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The characteristics of prostitution in kosovo: a sociological analysis

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(*) Different philosophers, analysts, scholars and researchers have given different opinions and definitions on prostitution, taking into account the many factors that have influenced its occurrence and manifestation as well as by either putting the emphasis or overlooking some of these factors. The word *prostitution* derives from Latin that has the meaning of “an offer to satisfy somebody by selling something that is not for sale” ⁽¹⁾. Prostitution is a transformation of a sexual act into a typical buy and sell deal ⁽²⁾. Prostitution is “to give others, for money or for any other material interest, the thing, which according to ethical principles of a certain society, cannot be a matter of financial gain” ⁽³⁾. The person who prostitutes cannot be considered a human, but an object, instrument for production of pleasure for some people and earning money for others. Prostitution is inhumane phenomenon, which denies and violates human rights ⁽⁴⁾. These definitions lead to a conclusion that this activity is immoral and inhumane, and an activity that conflicts with the virtue, moral and dignity of people and societies.

Prostitution acts against the rule of law. The motto of its performance is to give support to: the immoral against the moral; dishonour against honour; evil against good; disvalue against value; slavery against freedom; discrimination against humanity; humiliation against dignity. Its only goal is to satisfy the individual or groups even though this form of activity is in discordance with acceptable social norms regarded as progressive and with values.

Based on researches and information given by different scholars it can be concluded that prostitution has its own history. It has been present and has existed all the time. History of prostitution is not written by prostitutes. They are not born as prostitutes. Prostitution has appeared as a result of economic pressures and tendencies for some persons to survive and some others to get rich. Survival is related to prostitutes and richness to their bosses and managers.

Characteristics of prostitution, its ways of manifestation and factors that influence its appearance are known, but the effects and impact of these factors into the dynamism of this activity depend on conditions and circumstances in different countries. Number of prostitutes is bigger in poorer and less stable countries in

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⁽¹⁾ L. SOKOLI, *Prostitution and human rights*, in “*Balkans Yearbook of Human Rights*”, 2003, p. 7.

⁽²⁾ *Ibidem.*, p. 7.

⁽³⁾ O. BENZI, *Prostitutes*, Tirana, 2003, p.140.

⁽⁴⁾ *Ibidem.*, p.142.

economic and social terms. It is easier to deceive people in poorer countries than in those societies with strong economies.

One of the strongest factors that influence appearance of prostitution, present in large number of countries and states, but with some little different characteristics regarding the impact effects, are the economic factors, conditions and social circumstances of certain countries, ways of deceits, factors that influence the recruitment of women, selection of young and beautiful women, and lack of discovery of cases by legal institutions and abduction of women very often.

Trafficking and prostitution have their early history. Activities of traffickers and human trafficking depend on social conditions of certain countries. In cases when they are not able to act, traffickers wait for better and favourable conditions, such as the case with plant seeds that wait for a drop of rain and better climate to bloom. It can be said that appearance, organisation and appearance of criminal activities and organised crime has been helped by changes in models of social organisation and changes in the structures of security institutions during the collapse of dictatorship-like communist regimes with strong control over families and individuals into transitional phase.

Organized crime, trafficking of human beings and prostitution has appeared under these circumstances in Albania in nineties and Kosovo after the war in 1999.

Before the war prostitution in Kosovo was not present even close to the extent it is now because of the strong Serbian police and military regime in Kosovo. It was very difficult to organize women trafficking under those conditions except in cases when individuals or groups had links and cooperation with Serbian state structures⁽⁵⁾. Prostitution was developing in other forms and in different dimensions at that time. Directors of companies and governmental officials had affairs with women working with them. These women enjoyed privileges in their work, benefits in their salaries or other forms of gains. It can be said that creation of rapports of subordination and compensation are conditional and every conditional relation can be considered a prostitution in a way⁽⁶⁾.

Prostitution, a dangerous activity with serious consequences for individuals and societies, is present in all those countries and regions, which are undergoing through big political, economic and social changes, or in transitional former socialist countries and countries plunged into wars, civilian conflicts, large-scale conflicts, such as Iraq or Afghanistan.

Huge changes happened in Kosovo after the war in all fields of social life. Over 40.000 NATO-led KFOR troops took the security control over the country.

⁽⁵⁾ B. SADIKAJ, *State of organised crime in Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia and problems linked to it*, Tirana, 2002, p. 106.

⁽⁶⁾ S. GËRXXHALIU, *Trafficking and prostitution of women*, Pristina, 2003, p. 33. As well important on this argument T. KEKO, *Prostitute*, Tirana 2006; E. HEINZE, *Sexual Orientation: A Human Right*, Tirana 2002; E. MOROLI – R. SIBONA, *Slaves of the West*, Tirana 2000; N. MAPPES-NIEDIEK, *Balkans Mafia*, Skopje, 2005; X. RAUFER – S. QUERE, *Albanian Mafia*, Tirana 2003.

UNMIK took the control over the civilian affairs. Over 300 international organisations came to Kosovo in order to help it to overcome the civilians difficulties and build its institutions. Borders were opened in direction to Albania and people started to move freely in Kosovo-Albanian directions. Citizens did not possess any identity documents and vehicles did not have any registration plates because they were destroyed by Serbian authorities when the refugees were fleeing. There was no police in Kosovo at that time and KFOR was not capable to control or follow the movement of people, being unable to identify people entering Kosovo. These circumstances in Kosovo were very suitable for organised crime and criminals, who have had an earlier experience with these criminal activities in European and Balkans countries. Prostitutes entered Kosovo together with traffickers.

Under these circumstances Kosovo became a country of destination and traffickers started to bring women from countries with weak economies and women from poor families or families living in extreme poverty. Financial situation of the trafficked women according to IOM report is: 43.77% of them live in poverty, 25.67 % live in extreme poverty, 25.18% live average life, 0.73% were rich and financial status of 4.65% was not known ⁽⁷⁾.

Following the reports on increased trafficking activities and prostitution in 2000, UNMIK administration set up a unit made of 22 investigators for investigation of trafficking and prostitution ⁽⁸⁾. Seeing the escalation of violence, threats, corruption as a result of organised crime that posed a threat to democracy, rule of law, human rights and stability in Kosovo, UNMIK administration adopted a regulation Nr. 2001/22 in order to set in the legal measures for prosecution and punishment of organised crime and criminals. The regulation foresaw measures and punishment for criminals and those who commit criminal offences. Punishments were foreseen according to the weight of an offence and role or participation in a criminal offence.

This regulation foresaw a prison sentence from 5-16 years of imprisonment and fines up to 250.000 German marks. A prison sentence of 7-20 years of imprisonment is foreseen for the organisers, tutors, leaders or managers of activities of an organised crime group. Those who help or incite the commitment of an organised crime activity can be sentenced from 4-7 years of imprisonment. It is interesting to mention that despite the fact there is a large expansion of prostitution in Kosovo both in geographical terms and number of prostitutes and that police institution have often identified the cases and victims and have proceeded these cases to the courts, number of verdicts and punishments in harmony with the law is very low. Judges often change case and offence qualification, punishing the victims for illegal border crossing instead of punishing the managers of prostitutes for forcing the

⁽⁷⁾ IOM, *Office in Kosovo, Sector against trafficking* – February 2000 December 2003, p. 3 and 5.

⁽⁸⁾ KOHA DITORE, *Prostitution and trafficking disregard political or ethnic lines*, 26 August 2002, p. 11.

women victims into prostitution. This speaks about the lack of efficiency of judiciary in Kosovo.

Competent institution in Kosovo have paid a special attention to the human trafficking issue when Interim Penal Code of Kosovo was drafted, seeing the increase of cases in human trafficking and prostitution as its result.

Measures against trafficking have been prescribed in Article 139 of the Interim Penal Code of Kosovo, which has seven paragraphs, foreseeing verdicts and fines for each activity and individual involved in the trafficking network. The highest punishment is foreseen for organisers of prostitution in the third paragraph of this article, which stipulates "fines to 500.000 Euros and prison sentence from 7 to 20 years" ⁽⁹⁾. According to analysis and studies that have been conducted recently, trafficking and prostitution are still present in Kosovo in very alarming and concerning figures in spite of severe legal provisions. We have also come to a conclusion that the characteristics of trafficking and prostitution in Kosovo and in other countries and continents are common, but are different in its geographical expansion and dynamism dependently on organisational conditions and social circumstances. Weak economy of a country, high unemployment rate, extreme poverty and impossibility for a decent life help trafficking and prostitution phenomenon ⁽¹⁰⁾. Migration of people from rural to urban settlements, migrations abroad for seasonal labour, displacement as a result of wars, ethnic and religious conflicts, family relations between the parents or parents with their children, lack of care for children, children without parents and especially without their fathers, sexual abuse in early age, incest, ways of recruitment and deceits, kidnapping and abduction represent some of these factors. Slavery of victims happens through confiscation of their identity documents, torture, rape, forced prostitution, restriction of freedom of movement, bad feeding, bad sanitary conditions and insufficient medical treatment, permanent debts towards their 'bosses', cooperation with state officials and selling of prostitutes.

Migrations are considered to be the root of this evil and according to IOM statistics from 2003, women make 50% of the total 175 million immigrants in the world. Sri Lanka and Philippines are the countries with a concerning women

⁽⁹⁾ Interim Penal Code of Kosovo, Pristina, 2004, pp. 62-63.

⁽¹⁰⁾ The example of a woman from Peja is one of the gravest cases in Kosovo. This woman, after divorcing her husband, is not accepted at her family home by her father. Having to raise her son in very difficult financial conditions she first started to sell her blood in order to pay the rent and later she was deceived and forced into prostitution. (Newspaper Express 3 December 2007 p.10). Similar cases have occurred in Iraq. Reports say that every six woman (age 15-49) has lost her husband during the war in this country, resulting in over 200.000 death tolls and over 1 million widows in total in the country. These desperate widows choose suicide attacks rather than accept to be sold "Koha Ditore" 09.05.2008 p.28. There have been some other examples in Afghanistan where women do not accept being sold. A 14 years old girl burned herself, thus refusing to be sold to a 75 years old man (Koha ditore, 24.05.2004 p.14. A situation of forced prostitution also happens in Union of Myanmar where due to economic and social disorder the military junta forces the juveniles into prostitution. (Koha Ditore, 5.11.07)

immigrants. In 1999 in Sri Lanka, 65% of its immigrants working abroad were women. The sum of money that these women have earned is above 1 billion American dollars or 50% of the total GDP. In Philippines women make 70% of immigrant of this country working abroad and are considered to be the keepers of their families. According to IOM statistics women are migrating more often even though there is a bigger danger for them to get subdued than men, get exploited, do jobs with little salaries, experience torture and even sexual exploit ⁽¹¹⁾.

As a result of war in 1999 migrations took place at a large extent in Kosovo. Many villages and settlements were destroyed during the war and therefore population could not stay in their residences ⁽¹²⁾. Often change of residence on one hand and media chaos on the other hand as well as lack of possibility to adjust and create resources for existence were good preconditions for trafficking.

According to an IOM report published in 2000, there were 292 abduction cases, 433 missing persons and 111 victims of sexual abuse in Kosovo ⁽¹³⁾.

This is the beginning of trafficking for prostitution reasons. Under those circumstances when it was impossible to control the border and movement of people, trafficking in human beings started in Kosovo and Albania. In Durrës a place called “Rrota e kuqe” is a popular and frequented site for prostitution. The largest number of trafficked women was from Albania in Kosovo, who started to work initially as waitresses in motels and ended up in prostitution ⁽¹⁴⁾.

After making the efforts to conclude and systemise the characteristics of prostitution in different countries as it is believed that prostitution has same lines and methods of expansion and activity, I will try to underline now some differences that have been made in origin, ethnic structure, level of education and age of prostitutes. I would make these comparisons for these periods of time 2000-2003, 2003-2005 and 2005-2007

In the conditions created in Kosovo after the war, trafficking and prostitution was organised by the traffickers and prostitutes who have earlier dealt with sex business or prostitution before coming to Kosovo (38.52%) ⁽¹⁵⁾.

Comparing the country origin of prostitutes in Kosovo, the official statistics from 2003 say that prostitutes in Kosovo were coming from Moldova, Romania, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Albanian, Kosovo, Russia and Serbia ⁽¹⁶⁾. In 2005 prostitutes from the same countries of origin are in Kosovo, but Slovakia and Nigeria are added to the list ⁽¹⁷⁾. In 2007 the same countries of origin are in the list, but it is interesting to

⁽¹¹⁾ KOHA DITORE, IOM calls for cessation of violence against women and trafficking, 8 March 2003.

⁽¹²⁾ S. GËRXHALIU, *Women Trafficking and Prostitution*, Pristina, 2003, p. 85.

⁽¹³⁾ *Ibidem.* p. 87.

⁽¹⁴⁾ KOHA DITORE, *Tourist season in Durrës with Kosovan prostitutes*, 16 August 2007.

⁽¹⁵⁾ IOM, *Office in Kosovo Sector against Trafficking*, Report February 2000 December, 2003, p.5.

⁽¹⁶⁾ IOM, *Office in Kosovo Sector against Trafficking*, Report February 2000 December, 2003, p.3.

⁽¹⁷⁾ IOM, *Office in Kosovo, unit against trafficking*, report February 2000, June 2005 p.3.

mention that there are no records of prostitutes with Kosovo origin ⁽¹⁸⁾. In 2008 the statistics say that 47 cases of domestic women are involved in prostitution in Kosovo ⁽¹⁹⁾.

It is very difficult to determine the ethnic affiliation of the prostitutes because in most of the cases they do not have any identity documents and give false statements. Albanian prostitutes from Albania who have been working as prostitutes in Europe have declared themselves as Ukrainian, Russian, Bulgarian and Bosnian. Also there are cases when other women victims declare themselves as Albanian. According to IOM data from 2003, prostitutes give false identities as a result of physical abuse, resulting in 78.97% of them being abused in 2005 and 77.58% of the prostitution victims being abused and tortured in 2007. These abuses and maltreatment are being done in order to force the victims into prostitution ⁽²⁰⁾. In 2005 the statistics also say that 81,31% of the victims are sexually abused ⁽²¹⁾.

Taking into account the circumstances and conditions in which victims live and operate it is very difficult to determine their ethnic structure in a right way because the data are not given based on their ethnic affiliation but based on their state of origin. Only Kosovo police structures keep data on ethnic affiliation of prostitution victims in addition to the data on their state origin.

After the war, Kosovo turned into a good market for persons who brought prostitution or victims of trafficking in Kosovo, but also for some women who came to earn money. According to IOM statistics in 2003 most of the women prostitutes in Kosovo were from Moldova, or 196 of the assisted women or 47.92% of the total 409 cases were coming from this country. In 2003, 84 cases or 20.53% of women were from Romania, Ukraine 57 or 13.93%, Bulgaria 24 or 5.86%, Albania 14 or 3.42%, Kosovo 29 or 7.09%, Russia 3 or 0.73% and Serbia 2 or 0.48% ⁽²²⁾.

There is an interesting fact in the IOM report from in 2001, which tells us that apart from prostitutes from the above-mentioned countries, 5 cases or 2% of the victims are from Kosovo, telling us that the traffickers had started to recruit the local prostitutes. One year later IOM has registered 9 cases of Kosovo domicile victims: 3 trafficked into Macedonia, 2 in Italy, 1 in Belgium, 1 in England and 2 in Kosovo ⁽²³⁾.

In 2005 the ethnic structure of prostitutes is the same based on the data on victims state origin with some slight changes in the increase of numbers and percentages. In 2007 there is also a same situation, but according to IOM there are no records of victims with Kosovo origin.

By comparing the data from 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2007 we can conclude that in 2001 - 57% of the prostitutes were coming from Moldova, in 2003 - 47.92%, in

⁽¹⁸⁾ Material taken from IOM on "victims of trafficking" December 1999 – 2007 unpublished.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Police statistics from 2000 up to 2008, Pristina.

⁽²⁰⁾ IOM, *Office in Kosovo Sector against Trafficking*, Report February 2000 December 2003, p. 8.

⁽²¹⁾ IOM, *Office in Kosovo Sector against Trafficking*, Report February 2000 December 2003, p.7.

⁽²²⁾ IOM, *Office in Kosovo Sector against Trafficking*, Report February 2000 December 2003, p. 3.

⁽²³⁾ KOHA DITORE, *Kosova plunged into human trafficking*, 10 October 2002.

2005 – 45.14%, in 2007 – 51.3%. In 2007 there were less Moldavian prostitutes for 6.16 % than in 2001. There were less Romanian for 1.11% than in 2001. Ukrainian less for 0.6% than in 2001. Russian and Serbian prostitutes are represented in the same way from 2001-2007 with 2 or 3 cases. In 2005 there is one case from Slovakia and 1 case from Nigeria. These figures occur in 2007 again.

Presence of such a large number of Moldavian prostitutes in a continuous way in Kosovo can be explained with the economic situation and poverty in this country. Another characteristic is the rare beauty of Moldavian girls because "they are a hybrid population of Russians, Romanians, Jews, Ukrainians and Bulgarians". A special race of beautiful women has been created and they are highly wanted, including Kosovo ⁽²⁴⁾.

As a result of stability in Kosovo and strengthening of capabilities of security authorities, traffickers have increased their efforts and activities from 2005 inside territory of Kosovo, resulting in a higher number of local victims in this way. This increase of number of local victims is happening due to difficulties in crossing the borders. The local victims are again being deceived for good jobs that would help them overcome all their difficulties.

According to the statistics from IOM and Kosovo police service, there were only 5 identified cases of domestic prostitutes in 2001 or 2% of the total cases of 254. in 2003 there were 29 cases or 7.09% of the total 409 cases. In 2005 there were 53 cases or 11.18% of the total 474 cases. ⁽²⁵⁾. In 2007 there were 63 cases of domicile victims ⁽²⁶⁾.

An interesting data is given by IOM spokesperson Bekim Ajdin, saying that IOM has offered assistance to 538 prostitution victims in Kosovo from 1999 up to 2008. 88 of the victims are of domicile origin and come from the main centres in Kosovo: Pristina 24, Mitrovica 21, Gjilani 14, Ferizaj 14, Peja 6, Gjakova 5, Prizreni 4 and Kaçanik 3 ⁽²⁷⁾.

These statistics rebuff the claims that most of the trafficking and prostitution victims come from rural zones.

In Kosovo, the number of domicile prostitutes has constantly increased in recent years and it is having a geographical extension in the entire territory, including the big urban centres, small towns, suburbs and villages. Prostitution is present in Pristina at a large extent: 25.22%, in Mitrovica with 22.52, in Gjilan with 18.02%, in Ferizaj 11.71%, in Prizren with 7.21%, in Peja with 7.21%, in Gjakova 4.5% and in Kaçanik with 3.60% ⁽²⁸⁾. Kosovo Police Service disclosed an information for the

⁽²⁴⁾ KOHA DITORE, *Slavery still present in Europe*, 10 June 2002.

⁽²⁵⁾ IOM, *Office in Kosovo*, report February 2000-December 2001, report February 2000- December 2003 and report February 2000 June 2005.

⁽²⁶⁾ Police statistics from 2000 up to 2008.

⁽²⁷⁾ INFOPRESS, 13 January 2007.

⁽²⁸⁾ IOM "Local Victims of Trafficking in Kosovo", unpublished material.

public in 2008, saying that it suspected that prostitution was being exercised in 694 bars, cafeteria and night clubs in Kosovo ⁽²⁹⁾.

Regarding changes in level of education, out of total 409 victims that received assistance in Kosovo in 2003, 34.73% of them had an elementary school education and in 2005 - 474 of the assisted victims or 44.82% of them had an elementary school education. In 2003 - 38.14 % of the prostitution victims that received assistance had a secondary school education and in 2005 - 48.53% had a secondary education. In 2003, 2.44% of the victims had a university education and in 2005 – 2.93% of the victims were with university education ⁽³⁰⁾. According to these statistics, the victims of prostitution had a higher level of education in 2005 than in two previous years.

Regarding the age of victims we can say that there were no big changes in age of prostitution victims in 2001, 2003 and 2005. In 2001, 7.88% of the total 254 prostitution victims were from 14-18 years old. In 2003, 12.7% of the victims were from 14-18 years. In 2005, 16.26% of the total 474 prostitution victims were from 14-18 years old. In 2001, 56.30 % of the victims were from 18-24 years old. In 2003, 57.21% were from 18-24 and in 2005, 53.58 % were 18-24 years old. The third age group of the victims from 24-30 years old were represented in this way: in 2001 – 27.17%, in 2003 – 22% and in 2005 – 22.15%. The prostitution victims of age above 30 were represented in this way: in 2001 – 8.66%, in 2003 – 6.85% and in 2005 – 6.96%.

By comparing the age groups of the prostitutes we can come to a conclusion that traffickers were interested to have as younger as possible victims because they were wanted more and eventually brought more money. Prostitution victims of the age 14-18 years old in 2001 were represented with 7.88%, in 2003 with 12.6% and in 2005 with 16.26%. Other age groups did not have any significant changes in their representation during these years ⁽³¹⁾. According to IOM statistics, younger prostitution victims of the age from 12-14 years old have also been identified. In 2007, out of 111 cases of domicile victims, 19 cases or 17.12% are of this age (12-14 years old) and 42 cases or 37.84 % are 16-18 years old ⁽³²⁾. This can lead us to a conclusion that traffickers, a criminal of a special nature, do not chose way or ends to get richer in the quickest possible way.

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⁽²⁹⁾ KOSOVA SOT, *Out of 28 victims 17 are Kosovans*, 17 January 2009.

⁽³⁰⁾ IOM, *Office in Kosovo, Sector against trafficking*, reports 2001-2003-2005.

⁽³¹⁾ IOM, *Office in Kosovo, Sector against trafficking*, reports 2001-2003-2005,

⁽³²⁾ IOM, *“Local Victims of Trafficking in Kosovo”*, unpublished material.

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