

Psychologist and trauma expert Dr. Ingeborg Kraus's lecture at the Madrid Conference: "La prostitution est incompatible avec l'égalité entre hommes et femmes." (Prostitution is Incompatible with Equality Between Men and Women) (Original in French)

Organized by La Comisión para la investigación de malos tratos a mujeres (The Commission for the Investigation of the Mistreatment of Women)

Madrid, 15 October 2015

In Germany, the idea of abolition isn't taken into consideration because it is believed that "good prostitution" exists. It is clear that child prostitution isn't tolerated; likewise, so-called "forced" prostitution is considered to be evil. But prostitution between two adults who supposedly consent mutually, why not? Why forbid this decision between two adults?

One year ago, I started the German Psychotraumatologists' Manifesto Against Prostitution. This appeal states that prostitution is humiliating, that it is degrading, that it is an act of violence and a continuation of violence in these women's life histories. There is no "good prostitution." This Manifesto also demands a law that holds men (buyers of sex) responsible and asks for the introduction of criminalization of sex purchasers. This Manifesto has been signed by the most distinguished trauma experts in Germany, therefore the ones who shape opinions.

To understand the importance of this Manifesto, I would like to frame it in its historical context because it is arriving 120 years late!

The founder of clinical psychology was Sigmund Freud. At the end of the 19th century, psychiatrists in Europe were interested in the phenomenon of hysteria. In Paris, there was the psychiatrist Charcot and in Vienna, Sigmund Freud. While Charcot observed and noted these women's symptoms, Freud began listening to them. He published his discoveries in a book called *Studies on Hysteria* where he discovered that all of these women were victims of sexual violence during their childhood. This book was certainly a scandal at the time, above all, because these women came from "good families." Very quickly, the board of Viennese doctors put pressure on Freud to retract these studies, which suggested that symptoms of hysteria were the result of sexual violence these women had suffered during their childhood. This would have been the end of Freud's career if he didn't retract the report, so he yielded. He denied this truth and in its place invented the theory of fantasy, namely that violence was something that the women had desired and fantasized about. For 100 years, all universities have spread this theory, which was founded on the denial of violence against women and the acquittal of the guilty parties.

Today, discussions about prostitution are still marked by the same mechanisms: the denial of violence against women and the inversion of the victim and the perpetrator with the claim, "But that's what you want, you want to sleep with us!" All this to protect a taboo subject: male sexuality and its right to fulfillment without constraints or limits.

If the lobbying at the time hadn't taken science hostage, if Freud hadn't retracted his first theory, we wouldn't be in this position today. Schools would have made students aware of and educated them about violence against women for several generations now. Today,

faced with a woman who enters into prostitution, we should instinctively say, "She must have gone through some terrible things to make this choice," and not, "She wants it!"

When we analyze the problem of prostitution in Germany today, we find that the culture of denial is omnipresent and that lobbying has infiltrated everything as well:

- There is a denial of the violence committed against women before entering into prostitution.
- There is a denial of the physical and mental consequences caused by prostitution.
- There is a denial of the violence committed against women in situations of prostitution.
- There is a denial of the impact of prostitution on society, the relationship between men and women and the family.

I would like to expand on the first three points:

1. Entry into prostitution, and I'm speaking only of so-called "voluntary" prostitution:

Here is what Ellen Templin, the director of a dominatrix studio in Berlin said:

"There is no voluntary prostitution. A woman who prostitutes herself has reasons for doing it. First of all, there are psychological reasons. Here in my studio all of them have been abused during their childhood. All of them! The souls of these women who prostitute themselves have already been destroyed." (p. 171-178, , Alice Schwarzer HG.: Prostitution , ein deutscher Skandal, 2013)

Rosen Hircher, who started in prostitution at the age of 31, says:

"What I was doing seemed perfectly normal to me. I knew exactly where I was going and it seemed normal to stay there. I will never forget the words of a prostitute who told me the first day: 'You've already done this all your life.' In fact, I had been sexually abused by my uncle since I was a child. My father was an alcoholic and was extremely aggressive. Since my childhood I was used to enduring the violence of men." (Rosen Hircher: A prostitute testifies, 2009)

Indeed, multiple studies on this subject show a direct correlation between entry into prostitution and experiences of violence during childhood:

- A study by Melissa Farley in 2003 shows that 55 to 90% have been victims of sexual aggression during childhood, and 59% victims of abuse. (Farley, Prostitution and Trafficking in Nine Countries: An Update on Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, 2003)
- The study by the German DFCS in 2004 found that 87% were victims of physical violence before the age of 16. (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend: Gender Datenreport, 2004)(Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth: Gender Data Report, 2004)
- A 2001 study by Zumbeck in Germany found that 65% have been physically abused and 50% were victims of sexual violence. (Zumbeck, Sibylle: Die Prävalenz

traumatischer Erfahrungen, Posttraumatische Belastungsstörungen und Dissoziation bei Prostituierten, Hamburg 2001)

The system of prostitution uses these childhood traumas for its own benefit and profit. There are 3 psychological mechanisms that result from such a childhood:

- Täterintrojekte – identification with the aggressor: crushed self-esteem, being persuaded that one isn't good and that one doesn't deserve better.
- Wiederholungszwang – compulsive repetition, voluntarily reliving similar traumatic situations with the illusion of controlling the actions each time.
- Dissociation. I would like to expand on this point.

Michaela Huber, the director of the German Trauma and Dissociation Society, says:

"To allow strangers to penetrate one's body, it is necessary to extinguish some natural phenomena: fear, shame, disgust, strangeness, contempt and self-blame. In their place these women put indifference, neutrality, a functional conception of penetration, a reinterpretation of this act as a "job" or "service". (<http://www.michaela-huber.com/files/vortraege2014/trauma-und-prostitution-aus-traumatherapeutischer-sicht.pdf>. 02.01.2015)

In fact, these women dissociate. What is dissociation? (<http://www.michaela-huber.com/files/vortraege2014/trauma-und-prostitution-aus-traumatherapeutischer-sicht.pdf>. 02.01.2015)

Dissociation is a short-circuiting of integrative functions when stress becomes unbearable:

- Consciousness (trance phenomena)
- Memory (amnesia)
- Feelings
- Perception of one's body and self (depersonalization)
- Perception of one's surroundings (tunnel vision, everything becomes foggy)
- Identity (playing a role, no longer knowing who one is, etc.)

So I ask myself the question: if you don't know who you are, you aren't really present, consciousness is cloudy, you feel nothing and you are disconnected from your body, is that freedom? Is that personal fulfillment, self-realization; is it self-determination?

The phenomenon of dissociation isn't something that you can turn on and off as you wish. The dissociation can remain. There are integrative functions that can be extinguished for extended periods of time. It's impressive to me every time I see these women reconnect with life. After successful therapy, some say: "Now I can feel pain" or "I can smell now and food has a taste" or "I understand who I am now."

If it were just the phenomenon of dissociation, the damages from prostitution would be limited to that level, but there are also traumatic memories. During dissociation, the body and the cortex are largely anesthetized. One perceives things, but they aren't all remembered in the cortex. There can be amnesia too, holes in the memory. An experience is recorded in another part of the brain, which we call "traumatic memory." This memory

doesn't function under the same principals as the cortex. It's a kind of black box to which we don't have conscious access and we don't even know that it exists. This memory collects traumatic experiences in a disorderly way, without a sense of space and time. It isn't semantic; it doesn't have language. It can be brought on at any moment by "trigger" events that revive the trauma: a smell, a color, a sound, images, words, phrases, etc. At that moment, it triggers an intense anxiety, as if the person was reliving the trauma at that very instant. It's what they call a "flashback." These reactions are known as PTSD: post-traumatic stress disorder. In other words, these women have a sort of time bomb in their brain. (Dr. Muriel Salmona, *La dissociation traumatique et les troubles de la personnalité*, 2013. <http://www.memoiretraumatique.org/>)

Therefore the prostitution system profits from the phenomenon of dissociation, in which women aren't in a position to defend themselves. They make their bodies available and suffer extreme violence. These women become more and more traumatized.

2. The psychological consequences:

The consequences are fatal:

- Melissa Farley's 2008 study found that 68% of women in prostitution situations had PTSD of an intensity similar to war veterans or victims of torture.
- Zumbek's 2001 study in Germany found that 60% had very intense PTSD.

And there are other problems that can develop: all sorts of anxieties, various dependencies, affective disorders like depression or bipolar disorder, psychosomatic pains, personality disorders, dissociative disorders, etc.

3. Denial of reality:

Germany instituted a law in 2002 that legalized prostitution without any regulation and made it into a job like any other. It was put in place because it was argued that it wasn't prostitution that was traumatizing but the stigmatization of these women by society. From this point on, they were called "sex workers" (The same argument now being led by Amnesty International).

Thirteen years after passing the law, the results are catastrophic:

- We are observing **an industrialization of prostitution**:
 - The total revenue is 14.6 billion Euros with 3500 registered brothels. (p. 327, Michael Jürgs: *Sklavenmarkt Europe*. 2014)
 - The creation of mega-brothels with the capacity to accommodate around 1000 buyers of sex at once. (p. 70-87. Chantal Louis: *Die Folgen der Prostitution*. In Alice Schwarzer HG. *Prostitution*)
 - "Flat-rate" brothels. For 60 Euros they offer a beer, a sausage and unlimited women.
 - You no longer need to go to Thailand for sex tourism, you see sex tourists from around the world coming in groups — buses transport tourists from the Frankfurt airport directly to the mega-brothels.

- **The growth of demand:** reports estimate that 400,000 women are in prostitution in Germany and 1.2 million men buy these women daily, (source: TERRE DES FEMMES: <http://frauenrechte.de/online/index.php/themen-und-aktionen/frauenhandel/prostitution>)
- **A reduction in the rate of pay** for women: 30 Euros for sexual intercourse, while they must pay around 160 Euros for a room; in the streets it starts as low as 5 Euros.
- You see **a banalization of prostitution**, I say that this violence has become structural:
 - The official tourist guide of Munich runs promos for brothels.
 - They recruit women on the street as "female escorts."
 - It is common for young people to celebrate school graduation at a brothel.
 - A guided tour of brothels for new students in Berlin.
 - In my city, Karlsruhe, a fitness club is located right across from a brothel. At night, women exercised to music with the windows open. The sex buyers complained. There was a trial and it was the brothel that won. The law thus protects buyers of sex and not women.
- The goal of the law, which is reportedly protecting and supporting women in prostitution, has failed completely — of these 400,000 women, only 44 are registered as sole proprietorship businesses. More than half of these women work illegally, meaning they don't have any social insurance and don't have access to medical services in Germany. So, even if they have the flu, they don't have the possibility of visiting a doctor.
- You see **growing perversion among sex buyers**. Practices are becoming more dangerous with an increase in violence against women and a lack of protection for them:

There is research that examines violence in prostitution:

- Melissa Farley's 2008 study at the international level shows that:
 - 82% of women have been physically assaulted.
 - 83% have been threatened with a weapon.
 - 68% have been raped.
 - 84% are or have been homeless.
- Zumbek's 2001 study in Germany: 70% have been physically assaulted. (Zumbeck, Sibylle: Die Prävalenz traumatischer Erfahrungen, Posttraumatische Belastungsstörungen und Dissoziation bei Prostituierten, Hamburg 2001)
- A study by the German Ministry of Family in 2004: 82% have mentioned sustaining psychological violence, 92% have been sexually assaulted. (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend: Gender Datenreport, 2004)

Just taking into account these numbers, it is difficult to say that it's a job like any other. And this research dates back to more than 10 years ago — things have become much worse in Germany.

This is what the dominatrix Ellen Templin had already observed in 2007:

"Since the reform you can see that not only have the advertisements become uninhibited, the buyers of sex have become more brutal. That's from one day to the next. Nowadays, if you say, "No, I don't do that," You often get the response, "Come on; don't be so difficult, it's your job". Before it was forbidden to demand unprotected sex. Today, buyers ask on the telephone if they can piss on your face, wanting to do it without protection, wanting to do it anally or orally. These days, it's an everyday occurrence. Before, buyers still had a guilty conscience. That doesn't exist anymore today, they want more and more." (p. 171-178, , Alice Schwarzer HG.: Prostitution , ein deutscher Skandal, 2013)

There is a "menu" circulating on the Internet, where buyers can choose what they want from a long *à la carte* list. (www.traummaennlein.de) (cf. attached list)

There are sites on the internet where buyers share their experiences: here is what you can read there: (<https://freiersblick.wordpress.com/>)

"I spread her butt cheeks and slowly thrust my cock inside her, which was accompanied by a quiet moan. When I was close to finishing and fucked her more and more violently, she wanted me to stop and fuck her in her pussy. I didn't want to. Sorry, Vanessa! After several more hard thrusts I shot my load and rammed it deep in her again."

A few weeks ago, I received a new study by Melissa Farley (<http://prostitutionresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Sex-Buyers-Compared2015.pdf>), which showed that buyers of sex display patterns similar to men with antisocial personalities, with the following characteristics: lack of empathy, misogyny and a desire to dominate women, practicing sex without making a connection, a lack of a guilty conscience.

So it's not the nice guy next door, who just wants a little sex. No, prostitution attracts psychopaths and encourages antisocial personalities among men. Needless to say, these behaviors don't stay confined behind brothel walls but also influence male-female relationships in everyday life.

- Under these conditions, no German woman sees herself as capable of doing this "work." **The makeup of women in prostitution has changed.** With the opening of Europe to the east, women come from the poorest regions of Europe: Romania, Bulgaria — and it's often minorities like the Roma who live in extreme poverty. Today around 95% come from other countries. It has become a prostitution of poverty.

Sabine Constabel, a social worker who has worked in Stuttgart with prostituted women for more than 20 years, says the following in a television interview (17.10.2013: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpCPKDRcFg0>):

"30% of these women are young, under 21 years old. Often they are sacrificed by their own families to support them financially. The majority doesn't speak German, and some among them are illiterate. And frequently, they haven't had sexual relations before. These young

women come to Germany and are subjected to the perverse desires of these buyers. They aren't capable of saying no, of defending themselves. They are completely overwhelmed by the situation and completely traumatized by it. Many of them ask for psychotropic drugs immediately after their first experience. They say, 'Otherwise, you couldn't survive it.' Some women are only there a few days and say, 'I'm dead here, I can't laugh anymore.' Others endure it for years and say, 'I have children at home, I have to support them.' These women are very traumatized, they develop depression, nightmares and physical problems; they somatize, they have stomach pains, they get sick and suffer. They become hopeless, they don't want to do this horrible work."

In conclusion I'd like to allow Michaela Huber, president of the German Trauma and Dissociation Society to speak:

"Society needs to get a clear picture of it and ask, "What is this?" What is happening? How is it that sexuality has disconnected from partnership, love and family? Is that what we want? It's a discussion that must take place in our society. Do we want to accept that millions of men each day buy a woman's body to penetrate it? Do we believe this is right? What society can believe this is right?" (22.01.2015 <http://www.trauma-and-prostitution.eu/2015/01/22/eiszeit-der-ethik/>)