

SEXUAL SPONSORSHIP - FROM TRANSACTION TO INTIMACY. SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PHENOMENON

Summary

Sexual sponsorship is an element of social life that has not yet been sufficiently diagnosed and described by sociologists, educators, and psychologists. Consequently, knowledge about the phenomenon comes mainly from popular science press and news media. These, in turn, often rely on unverified sources, and thereby duplicate old and create new stereotypes, which ultimately leads to the development of an incomplete and simplified picture of the phenomenon. In addition, its current descriptions do not exhaust the problem. For this reason, the main thesis statements of this dissertation focus on a multi-faceted analysis of sexual sponsorship, including its interpersonal aspect. According to the analysis of the obtained materials, many sponsorship-based arrangements were not limited to the exchange of services, i.e. companionship or sex in exchange for material goods, but also included components that fit the definition of intimacy. Furthermore, individuals who established this type of relationship sought and at the same time received something more than only satisfying their sexual needs, as it is commonly believed. As it arises from conducted interviews, most respondents expected to satisfy their needs of an individual as a social being, i.e. the need for respect, understanding, acceptance, friendship, and even love.

The work is both theoretical and empirical. It consists of five chapters. The first three chapters provide a theoretical framework for subsequent analysis. The last two chapters, which are empirical in nature, consist of a methodological part and an analysis of research results. Additionally, this dissertation includes Introduction, Conclusion, Bibliography and a List of Tables and Charts.

Chapter one discusses historical background and definitional complexities of prostitution and sexual sponsorship. It concludes with a juxtaposition of both phenomena in order to analyze their distinctive and convergent features, which then results in an adoption of an important thesis statement, namely that sexual sponsorship is a form of prostitution.

The second theoretical chapter deals with issues concerning social conditions of sponsorship, including changes related to the social role of women and men, and the impact of selected socio-cultural phenomena on interpersonal relationships, including those in sponsorship-based arrangements.

Chapter three constitutes the last theoretical part of this work. It discusses various dimensions, features, and approaches to intimacy developed by selected sociologists and researchers from other disciplines of social sciences, including psychologists and educators. In addition, this chapter presents selected theoretical approaches to intimacy developed by the following sociologists: Anthony Giddens, Zygmunt Bauman, Eva Illouz, and Arlie Hochschild. Particular attention is paid to Hochschild's concepts of emotional work and emotional outsourcing which best reflect interpersonal relationships in a sponsorship-based arrangement. As a result of conducted analysis, in this work the concept of intimacy will be understood as a close interpersonal relationship between a woman and a man, based on mutual trust, openness, willingness to help, understanding, and similar features that characterize their close bond.

The next two chapters, i.e. chapter four and chapter five, constitute the methodological part of the work. Chapter four presents the purpose of the study, research problem, and research hypotheses. It also describes the entire research process, beginning from the sampling method through difficulties gathering research participants. Problems that appeared during interviews are also described. Chapter five elaborates on the obtained results. In terms of methodology, it should be noted that this work utilized a qualitative method and it was carried out under an interpretive paradigm. Studies consisted of in-depth individual interviews, with a purpose to show a subjective approach to the issue of sponsorship-based relationships expressed by individuals who developed such relationships. For this reason, the research project was exploratory. It should be noted that general conclusions cannot be drawn from data obtained in this work and presented results cannot be treated as representative of all individuals who enter into sponsorship-based arrangements. However, the conclusions allow one to notice certain trends that make it possible to form some theoretical proposals regarding the phenomenon of sponsorship (Wyka 1992).

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