



Threats, Victims and Unimaginable Subjects of Rights: A Genealogy of Sex Worker Governance in Poland

AGATA DZIUBAN

Jagiellonian University, Poland

ABSTRACT *This paper sketches the emergence of, and shifts within, the social, legal, and political figurations of sex workers in Poland. By adopting a genealogical perspective, I investigate how sex workers have been (re)constituted as subjects of governance and unimaginable social justice claimants in legislation, political debates, and law enforcement strategies. With a broad temporal scope, this article traces continuities, transformations, and disruptions within modes of sex work governance in Poland from the adoption of the first laws relating to sex work enacted during the early 19th century to the present day. Through analysis of policy documents, scholarly work on the history of sex work policies in Poland, and personal accounts by sex workers, I identify and examine two dominant discursive and legal figurations of a sex worker: as a threat, and as a victim in need of rescue and protection. While analysing the emergence of and interplay between these two figurations, this article demonstrates how these seemingly contradictory frames of recognition gradually conjoined within 20th-century Polish sex work governance strategies, rendering sex workers unimaginable subjects of rights and social justice claimants.*

KEYWORDS sex-work; figuration of crime; recognition; redistribution; Poland; social justice; victim; threat; sex-work policy

Introduction

In May 2021, an interview with three sex workers was published in the centrist Polish newspaper, *Gazeta Wyborcza*. In “‘We want to pay taxes!’ Sex work is work,” Aleksandra Kluczyk, Sonia Nowak, and Sandra Anders openly discussed their trade and the fact they had not been coerced into the sex industry (Rozwadowska, 2021). Aleksandra called for the right “to be able to pay taxes and contributions for my social benefits, go to the doctor and be able to dream about a pension.” Sonia expressed a wish that Polish sex workers did not have to live in “constant fear.” For Sandra, only a change in their legal

Correspondence Address: Agata Dziuban, Institute of Sociology, Jagiellonian University, ul. Grodzka 52, 31-044 Cracow, Poland; email: agata.dziuban@uj.edu.pl

ISSN: 1911-4788



status would enable Polish sex workers to report violence and seek help from law enforcement and the criminal justice system. All three of them called for decriminalisation, a recognition of sex work as work, and an end to the destructive stigma attached to their community, expressed through the social construct of a “prostitute” (Rozwadowska, 2021). Essentially, these were demands for social justice. Along with demeaning representations of sex workers in public discourses, the interviewees highlighted policies that push them into hazardous work environments and exclude their community from employment rights, social benefits, and other safeguards. Their calls echo the conceptualisation of social justice as economic redistribution, cultural recognition, and political representation presented by Nancy Fraser (2009). The appeals made by these interviewees – for the ability to overcome institutionalised patterns of cultural value that constitute sex workers as unworthy of rights or entitlements by gaining recognition, and attain the status, rights, and resources of workers through redistribution – are effectively calls for social justice (Fraser, 2009).

In the comments section for the online interview, one reader declared their “impression that all or some of the protagonists of the article are made up” (Rozwadowska, 2021). The very existence of sex work activists capable of speaking for themselves and making claims for social justice appears to be inconceivable to this reader and must be contested. Sex workers fall outside what Judith Butler (2009) has designated the “frames of recognition” that construct some subjects as capable of making such demands. These categories, conventions, and norms construct certain subjects as “recognisable,” and “produce an historically contingent ontology, such that our very capacity to discern and name the ‘being’ of the subject is dependent on norms that facilitate that recognition” (Butler, 2009, p. 4). While frames of recognition are contextual, historically changeable, and potentially subvertable, as attempted in this interview, they shape how certain subjects and communities are perceived, managed, and compelled to exist.

In my view, this reader’s comment reiterates the frames of recognition to which sex workers in Poland are subjected and demonstrates the perplexing position they occupy; despite openly demanding justice for their communities, the interviewees are unimaginable as political subjects and claimants of rights. These frames not only shape popular perceptions, including those of this reader, but also manifest in the harmful modes of sex work governance described by Aleksandra, Sonia, and Sandra: criminalisation, an absence of labour rights, no access to state support schemes, and exclusion from participation in employment-related policy-making processes.

In this article, I analyse the existing frames of recognition that contribute to the unimaginability of a sex worker as a subject of rights with a political voice. I address the ways in which sex workers have been understood and represented, and the dominant figurations in which their lived realities are embedded. Given that sex workers are not seen as political subjects, what recognisable or imaginable social figures of sex workers have emerged? How and why have

sex workers been framed in such ways? What are the historically situated governance strategies that have formed the dominant constructions of sex workers in contemporary Poland? And how do different modes of sex work governance shape the conditions of, and potentialities for, realising social justice for sex workers?

To answer these questions, this paper sketches the emergence of and shifts within the social, legal, and political figurations of sex workers in Poland. Rather than taking the present-day constructions of sex workers as the end point of analysis, I adopt a genealogical perspective to unravel the forces that have shaped these constructions. Following others that have applied a genealogical perspective (Foucault, 1977; Scott, 2005; Scoular, 2015), I examine the ways in which sex workers have been (re)constituted as subjects of governance within the legal system, political debates, and law enforcement strategies by tracing continuities, transformations and disruptions within modes of Polish sex work governance from adoption of the first relevant laws during the early 19th century through to the present day. As this will necessarily be a partial and selective genealogy (Scoular, 2015, pp. 20-24), I focus on the emergence of and interplay between two dominant discursive and legal figurations of a sex worker as a threat and a victimised other in need of protection. I then explore how these two apparently contradictory figures have converged in governance strategies to render sex workers unimaginable as rights-claiming subjects. I conclude by returning to the issue of social justice, and address how modes of sex work governance influence the rights, entitlements, and possibilities for claim-making of sex workers in Poland.

This paper contributes to research on sex work governance in Poland in several ways. Firstly, it provides an analysis of different modes of sex worker governance and their impact on people selling sexual services in Poland. Very little comprehensive and context-based analysis of sex work policies has taken place (Ratecka, 2022, 2023), and the existing literature draws largely from legal and criminological studies (Mozawa, 2014; Welskop, 2013). Secondly, a genealogical perspective brings together the often fragmented and dispersed historical and sociological accounts of sex work management in Poland. While the available research has focused on specific historical moments, such as the 19th century (Sikorska-Kulesza, 2004; Stauter-Halsted, 2015; Urbanik-Kopeć, 2021), the interwar period (Grata, 2013; Lipska-Toumi, 2014), the state-socialist era (Antoniszyn & Marek, 1985; Dobrowolska, 2020; Jasińska, 1967), and post-transformation Poland (Ratecka, 2022, 2023; Ślęzak, 2019), my article explores continuities and shifts in sex work governance across these periods. Thirdly, this text presents a novel, figuration-centred approach to the analysis of sex work governance. This enables me to unravel the historically contingent forms of sex worker subjectivity produced by shifting modes of governance in Poland.

Methodological Note

The genealogical analysis of shifting modes of sex work governance over an extensive timespan requires in-depth study of multiple sources and the adoption of varied research methods. Hence, I adopted a multi-method approach that included a review of the relevant literature, policy analysis, archival research, and ethnographic fieldwork. I have examined all the major legal documents referring to sex work within the Polish territories since 1802. To capture the logics and moral economies behind these policy developments and better understand the broader historical context in which they emerged, I have also analysed expert discourses, historical accounts of relevant regulations and policy-debates, and academic publications on prostitution published throughout this period (e.g., Antoniszyn & Marek, 1985; Bebel, 1897; Giedroyć, 1892, 1897; Jasińska, 1967; Maćko, 1927; Zaleski 1927). To the extent possible given the extensive timeframe addressed in this article, I have drawn on archival research and studied popular, feminist, and expert (e.g., medical) publications on prostitution from the 19th century onwards, and examined extensive secondary sources, including contemporary scholarly work on the history of sex work, and present-day sociological studies of sexual commerce in Poland (e.g., Dobrowolska, 2020; Jakubczak, 2020; Lipska-Toumi, 2014; Ratecka, 2022, 2023; Sikorska-Kulesza, 2004; Ślęzak, 2019; Stauter-Halsted, 2015; Urbanik-Kopec, 2021). My study of contemporary modes of governance has also been informed by my long-term participatory research with Sex Work Polska, a collective working for the rights of sex workers, and analysis of activism, advocacy, and writings by sex workers (e.g., Kluczyk, 2023; NGPS, 2019; SWP, 2020). Given the length restrictions on this article, I predominantly refer to secondary sources, which have been read in relation to and corroborated by other data.

My analysis focuses on the emergence of and shifts in the constructions of sex workers enacted in policies pertaining to prostitution. These constructions, captured here with the notion of “figures,” embody various forms of sex worker subjectivities that are produced and negotiated through laws, administrative categories, political debates, social imaginaries, and law enforcement strategies (Moser & Schlechtriemen, 2019; Shore et al., 2011). As such, they articulate the dominant frames of recognition through which sex workers are perceived and governed (Butler, 2009). Through my analysis, I have identified two key sex worker figurations within Polish prostitution policy: the sex worker as a threat and as a victim. In this article, I focus on the emergence and historical transformations of these figures and explore their performative function in rendering sex workers as particular subjects of governance in Polish policy landscapes.

With respect to terminology, I use the terms “sex workers” to refer to women providing sexual services and “prostitution” when discussing legal measures relating to the provision of sexual services in their historical context.

Elsewhere, I use “sex work” or other, non-stigmatising, descriptive categories (Kluczyk et al., 2022).

The Birth of the Threat

Political and legal figurations of sex workers in Poland have their roots in the 19th century, a time of rapid social and economic change with the emergence of modern industrial capitalism, urbanisation, wage labour, nation-state consolidation, and shifting social norms pertaining to sexuality and reproduction. These transformations led to the expansion of commercialised sexual labour in many European countries, but also contributed to its framing as a social, moral and biopolitical concern, and thus a subject of governance (Sikorska-Kulesza, 2004; Wagenaar, 2017; Walkowitz, 1980). With France and Prussia as forerunners, prostitution was meticulously regulated by the state in almost all European countries by the end of the 19th century (Jansen & Wagenaar, 2018).

The first regulation governing sex work within the territory covered by contemporary Poland emerged after the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Between 1772 and 1795, Prussia, Imperial Russia, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire annexed parts of Poland and the state ceased to exist. Prior to partition, prostitution had been tolerated within the confines of minimally regulated brothels (Stauter-Halsted, 2015; Zaleski, 1927). This changed in 1802, when Prussian authorities governing the Duchy of Warsaw introduced *An ordinance forestalling the ensnaring of young girls into licentiousness in bordellos, or otherwise for money, nonetheless containing regulations towards halting the venereal plague in Warsaw* (Giedroyc. 1897, pp. 209-219). Modelled on Prussian regulations from the 1790s, this ordinance restricted prostitution to licensed and state-supervised brothels and introduced the mandatory registration and medical examination of sex workers. Those diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection (STI) underwent compulsory treatment, and failure to register as a sex worker or report STIs resulted in detention in resocialisation centres (Sikorska-Kulesza, 2004, pp. 34-40). Historians have primarily understood this ordinance as an attempt to prevent the spread of STIs among Prussian soldiers and officials, who constituted over 20% of Warsaw’s population at that time (Sikorska-Kulesza, 2004, pp. 34-35; Stauter-Halsted, 2015, pp. 28-29). This law, therefore, contributed to the framing of sex workers as vectors of “venereal plague” and a threat to the Prussian military.

The figure of the sex worker as a health threat was also central in sex work governance under the Russian Empire. Following the Congress of Vienna, the Duchy of Warsaw became the Kingdom of Poland in 1815, part of the Russian Empire and under Tsarist rule. Although prostitution was prohibited in Russia at that time (Bernstein, 1995; Hearne, 2021), the licensed and unlicensed

brothels that existed were not closed by imperial authorities. Increases in STIs among soldiers and the general population during the 1820s and 1830s prompted the Kingdom to adopt anti-syphilitic regulations subjecting sex workers to medical-police supervision in 1843. Although sex workers could work in state-licensed brothels or independently, registration with the police and medical examination became mandatory. Failure to register or attend a gynaecological check-up resulted in compulsory hospitalisation or detention (Giedroyć, 1892, 1897). Sex workers were required to hand their passports over to the magistracy and use medical certificates as identity documents. Similar regulations were introduced in the Austro-Hungarian partition during the 1850s (Stauter-Halsted, 2015; Wingfield, 2017).

Equating sex workers with the spread of STIs, these modes of governance utilised punitive measures to protect the health of soldiers and the general population. Subsumed in the figure of a health threat and subjected to the extensive discretionary powers of the police and physicians, sex workers were not recognised as subjects of rights or protections. Regimentation significantly limited the social and civil rights of sex workers, including freedom of movement, and contributed to their social marginalisation. Substituting passports with medical tickets trapped women in the incapacitating identity of “the prostitute” and hampered their social mobility, forcing them to reveal their work and health status wherever they were required to produce documents (Jakubczak, 2020, pp. 40-41; Sikorska-Kulesza, 2004, pp. 34-40). Leaving sex work and having one’s name removed from the sex worker register was complicated. Deregistration was only possible in the Russian partition for women about to marry, give birth, or begin other employment, or for those with a guardian prepared to vouch for their “moral improvement” (Sikorska-Kulesza, 2004).

This regulatory model – also known as “regimentation” – solidified across partitioned Poland during the 19th century. Sex work gained heightened public attention among national elites during the 1880s. As Keely Stauter-Halsted (2009) has stated, this “moral panic” in Polish newspapers and public debates reflected anxieties about the shifting socio-economic conditions under which commercial sex was performed, as well as “transformations of the meanings imparted to the figure of the prostitute” (p. 559). Firstly, industrialisation and emancipation from serfdom had increased rural-to-urban migration and urban poverty. Due to limited employment opportunities and gender-pay disparities, many working-class women relied on sex work (Urbanik-Kopec, 2021). The regimentation system further increased the visibility of sex workers and the sense of national urgency about the prevalence of prostitution in the Polish territories.

Secondly, while all prostitution-related regulations constructed sex work as a public health concern, sex workers primarily featured in Polish-language media as a threat to social order. Violating middle-class gender and sexual norms by engaging in non-procreative and transactional sex, these “fallen women” were portrayed as immoral, deviant, promiscuous, and shameless, as

well as possible corrupters of “innocent” children and girls (Stauter-Halsted, 2015, pp. 37-42; Urbanik-Kopeć, 2021). As a metaphor for urban disintegration and social malady, sex workers were rendered a threat to the bourgeois family and respectable femininity.

A key element of this moral panic was its national perspective: sex workers were seen as a threat to an embattled Polish nation, partitioned between the Austro-Hungarian, German, and Russian empires, and its emancipatory aspirations. As Stauter-Halsted (2009) has stated, debates surrounding prostitution were part of creating a “virtual nation, an imagined moral community that could serve as the basis of a political nation in time” (p. 561). Associated with moral and physical contagion, sex workers embodied the “decay, degeneration, and disease attacking the national body” (p. 558) and were therefore beyond the privileged norms of national respectability and an imagined citizenry.

In this context, the regimentation system came to be seen by members of the Polish intellectual elites as an instrument of political subjection and demoralisation that legitimised and sustained the sex trade (Jakubczak, 2020; Maćko, 1927; Sikorska-Kulesza, 2004). By the turn of the century, numerous organisations were advocating for the eradication of prostitution, including the Society of Abolitionists, the Association to Combat Venereal Diseases and Propagate the Principles of Abolitionism, and the Association to Propagate Moral Purity (Sikorska-Kulesza, 2004). Utilising classist, puritan, hygienist, and even eugenic arguments, these organisations politically instrumentalised the figure of the sex worker as a threat. However, as the abolitionist movement gained strength in partitioned Poland, the idea of the sex worker as a victim also began to develop.

The Rise of the Victim

This paradigmatic and “humanising” shift in Polish debates on prostitution resulted from the popularisation of abolitionist demands across Europe. The abolitionist movement emerged in Britain during the 1870s in response to the *Contagious Diseases Acts* (CDA), which subjected sex workers to medical policing similar to that deployed in partitioned Poland (Scoular, 2015; Walkowitz, 1980). Objection to the CDA became a vehicle for political mobilisation, in which the Ladies National Association played a major role. Association activists equated enforced medical examination with rape and depicted sex workers as victims of adverse social conditions, lured into prostitution by powerful men. Rather than the imposition of strict medical surveillance, abolitionists demanded the eradication of prostitution. Lauding monogamous marriage and moral purity, they called for the protection and moral rehabilitation of sex workers (Scott, 2005; Scoular, 2015; Walkowitz, 1980).

As the movement gained prominence across Europe, the abolitionist perspective soon became one of the core values of the Polish feminist movement; support for the abolition of sex work was officially endorsed at the first Conference of Polish Women in 1907. Perceiving prostitution as state-sanctioned violence, a violation of woman's honour and dignity, and moral and physical enslavement, many women's organisations engaged in charity work intended to protect "innocent girls" from prostitution and rescue the already "fallen" (Urbanik-Kopec, 2021).

The figuration of the sex worker as victim could also be found in socialist perspectives pointing to the classed character of sexual labour under industrial capitalism. Engagement in sex work was understood here as a consequence of hostile economic circumstances and the dire poverty experienced by lower-class women. Struggling with degrading working and living conditions and everyday hardship, urban proletariat women were condemned to fall into moral atrophy and thus the hands of exploitative "pimps" (Bebel, 1897). Enforced police medical check-ups on lower-class, particularly factory-working women and the registration of poor women without stable employment as sex workers contributed to outrage within the workers movement (Sikorska-Kulesza, 2004; Urbanik-Kopec, 2021). Yet, rather than framing sex workers as workers and advocating for enhanced rights and working conditions, the workers' movement joined abolitionists in their calls for the eradication of prostitution.

Increasingly, the trafficking of women and girls became a key concern within the Polish abolitionist movement. The issue had initially been brought to popular attention by a series of articles entitled "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," published in Britain in 1885, which narrated the abduction and sale of young girls to foreign brothels (Doezema, 2010; Scott, 2005). While later revealed to be fraudulent, this series ignited political activity and inscribed the topic of "white slavery" within policy-making debates across Europe. In another wave of moral panic following two well-publicised trials of emigration agents in Galicia in 1882 and 1889 (Stauter-Halsted, 2007; Wingfield, 2017; Zahra, 2014) and many press and fictional stories of innocent girls "trafficked" to Latin America, partitioned Poland also witnessed anti-trafficking mobilisation (Jakubczak, 2020). The construction of trafficking as the mass sexual enslavement of thousands of Polish women and girls created an intense sense of urgency.

Aleksandra Jakubczak (2020) has claimed this moral panic was a response to the mounting visibility of sex work, fears surrounding national identity under partition, and an increased transnational labour migration by women. She has also highlighted the deeply antisemitic character of Polish anti-trafficking debates, in which Jewish communities were depicted as disproportionately engaged in, and responsible for, the sex trade in partitioned Poland (Bernstein, 1995; Jakubczak, 2020; Wingfield, 2017). As names of Jewish travel agents featured in trafficking trials and reports by the recently established International Bureau for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, the figuration of the victimised, innocent Polish girl became coupled

with that of a predatory Jewish pimp or trafficker (Jakubczak, 2020, pp. 86-87). This not only contributed to reinforcing antisemitic stereotypes, it also laid the groundwork for the “pimp pogrom” in 1905, in which a mob that included members of Jewish and Polish worker organisations attacked 150 brothels across Warsaw, killing and injuring owners, clients, and sex workers (Jakubczak, 2020).

The trafficking debates also initiated shifts in sex work policies across partitioned Poland. Representatives of the German, Russian, and Austrian Empires endorsed the 1904 and 1910 International Conventions for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic (League of Nations, 1904, 1910). In accordance with their provisions, governments adopted various measures, including introducing laws to criminalise trafficking, establishing registers of “white slavers,” and initiating strategies to identify and track potential victims. For example, in 1909, the Russian Empire adopted regulations criminalising those procuring underage girls and forcing adult women to sell sex by violence, deceit, or authority. However, abolitionist activists considered these measures entirely unsatisfactory. Hoping to “prevent the development of a special brand of ‘Polish goods’ [sic] in the global markets,” and demonstrate that the Polish nation did not want Warsaw to be “a warehouse of white female slaves” (Kuczalska-Reinschmit, 1909, after Sikorska-Kulesza, 2004, pp. 315-316), they pushed the Russian authorities for more punitive policies that targeted traffickers, procurers, and pimps, as well as the eradication of what they deemed the main driver of trafficking: regimentation (Jakubczak, 2020, pp. 148-151).

Although their attempts to change the legal situation were hampered by the outbreak of the First World War, abolitionist demands contributed to the pluralisation of sex worker figurations in Poland. Challenging the frames of recognition that constructed sex workers as a threat to public health, nationhood, and morality, abolitionists envisioned those engaged in sexual labour themselves as under threat. An emphasis on adverse economic circumstances, sexism, a regulationist system, and trafficking as key factors pushing women into the sex industry enabled the figure of a vulnerable and violated subject in need of rescue and care to emerge. In the next section I will address how, over the following decades, these two figurations became entwined.

The Threat-Victim Nexus

In the newly-independent Poland of 1918, debates on how best to deal with prostitution re-emerged with increased tensions between the framings of prostitution and proposed strategies to govern it (Grata, 2013; Lipska-Toumi, 2014). Condemning the allegedly increasing number of women selling sex and, subsequently, STI diagnoses in post-war Poland, policymakers, state

administrators, and physicians demanded higher levels of state surveillance. However, regimentation was fiercely criticised by many for being occupier-imposed and thus anti-Polish, as well as ineffective in reducing either STIs or prostitution. Focusing on the figure of a violated victim, abolitionists demanded the replacement of all punitive measures that targeted sex workers with the harsh criminalisation of third parties.

These ostensibly irreconcilable demands led to the adoption of a neo-regimentation model in 1922. This abolished managed sex work venues and imposed medicalised control over sex workers by sanitary and moral committees of doctors, clerks, police officers, and representatives of charitable organisations. The committees adjudicated whether a woman was a “professional prostitute,” a term introduced to Polish legislation in the early 1920s, and referred these for medical examination. Women classified as “ambulatory” (casual) or “professional prostitutes” were registered and required to carry medical booklets certifying their health status at all times. Sex workers diagnosed with STIs were immediately escorted to hospital for compulsory treatment. Failure to comply with those sanitary-moral regulations was a misdemeanour penalised with fines or detention (Grata, 2013; Lipska-Toumi, 2014).

These regulations, however, did not grant sex workers protection under labour laws: as “professional prostitutes” they were not entitled to sick leave, vacation, or retirement benefits. Additionally, they were forbidden to walk through the city in groups, address passers-by in public spaces, go to museums, exhibitions, and libraries, or live with children or men (Lipska-Toumi, 2014, pp. 191-193). In fact, the neo-regimentation model severely restricted the civil rights, freedom of movement and mobility, and personal autonomy of sex workers, as well as their ability to foster family life. Hence, many sex workers attempted to elude this repressive system by avoiding registration as a “prostitute” (Grata, 2013; Lipska-Toumi, 2014).

This neo-regimentation model was accompanied with abolitionist-driven attempts to eradicate trafficking and all third-party engagement in sex work. Following the adoption of anti-trafficking regulations in 1925, women’s police departments were established to combat human trafficking and demoralisation (Głogowski, 2014; Lipska-Toumi, 2014, pp. 197-202). Documentation reveals that these departments also ensured registered sex workers reported for health check-ups and tracked down women working clandestinely (Lipska-Toumi, 2014, p. 199). Female police officers were charged with joining local sanitary and moral committees, chasing traffickers, preventing prostitution, and identifying illegal sex work venues. These departments gained increased legitimacy with the adoption of a broad list of criminal offences relating to sex work in the 1932 Polish Criminal Code, including trafficking, procuring, organising, and facilitating transactional sex for profit. Although the selling of sex itself was not criminalised, same-sex sex work was, a provision that reflected the homophobic attitudes of the time and remained enshrined in the Polish penal code until 1969 (Dobrowolska, 2020, pp. 123-125).

Unsurprisingly, this strategy, which amalgamated the contradictory logics of regimentation and abolition, was not endorsed by the abolitionist movement, which attempted to overturn the legal changes from the mid-1920s onwards (Goldyn, 2013; Grata, 2013; Lipska-Toumi, 2014). Many of their policy proposals upheld third-party criminalisation but removed the punitive practices of sex worker identification, registration, inspection, and hospitalisation. Abolitionists called for preventive and protective measures, including the subsidising of railway station missions, care and correctional institutions for women and girls. Some envisioned creating voluntary or mandatory workhouses, along with rehabilitation and re-education facilities to provide sex workers and girls “at risk” of prostitution with moral and vocational training. These proposals also recommended the introduction of relief funds, community kitchens, and shelters for the most impoverished young girls and women to prevent them resorting to sex work.

Grounded in humanitarian principles, these proposals were intended to rescue sex workers and counter the assumed evil of prostitution with all means necessary. Simultaneously, they reinforced the figuration of sex worker as victim in need of rescue, and vilified sex work as a degrading and demoralising misery rather than an occupation. Disregarding the possibility of any other reasons for engaging in transactional sex, the abolitionist frames of recognition constructed sex workers as either violated, innocent, passive subjects in need of saving, or as “fallen women” who required responsabilisation via corrective and redemptive interventions. For an innocent victim, the return to respectability would require humble subjugation to assistance and withdrawal from prostitution. For the already “fallen” woman unwilling to abandon their work, abolitionist frameworks envisioned mandatory resocialisation in correction institutions. Thus, rather than substituting one for the other, both figures – victim and threat – were entwined within these abolitionist policy proposals, which offered negligible agency or rights for sex workers.

This entwinement became ever more evident after the Second World War, as a devastated Poland underwent a surge in STIs (Barański, 2012; Dobrowolska, 2020). Deemed a serious biopolitical threat, sex workers were subjected to rigid control, registration, and mandatory testing during the late 1940s (Barański, 2012; Dobrowolska, 2020). Simultaneously, the post-war political shift to state socialism favoured an abolitionist perspective. Framing sex work as a subjugation of working-class women embedded in and reproduced by a capitalist system upholding bourgeois morality, many policymakers, including the communist League of Women, called for the eradication of prostitution (Dobrowolska, 2020, pp. 35-41).

These efforts led to neo-regimentation being abandoned in Poland during 1949 and ratification of the United Nations *Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others* in 1952. This criminalised third-party engagement in sex work, including pimping, procuring, and trafficking, and prohibited any regulation,

registration, or punishment of sex workers. Additionally, constructing prostitution as “incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person” and a threat to “the welfare of the individual, the family and the community” (United Nations, 1949, p. 1), the Convention obliged signatory countries to introduce prevention measures and commit to the “rehabilitation and social adjustment of the victims of prostitution” (p. 4). Thus, sex workers, freed from punitive regulatory interventions, were explicitly framed as victims, with their engagement in an inherently harmful occupation cited as the primary source of their victimisation. Sonja Dolinsek (2022) has argued that, “denying them the capacity to self-define their activity” (p. 237) stripped sex workers of agency and “reifie[d] their status as second-class citizens” (p. 236). As such, the Convention reinforced the frames of recognition constructing sex workers as violated victims devoid of agency and enabled the implementation of repressive policies.

Indeed, Poland’s state-socialist abolitionist model easily translated into anti-prostitution rhetoric and coercive law enforcement practices that directly targeted the “victims” of prostitution. In the Polish People’s Republic, as Anna Dobrowolska (2020) has documented, prostitution was primarily viewed as a threat to public health, peace, and the socialist order, and a social and economic pathology associated with moral degeneration, sexual demoralisation, and petty crime (Antoniszyn & Marek, 1985; Jasińska, 1967). Rather than social or economic support schemes, strategies to combat prostitution involved “rescuing” sex workers via workhouse detention or, if “deviant” enough to defy the role of victim amenable to rehabilitation and continue in the sex trade, imprisonment. The sections to “combat harlotry,” re-established in 1956, and later “vice squads” within the Citizens’ Militia, continued street-level policing of sex workers, raids on venues, surveillance, registration – thereby breaching the Convention – and, subsequently, mandatory health-checks (Dobrowolska, 2020, pp. 101-122). Other laws introduced in the 1970s that penalised active solicitation and labelled sex workers as “social parasites” for evading work outside the sex trade, also contradicted abolitionist logic (Code of Petty Offences, 1971; Dobrowolska, 2020, pp. 122-125).

This evident renegotiation and distortion of the abolitionist paradigm reflected an increasing conflation of sex workers with prostitution, and the entwining – perhaps even merging – of the victim and threat figurations. New policy measures ensured the war on prostitution increasingly became a war on “prostitutes,” deviants who paradoxically embodied both exploitation and victimhood, endangering themselves, society, and the state. Rather than being afforded rights and protections, sex workers were exposed to disciplining, punishment, and coercive controls. Framed as subjects that required rescue and rehabilitation, sex workers were again denied a political voice.

The Unimaginable Subject of Rights

The transformation from state socialism to liberal democracy in 1989 had a significant impact on the Polish sexual trade. Neoliberal restructuring and economic privatisation, accompanied by systematic dissolution of the welfare state, led to the flexibilisation and precarisation of labour and rising socio-economic inequalities that disproportionately affected women. Simultaneously, with expansion of the service sector, the increasing role of digital technologies, an increased commodification of reproductive labour on the capitalist market, renegotiations of gender and sexual norms, and transformations of intimacy, commercial sex became increasingly evident. The opening of borders in many countries of the former Soviet Union and the subsequent eastward enlargement of the EU enabled increased transnational mobility within the sex trade (Ratecka, 2022; Suchland, 2015). All these factors resulted in the expansion, internal diversification, and increased visibility of the Polish sex industry (Ratecka, 2022; Ślęzak, 2019).

These shifts in the sex trade have not resulted in the re-figuration of sex workers or major transformations in governance strategies. The contemporary legal landscape of sex work in Poland remains deeply anchored in distorted abolitionist logic and the dominant victim-threat figuration that solidified during state socialism. Police reform in 1990 abolished the Citizens' Militia "vice squads," and registration and mandatory health checks were abandoned in the mid-1990s. As "victims of prostitution," sex workers are not directly criminalised, but are subjected to regular ID checks and arbitrary searches by law enforcement agencies, presumably to determine whether they are wanted by the authorities (Dziuban et al., 2021; NGPS, 2019). Additionally, under the Code of Petty Offences of 1971, arrest, restriction of liberty, or a fine may be imposed on anyone "offering indecent act for financial gain" (art. 142, Code of Petty Offences) in a manner that could be viewed as ostentatious, persistent, or disruptive to public order (Mozgawa, 2014). Intended to safeguard "public decency," this does not penalise outdoor sex work or solicitation *per se*, but deems sex workers who "too openly" solicit clients to be a public nuisance (Dziuban et al., 2021). Framed as threats or "deviants" for transgressing the boundaries of accepted (in)visibility, outdoor sex workers are often targeted and fined for other petty offences, such as disorderly conduct, public indecency, loitering, and alcohol consumption in a public space (NGPS, 2019).

The official abolitionist framework of sex work as a menace to society and sex workers as threats-victims is enshrined in the Penal Code adopted in 1997. As "crimes against sexual freedom and decency" (Penal Code, 1997), all third-party engagements in prostitution incur criminal sanctions. However, coercing someone into prostitution, facilitating sex work, and procuring and profiting from sex worker earnings are considered crimes against public decency rather than against sex workers, and are penalised without the consent of the sex workers themselves (Mozgawa, 2014; Welskop, 2013). Thus, this legal

construction reinforces the construction of sex workers as unable to consent and hence without agency, and as deviant because they engage in an activity considered to be a pathological, social nuisance.

These measures also criminalise non-coercive labour relations and all third-party activities, including owning or managing sex work venues, hiring a sex worker, and providing them with any kind of services, including transportation, advertising or facilitating contact with clients. This approach – assuming the protective function of criminalisation for the “victims of prostitution” – situates sex work within the realm of illegality, thereby forcing sex workers underground. Operating in managed or collective venues exposes them to unemployment or even homelessness if workplaces are closed by the police (SWP, 2020). As Sandra noted in the interview cited at the start of this paper (Rozwadowska, 2021), third-party criminalisation often prevents sex workers from reporting work-related violence, as police intervention can result in further victimisation and criminal charges against the claimant, their colleagues, or bosses (NGPS, 2019; Rozwadowska, 2021; Ślęzak, 2017; SWP, 2020).

This criminalisation of sex work labour relations and workplaces is entwined with the absence of any legal recognition of sex work as a form of labour (SWP, 2020; Właszczuk, 2021). The status of sex work as a public nuisance and threat rather than work has been reaffirmed in fiscal regulations stating that income generated via sex work cannot be subjected to taxation (Olczyk, 2017). As Aleksandra remarked in the interview (Rozwadowska, 2021), being designated non-workers denies sex workers access to work-related protections and welfare benefits typically safeguarded by labour law, including health and social insurance, pensions, sick leave, parental or holiday leave, and accident compensation (NGPS, 2019; Rozwadowska, 2021; SWP, 2020). Being forced into the informal economy, sex workers lack the legal means to protect themselves by unionising or bringing cases of exploitation to labour courts. This often translates into precarious, exploitative working conditions and job insecurity (Rozwadowska, 2021; SWP, 2020; Właszczuk, 2021).

Another key element of sex worker governance in Poland is its law enforcement-focused approach to combatting trafficking. The increasing westward migration and transnational mobility that followed the socio-economic transformation in Eastern and Central Europe have led to another wave of “moral panic,” this time in relation to the perceived vulnerability of migrant women to sex trafficking (Milivojevic & Pickering, 2013, p. 592). Global governing bodies and international NGOs have fostered a “tough on crime” approach (Andrijasevic, 2010; Musto, 2016; Wylie, 2016). The Polish branch of the international anti-trafficking network, Foundation La Strada emerged in the mid-1990s and swiftly developed prevention campaigns and victim support schemes. Working in close cooperation with authorities, border guards, and the police, La Strada has become influential in framing policies and discourses on sex work and sex trafficking, and successfully lobbied for the introduction of anti-trafficking articles in the 2010 Polish Criminal Code

(Ratecka, 2022). Despite officially distinguishing between sex work and trafficking, La Strada has largely reproduced the existing pathologising perspectives on sex work and victimising narratives. As noted by Anna Ratecka (2022), La Strada defines prostitution as “harm or as an economic activity occurring outside of (or on the fringes of) socially acceptable norms” (p. 278). Moreover, the Foundation does not address the “systemic discrimination experienced by sex workers,” who it constructs as “individuals in need of rescue” rather than “subjects of rights” (Ratecka, 2022, p. 278). Consequently, the Foundation calls for “carceral protection” of sex workers and increased legal control and enforcement of the sex industry (Musto, 2016).

Alternative framings of sex workers and sex work have only begun to crystalise in Poland with the emergence of collectives working for the rights of sex workers, such as Sex Work Polska formed in 2014 and the Informal Group of Sex Workers established in 2018, and direct engagement in debates on their rights by sex workers. While still *talked-about* by policymakers, academics, journalists, feminists, and anti-trafficking activists, sex worker activists have attempted to challenge the representations forced upon them by providing first-hand narratives of sexual labour and calling for changes to sex work policy. As mentioned in the introduction, sex worker activists have demanded the decriminalisation of sex work and recognition of their work as work, and have attempted to present themselves as agential subjects worthy of rights and respect, rather than dangerous deviants to be disciplined or passive victims to be rescued (Kluczyk, 2020, 2023; Kluczyk et al., 2022; NGPS, 2019; Ratecka, 2022). In other words, they have challenged the dominant threat-victim figurations that construct them as non-workers and non-subjects of rights. Sex worker activists have also demanded the right to participate in the policy-making processes that affect their working conditions and lived realities.

These calls for social justice have rarely been supported by policymakers and other stakeholders in Poland, where the dominant threat-victim figurations still prevail in public debates and the political arena. Law and Justice Party politicians have repeatedly made demeaning comments about sex workers in the state-run media, attacked community-led initiatives, and used alleged associations with such initiatives to attack political opponents (Kaleta, 2019). Official police textbooks present sex work as an undesirable pathology and sex workers as either victimised or demoralised deviants that need to be monitored and policed (Śmiałek, 2020; Zielonka, 2019). Moreover, attempts to engage with various media outlets and achieve greater visibility have been countered by strategies intended to silence sex workers. In March 2023, the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Justice reported the centrist newspaper *Gazeta.pl* to the national Media Ethics Board for featuring two interviews with sex workers, which he alleged promoted the “extremely socially and personally harmful” prostitution (REM, 2023). Although the complaint was dismissed, numerous right-wing politicians and journalists have since denounced statements by and interviews with sex workers as the “promotion of prostitution,” a category that

closely mirrors the homophobic notion of “gay propaganda” (Kondakov, 2022).

Right-wing politicians and media outlets in Poland are not alone in framing sex worker accounts of their working realities and claims for rights as socially and morally harmful. Anti-prostitution activists in the Polish feminist movement have built on 20th-century abolitionism to construct sex work as an inherently harmful form of victimisation and objectification (Grzyb, 2017; Kuczyńska, 2020; Tworek 2023). Calling for a carceral approach to third parties and clients, feminist activists have resorted to various means to undermine sex worker perspectives and demands, such as presenting rights activists as overprivileged, unrepresentative, unobjective, and unaware of the realities faced by the majority of the sex worker community. Demands made by sex workers have also been dismissed on the grounds of work-related trauma and false consciousness. It is not uncommon for abolitionist feminists to describe sex worker activists, such as Aleksandra, Sonia, and Sandra, as part of the “pimp lobby” that fosters the commodification of women (Dziuban & Ratecka, 2018; Ratecka 2022).

Undoubtedly, both right-wing and abolitionist constructions of sex workers reinforce the dominant figurations enshrined in Polish sex work policies. Depicted as victimised or threatening (or both), sex workers are constructed as “objects” of interventions, including rescue, responsabilisation, punishment, and carceral protection, rather than agential subjects able to make informed decisions, claim rights, and have a political voice. The unimaginability of sex workers as subjects of rights is blatantly revealed not only by incapacitating discourses and governance strategies that deprive them of rights, but also in the disciplining and discrediting tactics used to silence those that speak out. Rather than contributing to a reconstruction of how they are framed, demands for social justice by sex workers have led to their further entrapment within the threat-victim figurations. Echoed by the interview reader quoted in the introduction to this paper, right-wing politicians, and abolitionist feminists, these figurations exclude sex workers from social debates about their situation and status within society. Framed as corrupted and corrupting, devoid of agency, or even “made up,” sex workers are denied the possibility of participating in society on a par with others, and challenging the harmful framings and circumstances to which they are subjected.

Conclusion

This paper has presented a genealogy of sex work governance in Poland by tracing the emergence of, and shifts within, the dominant figures of sex workers produced and legitimised by policies, political debates, and law enforcement strategies. My analysis has revealed how the framing of the sex worker as a health threat, established in the early 19th century with the adoption of a regulationist model of sex work governance, was later reconfigured as a

threat to Polish morality and nationhood. An alternative figuration, largely introduced by abolitionists, presented sex workers as victims of male domination, dire economic circumstances, and later of prostitution itself. I have demonstrated how these apparently antithetical figures gradually intertwined and merged during the 20th century, through interwar neo-regimentation and abolitionist policies under state socialism. I have also argued that the threat-victim nexus embedded in contemporary Polish sex work governance strategies has contributed to the construction of sex workers as unimaginable claimants of rights, beyond any frame of recognition that would allow them to be perceived and governed as respectable subjects with a political voice.

While many of the shifts in Polish sex work policies reflect or are directly inspired by international trends in prostitution governance, I have highlighted the context-specific events and debates that have shaped sex worker figurations in Poland and the material conditions in which these have emerged. As I have shown, 123 years of partition and the emancipatory aspirations of an embattled nation, widespread poverty, the atrocities of two World Wars, the introduction of state socialism, socio-economic transformations following 1989, and recent right-wing populism have all significantly affected how sex workers have been constructed and policed within the Polish territories. I have argued that these factors and the resulting modes of sex work governance hampered possibilities for realising social justice for sex workers in times of partition, the Second Polish Republic, state socialism, and post-transformative Poland alike. Regardless of the prostitution policy adopted, sex workers have been denied any labour rights and thus the tools required to address workplace exploitation and precarity. Positioned beyond the hegemonic norms of recognisability, sex workers have not been considered worthy of respect, inclusion, non-carceral care, and basic civil rights. Even today, when directly demanding recognition and redistribution, they are ignored or silenced as unimaginable claimants of rights, political representation, and a subjectivity of their own choosing.

My analysis demonstrates that the existing frames of recognition impose debilitating and othering representations on sex workers. As Butler has noted, the processes of framing (i.e., constructing someone as a subject) carry the risk of “being framed”: that is, subjected to harmful and authoritarian forms of representation that discredit the person or group in question as “guilty” or “defective,” and consequently unworthy of or unfit for recognition (Butler, 2009, p. 7-12). The dominant constructions of sex workers enact this “framing” simultaneously on three interconnected levels (Dziuban & Ratecka, 2018). Firstly, sex workers are trapped within exceptionally stigmatising and devaluing representations. Secondly, as justified by these representations, they are denied the status of agential subjects of recognition. Finally, policy measures are imposed that adversely affect their living and working conditions, safety, and access to rights. The demands for decriminalisation, destigmatisation, and recognition of their labour as labour made by Aleksandra, Sonia, Sandra, and other sex workers denounce the violent and

destructive character of these frames and reveal the pressing need for this framing to be subverted. Their calls oblige us to “reimagine” sex workers as agential subjects of rights worthy of liveable and fulfilling lives; a necessary step towards realising social justice for sex workers in Poland and beyond.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Editorial Board, two anonymous reviewers, Zuzanna Dziuban, as well as Justyna Struzik and Todd Sekuler from the “CrimScapes: Navigating Citizenship through the European landscapes of criminalisation” research team for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this article. This article is developed within the “CrimScapes: Navigating Citizenship through the European Landscapes of Criminalisation” research project, financially supported by the NORFACE Joint Research Programme on Democratic Governance in Turbulent Age and co-funded by National Science Centre, Poland and the European Commission through Horizon 2020 under grant agreement No 822166.

References

- Andrijasevic, R. (2010). *Migration, agency and citizenship in sex trafficking*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Antoniszyn, M., & Marek, A. (1985). *Prostytucja w świetle badań kryminologicznych*. Wydawnictwo Prawnicze.
- Barański, P. (2012). Walka z chorobami wenerycznymi w Polsce w latach 1948-1949. In M. Kula (Ed.), *Kłopoty z seksem w PRL* (pp. 11-98). IPN.
- Bebel, A. (1897). *Kobieta i socjalizm*. ZZSP.
- Bernstein, L. (1995). *Sonia's daughters: Prostitutes and their regulation in imperial Russia*. California University Press.
- Butler, J. (2009). *Frames of war: When is life grievable?* Verso Books.
- Code of Petty Offences [Kodeks Wykroczeń] (1971).
<https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=wdu19710120114>
- Criminal Code [Kodeks Karny] (1997).
<https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=wdu19970880553>
- Dobrowolska, A. (2020). *Zawodowe dziewczyny: Prostytucja i praca seksualna w PRL*. Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej.
- Doezema, J. (2010). *Sex slaves and discourse masters: The construction of trafficking*. Zed Books.
- Dolinsek, S. (2022). Tensions of abolitionism during the negotiation of the 1949 “Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.” *European Review of History*, 29(2), 223-248.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2022.2026893>
- Dziuban, A., & Ratecka, A. (2018). Sprostytuowane, zranione, wrobione: Konstruowanie reprezentacji pracownic seksualnych w dyskursie abolicyjnym. *Lud*, 101, 171-202.
<https://doi.org/10.12775/lud101.2017.05>
- Dziuban, A., Moźdrzeń, M., & Ratecka, A. (2021). “Very little but a lot:” Solidarity within the sex workers’ community in Poland during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 28(S2), 366-377. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12677>

- Fraser, N. (2009). *Scales of justice: Reimagining political space in a globalizing world*. Columbia University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Penguin.
- Giedroyc, F. (1892). *Prostytutki jako źródło chorób wenerycznych w Warszawie*. Drukarnia Maryi Ziemkiewiczowej.
- Giedroyc, F. (1897). *Rys historyczny szpitala św. Łazarza*. Druk K. Kowalewskiego.
- Głogowski, A. (2014). *Kobieta policja państwowa II RP w walce z międzynarodowym handlem ludźmi*. Sowa.
- Goldyn, P. (2013). *Pogarda dla zawodu, litość dla człowieka: społeczno-edukacyjne formy działalności wobec kobiet zagrożonych prostytutką w Polsce (1918-1939)*. Kaliskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk.
- Grata, P. (2013). *Walka z nierządem w polityce państwa polskiego w latach 1918-1939*. In M. Rodak (Ed.), *Marginesy społeczny Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* (pp. 253-274). Instytut Historii PAN.
- Grzyb, M. (2017, April 17). *Usługi seksualne czy eksploatacja i niewolnictwo? Krytyka polityczna*. <https://krytykapolityczna.pl/swiat/uslugi-seksualne-czy-eksploatacja-i-niewolnictwo-polemika/>
- Hearne, S. (2021). *Policing prostitution. Regulating the lower classes in late imperial Russia*. Oxford University Press.
- Jakubczak, A. (2020). *Polacy, Żydzi i mit handlu kobietami*. Wydawnictwo UW.
- Jansen, S., & Wagenaar, H. (Eds.) (2018). *Assessing prostitution policies in Europe*. Routledge.
- Jasińska, M. (1967). *Proces społecznego wykołajenia młodocianych dziewcząt*. Wydawnictwo Prawnicze.
- Kaleta, S. (2019). *Gdzie trafiają pieniądze warszawiaków*. <https://s.tvp.pl/repository/attachment/3/0/d/30d6e2e36d741de6a9edda7dd43d30de1575880401632.pdf>
- Kluczyk, A. (2020). *Save us from saviours*. [weblog]. https://fliphtml5.com/nohjc/sejf/Save_us_from_Saviours/
- Kluczyk, A. (2023). *Niech żyją ku*wy! O pracy seksualnej w Polsce*. Grupa Wydawnicza Foksal.
- Kluczyk, A., Ostrowska, O., & Rogaska, K. (2022). *Bez stygmy: Jak pisać o pracy seksualnej*. [weblog]. <http://bezstygmy.pl/wp-content/uploads/Bez-stygmy-Jak-pisac-o-pracy-seksualnej.pdf>
- Kondakov, S. (2022). *Violent affections: Queer sexuality, techniques of power, and law in Russia*. UCL Press.
- Kuczyńska, U. (2020, July 13). *Seks biznes a sprawa polska*. [weblog]. <https://urszulakuczynska.wordpress.com/2020/07/13/seks-biznes-a-sprawa-polska/?fbclid=IwAR0BUFWaUkNumFokLvgQHekWm3rxjmtEz75-HF6a-r8NVVP4mmYwE0rS14>
- Kuczalska-Reinschmit, P. (1909). *Głos kobiet o tz. handlu żywym towarem*. *Ster*, 5, 198-203.
- League of Nations (1904). *International agreement for the suppression of the "White Slave Traffic"*. https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=VII-8&chapter=7&clang=_en
- League of Nations (1910). *International convention for the suppression of the "White Slave Traffic"*. https://treaties.un.org/PAGES/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=VII-9&chapter=7&clang=_en
- Lipska-Toumi, M. (2014). *Prawo polskie wobec zjawiska prostytucji w latach 1918-1939*. Wydawnictwo KUL.
- Maćko, J. (1927). *Prostytucja*. Polski Komitet Walki z Handlem Kobietami i Dziećmi.
- Milivojevic, S., & Pickering, S. (2013). *Trafficking in people, 20 years on: Sex, migration and crime in the global anti-trafficking discourse and the rise of the "global trafficking complex"*. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 25(2), 585-604. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10345329.2013.12035985>
- Moser, S., & Schlechtriemen, T. (2019). *Social figures – Between societal experience and sociological diagnosis* (halshs-01972078) [Data set]. HAL Open Science. <https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01972078/>

- Mozgawa, M. (Ed.). (2014). *Prostytucja*. Lex.
- Musto, J. (2016). *Control and protect: Collaboration, carceral protection, and domestic sex trafficking in the United States*. University of California Press.
- NGPS [Nieformalna Grupa Pracownic Seksualnych]. (2019). *Doświadczalnik*. [Zin]. https://sexworkpolska.files.wordpress.com/2019/12/00_doswiadczalnik_digital_b.pdf
- Olczyk, A. (2017). Prostytucja jako czynność niepodlegająca opodatkowaniu w prawie polskim. *Acta Universitatis Lodzensis Folia Iuridica*, 79, 53-73. <https://doi.org/10.18778/0208-6069.79.05>
- Ratecka, A. (2022). *Sytuacja kobiet świadczących usługi seksualne w świetle teorii uznania* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Jagiellonian University.
- Ratecka, A. (2023). Sex work policy in Poland and its impact on the lived experience of sex workers. *Croatian Political Science Review*, 60(4), 35-60. <https://doi.org/10.20901/pm.60.4.02REM>. (2023, March 23). [List R. Bánkowicza (Rady Etyki Mediów) do M. Romanowskiego (Ministerstwa Sprawiedliwości)]. <https://www.rem.net.pl/data/20230323.pdf>
- Rozwadowska, A. (2021, May 17). "Chcemy móc płacić podatki!" Praca seksualna to praca. *Wyborcza Biznes*. <https://wyborcza.biz/biznes/7,159911,27050230, chcemy-moc-placic-podatki-praca-seksualna-to-tez-praca.html>
- Scott, J. (2005). *How modern governments made prostitution a social problem: Creating a responsible prostitute problem*. Edwin Meller Press.
- Scouler, J. (2015). *The subject of prostitution: Sex work, law and social theory*. Routledge.
- Shore, C., Wright, S., & Però, P. (Eds.). (2011). *Policy worlds: Anthropology and the analysis of contemporary power*. Berghahn Books.
- Sikorska-Kulesza, J. (2004). *Zło tolerowane: Prostytucja w Królestwie Polskim w XIX wieku*. Wydawnictwo Mada.
- Ślęzak, I. (2017). Violence towards sex workers: Analysis based on research into the field of indoor sex work in Poland. *Polish Sociological Review*, 198(2), 237-254.
- Ślęzak, I. (2019). *Social construction of sex work: Ethnography of escort agencies in Poland*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
- Śmiałek, M. (2020). *Patologie społeczne*. Dział Wydawniczo-Wydawniczy Centrum Szkolenia Policji w Legionowie.
- Stauter-Halsted, K. (2007). "A generation of monsters:" Jews, prostitution, and racial purity in the 1892 L'viv white slavery trial. *Austrian History Yearbook*, 38, 202-225.
- Stauter-Halsted, K. (2009). Moral panic and the prostitute in partitioned Poland: Middle-class respectability in defense of the modern nation. *Slavic Review*, 68(3), 557-581. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0037677900019744>
- Stauter-Halsted, K. (2015). *The devil's chain: Prostitution and social control in partitioned Poland*. Cornell University Press.
- Suchland, J. (2015). *Economies of violence: Transnational feminism, postsocialism, and the politics of sex trafficking*. Duke University Press.
- SWP [Sex Work Polska]. (2020, April 28). Praca seksualna, pandemia i polowanie na czarownice. *Codziennik feministyczny*. <http://codziennikfeministyczny.pl/praca-seksualna-pandemia-polowanie-na-czarownice%E2%80%A8/>
- Tworek, D. (2023, February 13). Przeciwno lukrowaniu prostytucji. *Tygodnik przegląd*. <https://www.tygodnikprzegląd.pl/przeciwno-lukrowaniu-prostytucji/>
- United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, December 2, 1949, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-suppression-traffic-persons-and-exploitation>
- Urbanik-Kopec, A. (2021). *Chodzić i uśmiechać się wolno każdemu: Praca seksualna w XIX wieku na ziemiach polskich*. Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej.
- Wagenaar, H. (2017). Why prostitution policy (usually) fails and what to do about it? *Social Sciences*, 6(2), 43. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci6020043>
- Walkowitz, J. R. (1980). *Prostitution and Victorian society: Women, class, and the state*. Cambridge University Press.
- Welskop, W. (2013). *Zjawisko prostytucji w Polsce po 1989 roku*. ECE Wydawnictwo.

- Wingfield, N. M. (2017). *The world of prostitution in late imperial Austria*. Oxford University Press.
- Właszczuk, J. (2021, August 2). Praca seksualna to praca! *Vogue*. <https://www.vogue.pl/a/sex-work-polska-aktywistki-na-rzecz-pracyseksualnej>
- Wylie, G. (2016). *The international politics of human trafficking*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Zahra, T. (2014). Travel agents on trial: Policing mobility in East Central Europe, 1889-1989. *Past & Present*, 223(1), 161-193. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtu002>
- Zaleski, W. (1927). *Z dziejów prostytucji w Warszawie*. Warszawa.
- Zielonka, M. (2019). *Charakterystyka wybranych zjawisk patologii społecznych*. Wydawnictwo Szkoły Policji w Pile.