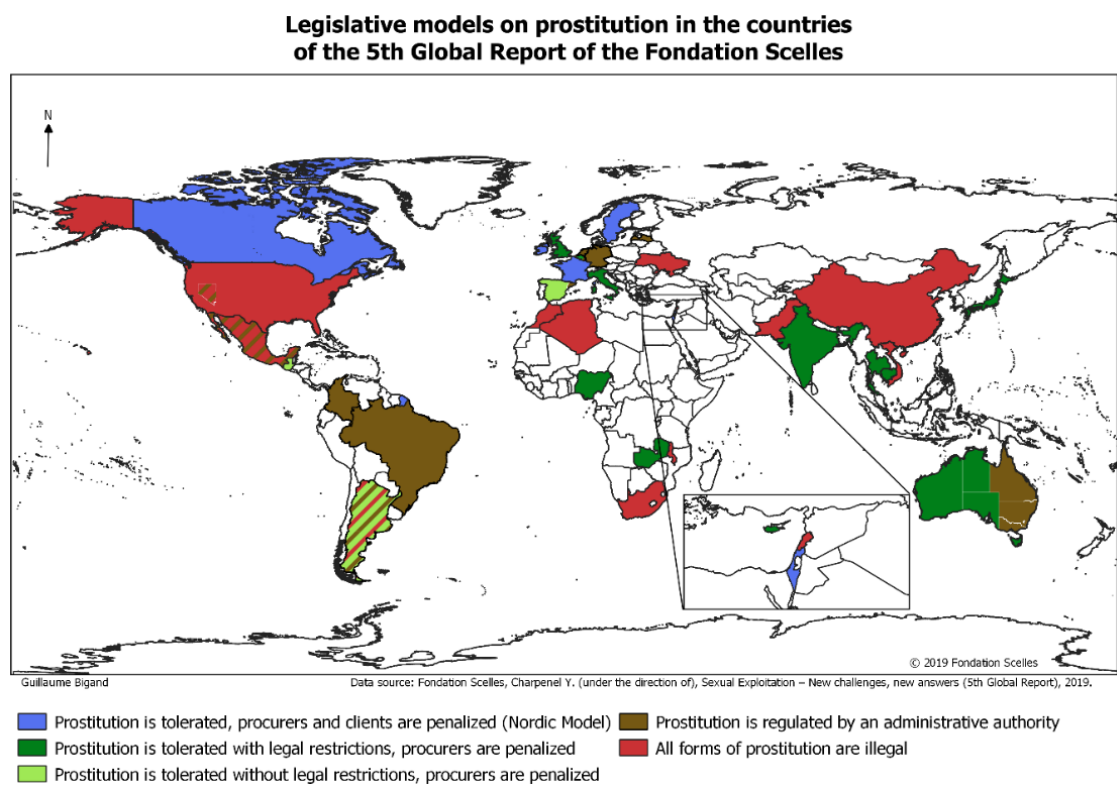
3.5.2.2 Criminalization

In this model, all of the aspects of prostitution are illegal. It is a popular model used by countries like China, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America.

This model aims to eradicate too many things at once; violence against sex workers and human trafficking are among them. However, the model fails and ends up worsening the situation by further marginalizing workers. Since sex workers perform illegal activities, they are no longer eager to report crimes to the police. Therefore, sex workers have no alternative way of making money; fines can drive sex workers further into sex work since

they would have to repay them. Legal actions against sex workers require funds that otherwise might be used for different purposes. Statistics regarding the violence against sex workers under the criminalization frameworks further reinforce the notion that this model enables the image of a sex worker as someone who deserves abuse, according to *Tesla Carrasquillo*. (Carrasquillo, 2014, pp. 12-16). Ukraine is among the countries that adopted the model as a remnant of the Soviet past and has to live with the downsides that come at great cost every day.

Figure 1



Source: (Fondation Scelles, 2019)

3.6 Model Outcomes

3.6.1 Legalization in the Netherlands

The Netherlands legalized prostitution first in Europe in 2000. Prostitution was never a criminal offense there, but brothels were illegal before. Sex work itself was left for the municipalities inside the country to manage. Among the aims of the legalization were: introductions of the municipal licensing system for the workers, protection of minors from

sexual abuse, reduction of foreign nationals involved in sex work that were in the country illegally. After seven years, 95% of prostitutes worked without contracts and were not entitled to any social benefits without those contracts. The emotional well-being of workers declined, and there was no decrease in the number of prostitutes with pimps. More than 60% did not pay taxes on the income they earned. (Erika Schulze, 2014)

The violence against sex workers was still very much present. More than half of women worked against their will, and pimping was not eradicated. Police and brothel inspectors were not successful in detecting violence against women. (Ane Mathieson, 2015, p. 386)

3.6.2 Decriminalization in New Zealand

In 2003, New Zealand passed the laws that decriminalized prostitution. Even though prostitution was never illegal, many related things were prohibited, and it made being a sex worker and not breaking any laws almost impossible. There were no specific districts allocated for the purpose of sex work. Workers had the right to work for themselves and in groups of not more than four people in an unregulated environment. Sex workers who worked for the third party had to acquire a license, while regulation of brothels was the local governments' responsibility. One of the *Prostitution Reform Act's* main objectives was not to let prostitution become an entirely underground business while setting goals similar to other countries that decide to adopt a new model for sex work. The evaluation was released in 2008 by *Prostitution Law Review Committee* that was established for this task.

The effect of decriminalization was positive. Sex workers felt that they had more power to refuse services to a client and were more willing to report violence to the police. The number of people under 18 involved in sex work has not increased. However, there was no significant improvement in working conditions either. The committee concluded that, despite minor incidents, the decriminalization was working. (Laura Barnett, 2011, pp. 6-8)

3.6.3 Abolitionism in Spain

In 1995, Spain decriminalized prostitution, but it did not perform very well and caused the industry to grow with negative side-effects. So, in 2003 Spain made third-party (organization) involvement in sex work illegal. It was illegal to establish employment

contracts for sex work, but sex workers could register in Social Security System under the undefined category. The model allowed brothels to continue to operate. While they served only as landlords and did not profit from the sex work itself, they still used the laws to their advantage and found ways to profit. The risk of violence among sex workers is still high, and drug abuse is widely spread. Trafficking of human beings still has not vanished, and the number of brothels has increased, and sex work is highly criminalized. Public viewed sex work as something inevitable. (Erika Schulze, 2014)

3.6.4 Neo-abolitionism or Nordic model in Sweden

Before 1999, sex work in Sweden was under the regular Abolitionist model, where sex work itself and buying it was not illegal, but organizing brothels and profiting from the work of sex workers was illegal. After 1999, buying sex became illegal. The aims were to battle human trafficking and violence against sex workers. Means to achieve the aims were situated around the shift of attention from supply to demand. The model proved to be successful. The demand for sex work halved, and workers were able to integrate into Social Security Scheme to receive benefits as any other occupation by paying taxes. Special social services were established to help sex workers exit the profession and to help buyers to stop. Not everything was spotless since Internet sex work has increased, and citizens were still buying sex outside Sweden, where it was legal. (Erika Schulze, 2014)

Considering other countries' experiences and it is safe to say that Sweden made the farthest leap.

3.6.5 Prohibition or Criminalization

Total prohibition of sex work is a widespread tactic of achieving the desired result in the most obvious way. Sex work, buying of sex, and involvement of a third party are illegal. I will not discuss this model in-depth since this model's primary effect is self-explanatory - the need, expressed by many progressive countries, to change their current legal model. It can be argued that each country operates under any legal model with nuances particular to that country.

4 Practical Part

In this part, I will discuss how things are in Ukraine's seaport Odessa and what I had found out from the interviews I conducted. The things I will describe are possibly truthful only for Odessa. So, inquiring about people's attitudes, I would like to address the rejection and ambiguity surrounding sex work.

I chose this particular topic for the obligation that would come with it. Growing up in the center of the city enabled me to see the girls who often stood in the street. They often were seen from a window of my balcony. Also, I was always interested in what is their life like since my parents never spoke about them to me, and the topic was generally not discussed in public. In post-Soviet society, where the topic of prostitution is still not the most popular one, this obligation and possibility would make me dig into this question to understand whether sex work is seen as something that should not be, as it was in the USSR, or that attitude has changed.

4.1 Interviewees

In the practical part, I will present the results of the interviews I conducted with Odessa's residents. There were eleven interviews, including six respondents who were in their adulthood when the Soviet Union was still in place. While the youngest respondent being only seventeen years old and just finishing school. Their occupations will be listed beside the first letter of their names and their age in the appendix, where the interviews' translations will be. They range from self-employment to private sector and governmental organizations.

All the interviews were conducted through video calls during the period of two months, where I asked them questions while recording the part of the call when the interviews took place. Necessary to note that before starting with interviews, I tried to establish contact through a conversation when we scheduled calls and during the time right before the actual interviews. Knowing beforehand that our interviews' topic is controversial, I wanted to for us to become at least acquainted before I started asking them personal questions. In turn, most of the respondents were glad to share their opinions, knowing that it would help me with my cause. I should mention that a few potential respondents, while previously agreeing to the interview, decided not to do it because they thought this topic was too intimate to discuss over the recorded interview.

4.2 State of sex work in Ukraine

“Everything in this profession is just tied to the looks of the worker. If she is not a good looking one, then...well. And if she has the looks, then she has a different treatment.”
(Excerpt from the interview with a seafarer, male, 50)

Examples by *Debra Satz* still hold in the case with Ukraine Today.

“Lower class”

These workers are most commonly seen working in the streets, illegal brothels, pubs, and places with a high possibility of attracting customers. In Ukraine, prostitution as a phenomenon is associated mostly with them because they are the most visible and easily identifiable part of the profession.

“Higher class”

They are seen as an exception that proves the rule. Not easily identifiable in everyday life, they work through personal calls. Higher class workers have better access to medical services and do not provide services in cheap hotel rooms and cars, unlike the lower class workers. “I would prefer for my friend to work as a higher class prostitute (escort, etc.). Because there is a difference, in any case.” (Excerpt from the interview with a factory worker, male, 25)

“Internet class”

With Instagram and platforms alike, new possibilities emerge for people interested in such kinds of work. Although both categories can work through the Internet, it is necessary to emphasize that most girls, who provide services through the Internet, have a job besides sex work. Engagement in sex work helps them fund activities otherwise not accessible to them with their regular wage.

“The Internet is now playing an increasing role in the organization of prostitution. Social networks, dating sites, recruitment sites, and instant messaging services (such as WhatsApp) are used by both prostituted persons to find sex buyers, and by traffickers to find victims. In 2015, one out of five prostituted persons was settled in an apartment or via the Internet (compared to 13.2% in 2013). The majority of victims engaged in online prostitution are younger, while older prostituted persons prefer street prostitution.”
(Fondation Scelles, Charpenel Y., 2019, p. 3)

"Men in the profession"

Although the boundaries of sexuality have broadened nowadays, men's perceived masculinity does not go well with them being sex workers in Ukraine. Nevertheless, it does not mean that they are not. There are very little information and statistics on them. Instances of men being sex workers must be reviewed separately. However, here comes the question of what is considered sex work. Staying in a relationship solely because of financial benefits may be argued to be a form of prostitution.

On paper, Ukraine's legal framework for prostitution makes procuring, managing a brothel, and pimping illegal, while prostitution is only punished by an administrative fine and is not a criminal offense.

Ukraine follows a bit more liberal path of abolitionism by introducing only fines for workers. The closest comparison - is the Neo-abolitionist model in Sweden. With the exception that sex workers are fined in Ukraine, while their work is not illegal in Sweden. All other activities related to sex work are illegal.

In Ukraine's codex of administrative offenses, punishments for sex work include warnings and fines. If you are fined, then the first fine would be from five to ten non-taxable minimum incomes, and if you were fined the second time in one year, then the fine is eight to fifteen non-taxable minimum incomes, which is from around \$3 to \$9. (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine) In practice, it rarely comes to an official fine. While prices for basic food and services are comparable between Odessa and Prague, it paints a clear picture of how insignificant the fines are.

In theory, Ukraine's legal framework must not encourage sex work, making procuring, brothel operation, and pimping illegal. However, insignificant repercussions for sex work, poor economic situation, government inefficiency, and corruption make sure that people steadily enter sex work. The illegality of sex work transfers the power over the worker to police, who often take part in the protection racket of this business, and to pimps, who are, most likely, tied to a criminal world. "There are multiple incidents in Ukraine when policemen acted as de facto pimps, extracting part of the earnings for 'protection.'" (Alexander Muravyev, 2015) This treatment drives sex work deeper in the underground, where violence, trafficking, and extortion are endured by sex workers, who have been stripped of basic rights and protection.

The absence of a framework that would integrate sex workers into society, and provide them with legal protection and social benefits, works only when the prohibition of sex

work is imposed and executed following the laws. However, when there is no such framework in place and sex work is still widespread, we get an industry that generates revenue and imposes external costs on society and sex workers. By being an underground industry, the external costs are offset neither by tax revenue from the industry nor by government regulations.

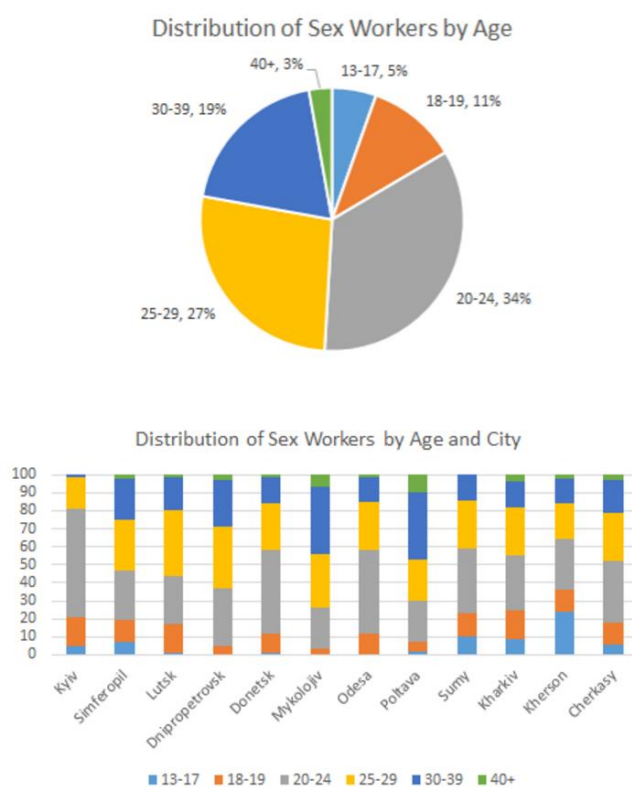
4.2.1 Trafficking and statistics

There are more than 80 000 sex workers in Ukraine. (Alliance for Public Health, 2017)

In *Figure 2*, composed by *Vox Ukraine*, workers' distribution depicts that fifty percent of all respondents were under the age of twenty-five. With five percent of respondents being 13-17 years old.

The age of mutual consent in Ukraine is 16 years old. Sexual intercourse with a person under 16 years old might be punished with up to 5 years in prison. (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine)

Figure 2: Distribution of Sex Workers by age groups in 12 Ukrainian cities (1,602 respondents)

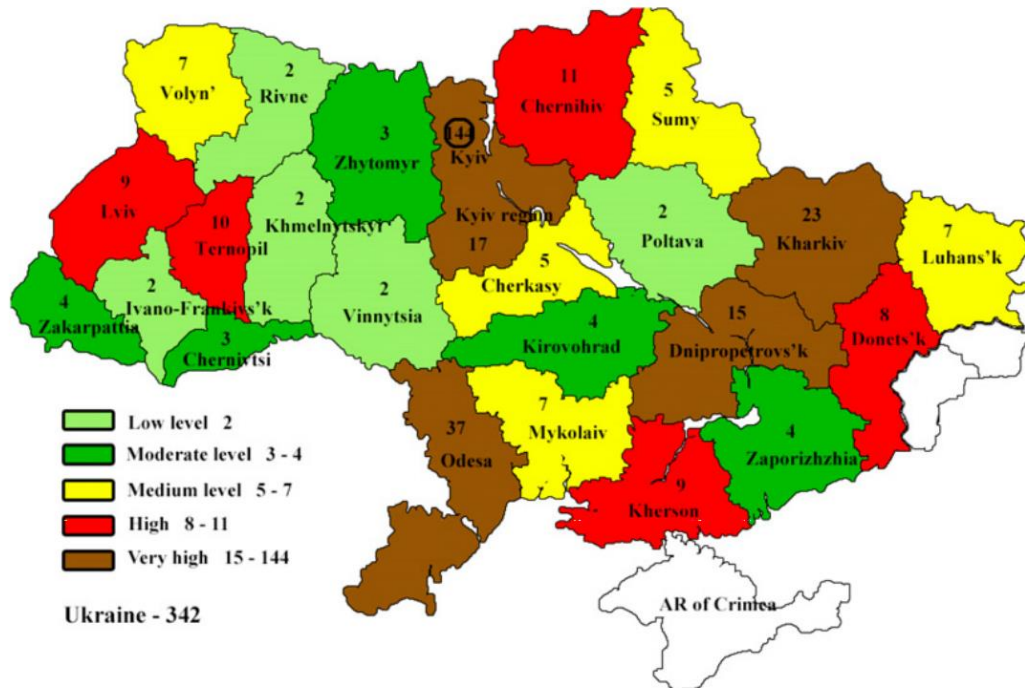


Source: (Alexander Muravyev, 2015)

According to the paper *Human trafficking from Ukrainian cities and villages: Current trends*, in 2017, the number of cases of human trafficking has increased three times: from

115 in 2016 to 342 in 2017. Moreover, 37% of all crimes committed in Ukraine against human freedom – are crimes related to human trafficking. (Andriy Babenko, 2019)

Figure 3: 342 cases of human trafficking in 2017 spread across Ukraine



Source: (Andriy Babenko, 2019)

In *Figure 3*, we can see that Odessa and the surrounding region have a *very high* amount of cases of human trafficking. *Table 1* is provided in the excerpt from the report by *Fondation Scelles*. It includes 346 cases for human trafficking in 2017. From them, 142 are for sexual purposes. Trafficking cases with the purpose of sex work amount to 41% of all the cases. There is a visible improvement. However, the number of convictions in 2017 still leaves a place for improvement, considering the number of investigations.

Table 1: Investigations into human trafficking in Ukraine

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Investigations	130	109	111	115 (including 72 for sexual exploitation purposes)	346 (including 142 for sexual exploitation purpose)
Legal proceedings	91	42	59	45	66
Convictions	109	57	25	28	23
Identified victims	-	-	83	103	367
Assisted victims	-	940	699	1105	1256

Source: Retrieved and compiled by (Fondation Scelles, Charpenel Y., 2019)

People I interviewed, mostly, were sure that being involved in sex work increases your chances to be a part of this problem, as well as generally being subjected to violence. They agreed that the business is criminalized.

The inherent association of sex work with immorality, disease, and criminality is a result of Ukraine in the past being a territory of the Soviet Union. Prostitution was not a part of The Communist Party's vision of the country.

“I have lived in the USSR for 23 years. At that time, attitudes were strictly negative. And those opinions took many different forms. Today the times have changed, and there are talks about legalizing prostitution. But I, probably, would say that we do not need to legalize it. This is strictly my opinion. Prostitution shouldn't be legal.” (Excerpt from the interview with a university lecturer, Doctor of Sciences, female, 53)

4.3 Roots

Despite the external issues connected to sex work, the attitude to it has been cultivated in people since the early Soviet Union. And the spell is wearing off.

Current administrative law is active since 1987, while the last change was made in 2001, just ten years after the Soviet Union collapsed. Two years before the last change, in 1999, Sweden has adopted its famous model. It is not the action that brought sex work in Ukraine to this state, but the lack of change. Just by interviewing people, I can probably state that one of the reasons for not doing anything with sex work is our people's tendency to shy away from the question of sex work, which was implanted within them during the Soviet regime.

"There is no sex in the USSR" – an altered version of the phrase that was said during the teleconference between Leningrad (Saint Petersburg) and Boston in 1986, and that is widely used even today. The original phrase stated that people did not have sex but made love in the USSR. However, it happened so that only the first half became popular in culture and everyday life. This altered phrase, kind of, reflected what was happening. There was sex, but it was not appropriate to talk about it, more so publicly. Fast-forward to today, when people who were born during those times are making all sorts of important decisions – and we have our current state of affairs. There is no doubt that other issues contribute greatly to the lack of change, but I would also argue that a politician or a political party that decides to spearhead a change of current model would encounter fierce opposition from the public and other politicians. However, things are not that bad. Judging by the interviews I conducted, people born in the Soviet Union, most of them, even if had an ambiguous opinion about sex work, were agreeing that we are not going the right way. They see sex work as something inevitable and see how other countries deal with it.

The theme that was present almost in all the interviews I conducted is that this ambiguous attitude has its roots exactly how love and sex were portrayed in the Soviet Union. According to *Vera Sandomirsky*, during the 1920s, people in the Marxist-Leninist part of the world were much freer in terms of sex, forming relationships and marriages, and ending them. Women were more socially and economically independent. As Stalin came to power, things started to change for the worse.

“The reign of free love-or Red love-was succeeded by the regime of Stalinist Virtue. (The latter emerged as anything but red or flamboyant, but on the contrary enormously rigid and oppressive.)”

‘The essence of the matter, that is to say of Stalinist Virtue, is that the wall which separates the private life of individuals from the

public life of the collectivity must be destroyed. "Private life and family life are an intrinsic and inseparable part of public life." Sex, as a private matter, is looked upon with great suspicion by the rulers in the Kremlin. They believe that the intimate world of the individual, with its loves, hates, and fears must be carefully investigated and controlled by the collectivity, that is to say by the Party." (Sandomirsky, 1951)

This excerpt should provide at least a partial understanding of the situation. A Soviet person's sexuality is not explored but is squeezed into the boundaries created and imposed on everyone by The Party. When, additionally, that person has to worry about not breaking any laws that were plenty and had ambiguous interpretations, sex work and nonconformity become things out of context for an average citizen. A woman, who sometimes performs a man's job, and is a keeper of the home, cannot be a prostitute. It is unacceptable. This attitude was cultivated through the generations and resulted in the disregard that has outlived the Communist Party. As new generations came, the influence of globalization and new ways of living made everyone more open to the idea of sex work by living in the world where it exists.

The absolute majority of interviewees wanted sex work to be either legalized or regulated in a way, which would allow women and men not to be outcasts but to earn a fair living and explore their sexuality if they want to do so. Even though each interviewee pointed out that prostitution is still highly stigmatized in Ukraine, only two respondents out of eleven wanted total prohibition and criminal liability for sex work. "It all affects people's minds and lowers mortality. Men have women, and women have men for those kinds of things. Prostitution is not acceptable. If you want sexual satisfaction, find yourself a partner." (Excerpt from the interview with a seafarer, male, 27)

4.4 The Change and summary

In 2015 the draft law was submitted to the Parliament. (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine) The draft proposed to legalize the regulate prostitution and bring it closer to the example of Germany and the Netherlands. This law was never debated or accepted. It recognized the possible increase in the size of the industry and intended to bring money for the economy since Ukraine was and is a popular place for sex tourism. It also proposed to introduce barriers to entry to the industry. There were different reactions from members of the

Parliament, including fierce opposition. But it ultimately led to nothing. (Sputnik News, 2016) (Alexander Muravyev, 2015)

4.4.1 How people see it

In this part, I will summarize the points from my interviews to describe people's attitudes and views on key issues discussed. In this case, people pose as experts in the matter, and I ask them what their opinion is on topics related to sex work in Odessa.

I will present only the generalized opinion expressed by the majority and, sometimes, the opinion of the minority as an antithesis. The interviews are of qualitative nature, so it would not be fair to reduce the opinions to the form of a simple table. Presenting the attitude of the majority would mean excluding the opinions of a minority. But I do not, in any way, try to diminish the value of the opinions of the minority (of my interviewees), but only to express the general tone or the attitude.

4.4.2 Change in a general attitude

All the interviewees who lived during the Soviet regime, even though not completely justify the phenomenon of sex work, believe that sex work will not vanish and take away sex workers' struggle. I can see that some of them were against sex work, but they cannot afford to stay with this point of view anymore. So, the shift of attention from the perceived immorality of this work to what must be done to make sex work less dangerous. Their logical process of thinking is: why continue disapproving of something that is not going anywhere? A better solution would be to mitigate all the externalities caused by sex work being illegal and make sex work as invisible as it can be. This attitude can be more or less scaled to show the general attitudes of people in Odessa. Even though the majority wanted regulation or legalization of sex work, they still showed some degree of reluctance when talking about this profession. I think they are proud that they have not surrendered their stance on prostitution completely and are trying to adjust their view of sex work to be more modern. Had I been doing these interviews ten years ago, the opinions would have been different.

However, I also would not say that all the younger people were welcoming sex work as a phenomenon with open arms. They understood the problems of sex workers: "Prostitutes are mistreated and abused very often by those who run this business." (Excerpt from the interview with a seafarer, male, 29) but were reluctant to cut them a place among

professions like teacher or nurse "... prostitutes have the right to earn money, but this profession is not fit to stand with other professions, at least right now." (Excerpt from the same interview) Their attitude may depend on many things, including their family members' views and the way they were brought up. Seeing my interviewees' understanding of hardships that sex workers endure, even without an immediate call to legalize sex work in all its entirety, makes me think that the old way of thinking, if not going away, at least changes to a more accepting and understanding one.

The stigma is still in place, but the change is obvious. Moreover, the fact that only two people out of eleven favored even more radical prohibition of prostitution shows that we are on the right track.

It is important to state that the negativity is displayed towards the workers, but not towards their clients. According to the responses from the interviews, the clients are not viewed as someone who does something immoral. All the blame is shifted towards sex workers. Somehow, clients elude the negativity and are viewed as someone, usually a male, who fulfills the demand side. In the people's minds - it is the sex worker who is performing an immoral act.

"As a rule, the client is led by the physiological needs that our society understands well and doesn't condemn. But the people who provide the services are perceived more ambiguously compared to their clients." (Excerpt from the interview with a retired officer, male, 51)

4.4.3 Change of image of a sex worker

Sex work was and still is thought about as an unworthy type of work, and the image of a sex worker is far from universal acceptance in Ukraine. This view of a sex worker persists even with most interviewees wanting either legalization of prostitution or something similar to the abolitionist framework, where sex workers are permitted to work, but sex work, in general, is suppressed.

Again, most respondents thought that the image could not be changed, and those who thought it could be were speaking about the task requiring an immense amount of work. This work would have to be done by people since they still bear the remnants of the stigma from the past. The respondents see the need to change this notorious view of sex work. But some think that it would require more time. Maybe, they wish for one more generation to grow up or for memory of the previous stigma to fade away to start building anew.

Interestingly, none of the respondents proposed radical measures like the country-wide campaign to change the image, or something of similar nature, that would indeed be controversial for Ukraine.

4.4.4 Service or exploitation, and attitudes to different types of sex workers

The majority of the respondents thought that sex work is not a type of exploitation by itself. They agreed that other factors like how the worker is treated, what actions, and under what circumstances they have to perform are the basis for the definition of exploitation. But sex work as performing an act of sexual character in exchange for money was not seen as exploitation, but as a service.

There was a universal agreement that when a person is coerced into sex work, it is clearly a case of exploitation, no matter what services the person provides. Defined as exploitation was also when a sex worker by choice performed actions against his or her will. But there was also an argument that nobody ever enters sex work by choice, but that demands the hard choice under that circumstance. Therefore all sex workers are exploited by definition no matter what kind of services they provide.

There was no universal agreement on this for the difference in attitudes to different classes of sex workers described in the literature review. Some said that their services define them as sex workers, and they are universally doing the same thing. But some respondents drew attention to the fact that street workers are more likely to be drug addicts and that they are more affected by diseases. This made some of the respondents think that higher class workers were more appealing just in terms of general looks and cleanliness.

4.4.5 How the government handles sex work

Looking at what was already said about sex work in Ukraine, I can only add that as an effect of the current situation, all the respondents viewed the actions of our government as either a complete lack of action and, therefore - a total failure, or as bad management of the situation that resulted in a total failure. This kind of attitude is not at all surprising, considering that the base law for prostitution is 33 years old. Be it just general dissatisfaction with the government or a genuine dissatisfaction related to the handling of sex work, the opinion is clearly negative.

4.4.6 Indifference

As I described earlier, the people I interviewed agreed that we need to change the current model. They were speaking about either "legalization" and "regulation." They are essentially part of the same concept that can be attributed to Legalization or Decriminalization. In fact, they want a departure from the current state of things to a state in which sex workers would have rights and responsibilities. But there is also an issue that I would like to address: all the respondents were disinterested, to a different degree, in what is going on with sex work in the country. They knew that it is criminalized and knew about the police racket. Some also knew about administrative punishments. The only two alternatives that come to mind of a person who is not invested in the question - are legalization and prohibition.

I talked with them about their preferred model, and when I came to understand their stance, I asked if they would react in any way if our government adopted an entirely opposite model. All the direct and indirect responses, but one, showed that they would only have a brief opinion on it. No passion would be involved since they were not invested in the topic in the first place. They did not see the possibility to influence the decision but only observe. Only one respondent answered that she would try to help the sex workers by volunteering if our government would further criminalize sex work. The lack of general interest can also be explained by the presence of more pressing issues that occupy people's minds. It is not surprising, considering that Ukraine is one of the poorest countries in Europe.

However, the disinterest and disbelief may have their source because most respondents did not see any change being made now because of the political and economic situation. The general view was that our healthcare and law enforcement were not ready for the change. The infrastructure is not suitable for any change, and the lack of the proper infrastructure can mitigate the effect that even a good model can bring. Corruption in the government and lack of action against the mafia that controls this business were also among the main reasons for the impossibility of change.

“If our government wished for it to be possible, then it would be. But the government doesn't care. Maybe, I don't know something, but there is nothing done about prostitution. I only know that government officials get money from not doing anything about it. They are covering up the organizational work. But it is not the government as a whole—just corrupt

politicians.” (Excerpt from the interview with an administrative worker in a private company, female, 50)

The public's attitude to sex work is in a league of itself. The "Soviet" past of the attitude that I described earlier plays a major role in the issue. Several respondents, including a person who works in the hospital, were sure that a sex worker would get different treatment if they decided to state the nature of their occupation. This attitude was also described as a remnant of the attitude that was in place during the time of the Soviet Union. Namely, a sex worker could be refused any help if someone found out the nature of this person's work. I would not state it as a fact, but this is not at all hard to believe.

4.4.7 A trial in Odessa and Sex-tourism

Regardless of all the ambiguity surrounding sex work and attitudes to it, all the respondents but one reacted positively to the question about whether the trial of any new model should be performed in Odessa. They thought that Odessa is suitable for this kind of endeavor. I can speculate that this is because of the seaport and sex work is at home in Odessa since long ago. People are just more used to sex work, even though their attitude may not reflect it properly.

One respondent that disagreed was generally against the legalization and regulation of sex work and stated that we could learn from the experience of other countries that performed similar trials without doing so in Odessa.

“Sex-tourism is bad. The money stays in the pockets of the people involved. But if prostitution was legal, then we could get taxes from it. But I can't tolerate the fact that we would fund a school, for example, with money from prostitution. Or any other application of that money. It is absurd.” (Excerpt from the interview with an anesthetist, male, 29)

I inquired about the attitudes to sex-tourism to find out how people would react to a possible increase in this kind of tourism if Ukraine legalized sex work. Sex-tourism is pretty popular already, especially in Odessa. In summer, you can spot American and European tourists interacting with young and attractive girls and women. It is common knowledge for people who live there. But the attitudes of the interviewees were not homogenous. Some thought that there is nothing bad in it, as long as it brings money to the city, and Odessa is not known only as a destination for said tourism. However, the majority thought it harms our image, while money from it stays in the pockets of pimps and the mafia. Also, concerns were expressed about sex-tourism being harmful to our morality.

Generally, both sides' points of view touched the aspect of harm to the city's image and Ukraine in general.

4.4.8 Hidden problem

It is indeed an interesting mix of the reluctance to accept sex work and the belief that our current model that is supposed to eradicate, or, at least, reduce prostitution is not working, and we need to regulate the sex work. If we combine the remaining "attitude" that is slowly fading away and the legalization of sex work that would increase the industry's size, it, without doubt, could provoke more media attention and negativity. The things about sex work instilled in the minds of people could resurface with a new strength when those people would encounter the reality of the legalization model, including the increase in the so popular sex-tourism and a possible increase in human trafficking that plagues the decriminalization and legalization frameworks.

While the police and law enforcement in Germany and the Netherlands may be up to the task, Ukraine's police are involved in the protection racket and widely distrusted, and the government institutions are drowning in corruption scandals. According to Transparency International, the corruption perception index of Ukraine is 33, corresponding to 117th place out of 179. (Transparency International, 2020)

4.4.9 Preferred change

To sum up briefly, the preferred change to the current model would be to say that people are indifferent. Some say it outright, but in other conversations, there is a lingering indifference. The indifference is not a result of ignorance but impotence. The general attitude that I derived from the interviews was that people want sex workers to have basic legal protection and rights; decrease violence and criminalization of sex work. These wishes are attributed to the legalization and regulation of sex work. The current situation in Ukraine facilitates the attitude of indifference regarding other topics than sex work. With sex work being in the back of the long queue of problems, the indifference because of impotence is understandable. Nonetheless, it is good to see that people are no longer wish for sex work to hide away in the shadows but wish for it to be recognized as a profession, even if with particular reservations about morality.

5 Results and Discussion

To adopt a new legal model, the government needs to look at other countries' experiences and models. The government would need to have a dialogue with sex workers and find out what they have to say on the matter. Sweden is often criticized for not talking to the sex workers and deciding that all sex work is inherently violent and destructive. Also, the argument that the famous Nordic model can exist only in Sweden in the way it was intended to exist. Because of Sweden's properly working law enforcement and social services. New Zealand had a dialogue with sex workers and decriminalized prostitution with a positive result. But not without challenges and criticism. These two countries use different approaches and have achieved considerable results in the ever-difficult case of sex work. It would be easy to imagine Ukraine learning from either of them. The reality is different. There are several problems: failing economy, social injustice, corruption, and attitudes. I chose to focus on the attitudes, but we cannot build a working solution only on the base attitudes. For any solution to work, we need to bring other parts of the equation to the desired level. And if we want a proper model, like in Sweden or New Zealand, we need at least a fraction of those countries' stability.

As *Oleksandr Radutniy* argues, Ukraine needs to legalize sex work. (Radutniy, 2016) I would also add that we need to legalize it because of the lack of alternatives. It can be argued that there are better models for Ukraine, considering that people in Ukraine are still not ready to recognize sex work as a valid form of work and have a negative attitude to this type of work. (Pyvovarova N.P, 2020).

“I think we are not ready for legalization. But legalization would bring security to women and other benefits. But I stress the fact that our society is not yet ready.” (Excerpt from the interview with a university lecturer, Doctor of Sciences, female, 53)

But not taking any action because of lack of readiness among people whose moral code may not allow such thing as sex work to become more visible – would be putting even more sex workers through the struggle that might have been avoided or mitigated otherwise. *Debra Satz's* argument about moralisms, which I briefly discussed earlier in the Literature Review, is useful in Ukraine's case. People are pained by sex work, which translates to the lack of action concerning that same sex work. The case of the failed legalization of sex work in Ukraine in 2016 confirms the existence of this cycle. When Parliament members voiced their opinions on the possibility of legalization, they brought

to life the effect of sex work on their lives in the form of moralisms, which affected their decision.

I would rather see sex work decriminalized with demand still being illegal in terms of this discussion. On the other hand, legalization would advance the conversation on what is right and wrong and allow for better regulation. We cannot afford to shy away from this discussion and swipe it under the rug any longer.

Legalization would take away the power that law enforcement currently has over sex workers, which is established with the criminalization of prostitution, the power described in the thesis by *Dafna Rachok*. (Rachok, 2018, pp. 37-39) Making any aspect of sex work illegal can enable corrupt government agencies to benefit from the protection racket and cover-ups that are plentiful today. And that is why, despite my support for a model similar to the Swedish model, I agree that we would benefit more from the total legalization of sex work. It all goes back to the problems Ukraine has right now.

“The government, in the faces of particular people, handles prostitution by covering it up and collecting illegal money from people down the chain. In turn, prostitution is left alone while it provides money for the people in power. While this order of things stays the same, nothing will change.” (Excerpt from the interview with a retired officer, male, 51)

Nevertheless, to focus on the positive side, legalizing prostitution can put Ukraine in a better place during the discussion about joining the European Union. Joining the EU is on the agenda for our government right now.

As I stated above, returning to the attitudes, lifting the criminal responsibility, and increasing the size of the industry can turn out to be destructive without proper working social services and law enforcement. However, also judging by what people said in the interviews, making sex work more visible can become a point where negativity towards sex work would only increase. Even noting that the respondents' attitudes have lightened, compared to what was expected, they still noted that the image of sex work and workers is still erratic, and a minor shake can cause rejection.

"... it's an immense task. We would have to do an enormous amount of work. Without good 'advertisement,' this profession won't be perceived any better. Because it still would be the same prostitution. Our people with defined social norms are not yet ready to accept this profession... ." (Excerpt from the interview with a retired officer, male, 51). This is a piece of the answer to the question of whether the image of the sex worker can be changed to be better accepted by the public. This opinion serves as a just definition of what is going

on in Ukraine now. With the right amount of publicity and discussion to adjust people to the notion of sex work being more present in our lives – it can bring better understanding and compassion. But a blunt and straightforward action may cause only rejection.

To bring the discussion to a close, it would be necessary to note that Odessa and Ukraine, in general, are not that static anymore. The discussion on what should be done with sex work is out there. And it was proved in 2016 when an attempt to legalize sex work was made, even if it was unsuccessful.

6 Conclusion

Starting from the early Soviet Union, the attitude to sex work on this massive country's territories was shaped to be unforgiving. There was no place for sex work in the official agenda that touched even the private life of Soviet citizens. People were conditioned to view sex work as highly immoral. Today, the Soviet Union is no more for many years, but the remnants of that conditioning are still alive and passed from parents to their children in the former Soviet Bloc countries.

In Odessa, which is a southern seaport of Ukraine, people are still bearing the stigma, but the stigma has changed to be more in line with the present day. People understand that sex work will not disappear, so they have adjusted their views accordingly. Opinions on sex work are changing with experience and passing of time, rather than staying static. And the attitude to sex work depends on many factors, including the circumstances in which the particular person was brought up. So, even the views of people who were brought up during the times of the Soviet Union in very conservative families are surprisingly directed at this particular profession's problems rather than at its immorality as they perceive it. Some people implied the change in their perception, not saying it directly; others said it directly. It is fascinating when a person admits that their previous view on sex work was different, but it has changed to become more accepting and understanding. Noting this kind of change outlines the result of my work. Previously, thinking that the majority of the residents of all ages would be against any manifestation of sex work. I found out for this to be not true, at least among the people I interviewed. They were in favor of sex work being legalized and properly regulated by the government rather than staying as it is. All the interviewees noted that the negative image of sex work has not magically changed. But I also noted that the direction their negativity is pointed at is our government's direction, which is idle when sex workers are exploited, trafficked, and coerced into work; at the appalling conditions in which women have to work while being under pressure from corrupt police officers who profit from their work.

This change in attitude marks not the complete turnaround but an important milestone in forming a modern and humane view of sex work in Odessa. The Ukrainian government is more concerned with making the country look better than resolving the problem of sex work that is at its extreme right now. More urgent problems define the agenda today.

Moreover, seeing the nature of those problems, it would be insensitive to judge people for their attitude to sex work because they have no time to reflect on the question.

“... I do not dislike them and do not think prostitutes are worse in some way than any other human being. Now, I accept them better.

Q: You disliked them before?

A: We were younger and had other values. I was different and didn't have the life experience. Everyone judged them and pointed at them, and so did I. I said that prostitution was horrible. But it's behind me now.” (Excerpt from the interview with a medical worker, female, 44)

7 References

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