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Hugvísindasvið

**Patriarchy and the subordination of
women**

from a radical feminist point of view

Ritgerð til B.A.-prófs í ensku og kynjafræði

Nína Katrín Jóhannsdóttir

Maí 2009

Háskóli Íslands

Hugvísindasvið/Félagsvísindasvið

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og Pétur Knútsson

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Abstract

In this essay I cover matters concerning patriarchy and its undeniable connection to the subordination of women. My reasoning is from a radical feminist point of view since I blame the patriarchy and its detrimental effects, for women's position in the world today. Firstly I briefly examine women's traditional subordination from the beginning and to this day. Likewise I survey the birth of feminism and examine in what ways it has been helpful in women's battle for equal rights. Secondly, I look at a suppression many people seem to be unwilling to see. This is a suppression connected to the sexualization of the public arena. In this chapter I define what pornography is and why it has the effect of belittling women. Furthermore I examine pornography and the internet and finally I reveal the connection between pornography and rapes. In the third chapter I review the exhibition, use and sale of women's bodies. I examine the sexualization of young girls in the mass media and establish how the society's sick ideology has had the effect of turning very young girls into sex-objects in advertisements, on the internet, etc. Moreover I examine concepts like 'the male gaze' in the advertisement business and how it is an exemplar of men's control over women and also reveals their supremacy. In the end I address important issues concerning women's biggest suppression of all in my opinion. This suppression is connected to prostitution and the trafficking in women and children. I look at the development of these issues, firstly in Iceland and then in the Nordic countries, and examine how these issues are handled.

Introduction

There has been an increased reference to sexuality in western culture over past decades. This is known as “the sexualization of the public arena”. “Mainstreaming” is the term which best designates the present day position of pornography in our culture, referring to the fact that pornography is everywhere and very accessible (McNair, 2002). From my point of view, the woman of today has become an easy prey to this mainstreaming, since it is mainly she who gets entangled in the pitfall of pornography, prostitution, and last but not least the trafficking in women. In this essay I will look at these aspects from a radical feminist point of view. I will roughly examine the history of women’s subordination and show how feminism has from the beginning been women’s liberator. Finally I will chiefly examine prostitution and trafficking in women in Iceland and then briefly survey the development in the other Nordic countries. The reason for my radical point of view is that I believe the developments towards equality of the genders in the western world are in some way ambiguous. Finally the question I will try to answer is: “Why do I think that patriarchy is the reason for the problem of female subordination nowadays?” Furthermore: “What can be done to improve this situation?”

Chapter 1 – Women and feminism battling patriarchy

Chapter 1.1- The subordination of women -a historical examination

“In the beginning of our story all significant societies were clearly patriarchal. There was no single exception” (Therborn, 2004, 17). Walby (1990, 20) has explained the patriarchal concept thus:

“I shall define patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women...the use of the term social structures is important here, since it clearly implies rejection both of biological determinism, and the notion that every individual man is in a dominant position and every woman in a subordinate one... patriarchy is composed of six structures: the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work,

patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions...”.

The patriarchal mode of production refers to the undervalued work of housewives who are the producing class, while husbands are the expropriating class. The second level, which describes patriarchal relations in paid work, refers to the fact that traditionally women have been granted worse jobs. The level which is about patriarchal relations in the state refers to the fact that the state is patriarchal, racist and capitalist and it clearly has bias towards patriarchal interests. Male violence constitutes the fourth structure and explains how men’s violence against women is systematically endured and tolerated by the state’s refusal to intervene against it. The fifth level describes the patriarchal relations towards sexuality, where the patriarchy has decided for us that heterosexuality is and should be the norm. The sixth level which is about patriarchal relations in cultural institutions describes the male gaze within various cultural institutions, such as the media, and how women traditionally have been exhibited via the mass media etc. (Walby, 1990).

We can go back beyond the birth of Christ to encounter patriarchy, when Aristotle and his often avant-garde ideas blossomed. Aristotle assumed that women were the defective part of humanity, having only developed as a mistake when the temperature during conception was too low (Weitz, 2003). During the Middle Ages this ideology was at its peak. Amongst renowned beliefs during this age was firstly that the woman was believed to be more stupid than the man. Secondly she was believed to be mainly driven by her libido and as a consequence she was blamed for the first sin ever committed in the sanctuary of Eden (Weitz, 2003). Capitalistic economic practices incrementally became institutionalized in England between the 16th and 19th centuries and from there this ideology spread throughout Europe, across political and cultural frontiers. Finally, in the 19th and 20th centuries, Capitalism had become the main means of industrialization throughout much of the world (*Capitalism*, 2009). The arrival of capitalism led to the loss by women of areas of work which had been theirs and in the aftermath they also lost certain legal rights over property that they had before held (Walby, 1990). Furthermore, with time the patriarchy changed from being private to public:

Private patriarchy is based upon household production, with a patriarch controlling women individually and directly in the relatively private sphere of the home. Public patriarchy is based on structures other than household, although this may still be a significant patriarchal site. Rather, institutions conventionally regarded as a part of the public domain are central in the maintenance of patriarchy (Walby, 1990, 178).

The rise of capitalism surely did lead to the development of a new form of patriarchy. However it did not lead to an alteration in its basic structures since this historical shift did not have great effects upon gender relations, “men remained the dominant gender; all six patriarchal structures continued across this period; only a minor shift in the relative significance of public and private sites of patriarchy, which can be identified as far back as the seventeenth century, accelerated” (Walby, 1990, 200).

Moreover, as time went by little changed and when we examine the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century in western culture and other developed countries, we cannot discern a great deal of changes in women’s subordination. As an example, when a woman got married she lost everything she owned to her husband and she herself became his possession, and in fact it is no wonder women were thought so little of when Darwin, the most renowned scientist in the fields of the theory of evolution in the nineteenth century, came forth with his conclusion that men were the more developed part of the humankind (Weitz, 2003). Furthermore, as Erla H. Halldórsdóttir shows (2006, 139) people in past centuries believed women were “irrational, vulnerable and incapable of independent thinking” (my translation). It is as if they were believed to be in some ways like children because of their social and psychological malfunctions, which early on brought their rank to a lower status than that of men. Their importance was primarily judged by looking at a few aspects of their lives, such as child rearing, how well they pledged themselves to their homes and how they did in civilizing their children and setting forth moral goals (Erla H. Halldórsdóttir, 2006). The woman in earlier days was only considered to be one of her master’s belongings just as any other property. Like an animal she was supposed to show submission and obedience, which was the hallmark of a good wife (Weitz, 2003). Moreover, the height of the private form of patriarchy was to be found in the mid-nineteenth century where there had been an intensification in the domestic ideology which had led to the fact that middle-class women were confined to the private sphere where they lacked citizenship as well as

suffrage and the right to own property and violence by husbands was considered legitimate (Walby, 1990, 179).

Despite this, all was not lost to women. For example the Enlightenment in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in Europe had given birth to liberalism in the nineteenth century, which as a result soon thereafter gave birth to feminism (Andersen, 2006). The Enlightenment, the word indicates, marked the beginning of a more critical thinking. As a result people became more and more enlightened, as enlightenment is the result of critical thinking. Critical thinking consists of the policy that you cannot accept anything without the proper premise (Páll Skúlason, 1987). The growing belief in human rationality enabled women to finally encounter their own crisis in society, leading to their subsequent fight for equal rights compared to men, which led to the birth of feminism in the late nineteenth century (Andersen, 2006). In the nineteenth century slavery had been abolished in the United States with great help from many essential people. Some of these people were women, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who later became one of the very first feminists, who pleaded for equal rights compared to men concerning property ownership, voting rights and more (*Elizabeth Cady*, 2009).

In spite of the growing power of women in the late nineteenth century it was for the most part a patriarchal world where wives virtually everywhere were subordinated to husbands and marriages most often were parentally arranged, except in the North Atlantic area of northwestern Europe and North America (Therborn, 2004). Therborn states that: “In a global perspective one of the most powerful expressions of patriarchy is paternal and/or parental power over children’s marriage” (2004, 107). Thus it can be argued that even though some women of this time had encountered a rising power in their freedom of expression and actions, the power of patriarchy still had a strong grip on them.

Furthermore, in most societies women either had minimum or no rights to inherit money or property if their father or spouse had passed away; moreover it was almost impossible for women to get a divorce, even if their spouse abused them mentally or physically and also if he had an affair which was rather common in those days (Therborn, 2004).

Subsequently at the end of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth women’s rights in the western world grew year by year until they gradually

earned themselves voting rights, the right to own property, the right to divorce their husbands, and finally the right to study and work outside the home if they wanted to (Andersen, 2006). In the beginning of the 20th century women thus were not any longer considered irresponsible, childlike and weak to the same extent as before. Furthermore, the world of women is even brighter now in the 21st century. As an example, for the last decades, women gradually have become the majority of students at virtually every level of public education. There is a downside because traditionally fewer women than men study science or are studying at any other levels of higher education (Andersen, 2006). In Iceland women's participation in the labor market counts for 80% and more women than men have graduated from high schools, yet women's education does not seem to help them earn as much as the other gender or to get promotion (Þorgerður Einarisdóttir, 2002). Thus it is not hard to envisage the fact that traditionally: "men earn higher wages in 85% of relationships" (Ingólfur V. Gíslason, 2005, my translation). Wherever you look, men get higher wages than women, even in fields typically connected to women (Þorgerður Einarisdóttir and Stella Blöndal, 2004). These fields could be working in preschools, teaching, etc. Guðrún M. Guðmundsdóttir (2004 B, 2) has explained Bordieu's theories concerning these matters thus:

Most developments concerning women's situation in past centuries have been external changes since they have not had the effect of changing the male-oriented nature of society. The one and only real change is that we do not question male supremacy any longer. All other changes concerning women's participation in the job market and their increased level of education are only on the surface if examined more closely (my translation).

As can be seen, without a doubt we can still in some ways, witness women's subordination in developed societies. However "women are not passive victims of oppressive structures. They have struggled to change both their immediate circumstances and the wider social structures" (Walby, 1990, 200). Nowadays women face more freedom than ever in most parts of the world. This has enabled them to go out and set their mark on the labor market, divorce their husbands, use contraception and have abortions if they are not ready for a baby. It is obvious that "...there have been many important changes in state policy towards gender relations over the last 150 years but these also include some very significant limitations. The state is still patriarchal as well as capitalist and racist" (Walby, 1990, 171).

1.2 – Feminism in a world of patriarchy

Feminism is the idea that women should have political, social, sexual, intellectual and economic rights equal to those of men. It involves various movements, theories, and philosophies, all concerned with issues of gender difference, that advocate equality for women and the campaign for women's rights and interests. According to Maggie Humm and Rebecca Walker, the history of feminism can be divided into three waves. The first wave was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the second was in the 1960s and 1970s, and the third extends from the 1990s to the present

(*Feminism*, 2009).

“First-wave feminism refers to a period of feminist activity during the nineteenth and early twentieth century ... It focused on *de jure* (officially mandated) inequalities, primarily on gaining women's suffrage (the right to vote)” (*First wave*, 2009). Thus first wave feminists fought for: “civil rights and political rights. Among other things this consisted in legal rights concerning education and independence” (Auður M. Leiknisdóttir and Gunnhildur Sigurhansdóttir, 2003, 20, my translation). As a result many western societies exploited this opportunity and women could climb somewhat higher up the social ladder. Finally the human race could embrace the fact that women were also human beings who should have equal rights compared to men. “First-wave feminism is a much more important historical force than usually considered. This major feminist push changed the course of history. However, it did not lead to an elimination of all the forms of inequality...which it sought to eradicate...patriarchy changed in form, incorporating some of the hard won changes into new traps for women”(Walby, 1990, 200-201). Some of these traps came to life with the second wave of feminism which fought for example for the increased freedom of women's sexual expression. This freedom of expression nowadays has led to the fact that pornography has been empowered and some could say it has led to a new kind of subordination with the before mentioned ‘sexualization of the public arena’.

“The "second-wave" of the...Feminist Movement... refers to a period of feminist activity which began during the early 1960s and lasted throughout the late

1970s. Whereas first-wave feminism focused mainly on overturning legal... obstacles to equality...,second-wave feminism addressed a wide range of issues, including unofficial...inequalities, official legal inequalities, sexuality, family, the workplace, and...reproductive rights” (*Feminist movement*, 2009). The second wave of feminism came forth with the saying: “ ‘the personal is political’. Women fought for equal rights in all battlefields. They pointed out that equal rights were not acted upon. Women demanded to be evaluated for their true worth both inside and outside the home” (Auður M. Leiknisdóttir and Gunnhildur Sigurhansdóttir, 2003, 20, my translation).

By the early 1980s it was perceived that women had met their goals and succeeded in changing social attitudes towards gender roles, when oppressive laws that were based on sex largely had been abolished (*Feminism*, 2009). It is right that the legal changes were there, yet perchance the social changes were not as great as they could be. Feminism with the help of gender studies has explained that we play our gender roles which are the roles women and men have in society where men are supposed to behave like men and women like women (Andersen, 2006). With the priceless help of women’s studies which later developed into gender studies, feminist scholars have developed all kinds of effectual concepts in the effort of trying to explain and fight the subordination of women. This has been a great help in women’s battle for equal rights. One of these concepts is essentialism, which is the kind of ideology which supports that men should behave as men and women as women, furthermore it tells us men and women are total opposites and blames our innate nature for this difference (Andersen, 2006). This essentialism has infected many of us since traditionally throughout history, characteristics like power and aggressiveness have been connected with men, while at the same time women are expected to be sweet and in some cases, passive. This ideology has brought us books like: “Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus”, which was written by John Gray in 1992. Feminist writers have pointed out the bad influence of essentialism by noting that not all men and women are the same (Andersen, 2006). Furthermore: “the dualism which characterizes the western way of thinking divides the world into contrasts like man-woman, culture-nature and individual-society” (Guðrún M. Guðmundsdóttir, 2004 A, my translation). Yet, feminists have pointed out that this is a great simplification of the state of society. Where do hermaphrodites for example fit into this dualism? Another key concept in feminist thinking is the sex/gender binary. Feminists have described the difference between sex and gender this

way: “sex refers to the biological sex but gender is used to describe the cultural meaning which society gives to the biological sex, meaning the expectations we have about masculinity and femininity” (Þorgerður Þorvaldsdóttir, 2000, my translation). These expectations in fact narrow our freedom of action because everybody who does not conform has the risk of harassment or even being socially cut off from society. In formulating these concepts and many more, feminists have tried to influence people’s thoughts of society by showing us how the patriarchy has been dictating our thoughts and actions ever since antiquity.

Without doubt feminism and later women’s and gender studies have been a great help in women’s struggle for equal rights. As a consequence the once vast gap between the two sexes in this world is with time and effort diminishing. As most people know women nowadays have climbed the social ladder to incredible heights, enabling some of them to become no less than Prime Ministers, cabinet ministers and various other prominent jobs have fallen into their capable hands. Despite this; “it is hard to describe the third wave of feminism because we are positioned in the midst of it...the third wave is concerned with the globalization, the sexualization of the public space and the new field of studies called: “gender studies”...many feminists...now fight so women can be seen as something other than sexual beings and accessories” (Auður M. Leiknisdóttir and Gunnhildur Sigurhansdóttir, 2003, 20, my translation). The sexual liberty some of us wanted for women has become an enormous problem in the world today and the mainstreaming of pornography, as before stated, has only brought the exploitation of women to an increasingly dangerous level. This development, where often very young or vulnerable women are exploited through prostitution, the sex-industry or via trafficking in women, has become very alarming.

To complicate things further, there are many different branches of feminism to be found that cross through the three waves. The first wave created liberal, Marxist and socialist feminism, where movements of liberalism fought for formal and legal rights on the behalf of women and the second two, which grew stronger with the second wave, looked at how the economical situation in society reflected women’s subordinated position (Þorgerður Einardóttir, 2001). The second wave saw the birth of radical feminism which criticized liberal feminists for closing their eyes to the fact that formal gender equality did in fact not reflect real equality (Þorgerður Einardóttir, 2001). In

short, radical feminists blame the patriarchy for women's subordinated status in society, where the term 'politics' in their minds refers to power-structured relationships and arrangements, whereby one group of persons is controlled by another and in this analysis men's violence against women is seen as an important basis of men's control over women, since the state is seen as an 'instrument' of patriarchal domination and its non-intervention is believed to be a part of the logic of the patriarchal system (Walby, 1990). In recent years third wave feminists have changed the outlook with their increasing participation in science and scholarships which seems to have succeeded in the involvement in political organizations and issues (Þorgerður Einardóttir, 2001). It has been argued that "postmodernism, together with poststructuralism, is the idiom of much of 1990s feminism" but "postmodernism refuses master narratives" and "the search for the fundamental causes of injustice, oppression, the movement of history is ruled out of court" (Andermahr, Lovell & Wolkowitz, 2000, 208-210).

Finally the question is; "Why do I position myself in the second wave by choosing the standpoint of a radical feminist when there are newer standpoints available?" The answer could be that as a second wave feminist I believe the personal is political. Although undoubtedly there have been many significant changes towards the increased equality of women, I still believe many events occurring in the privacy of our homes, and other things that some would consider private, should in fact be studied in greater detail. For example: the physical and sexual abuse of women and children, pornography, prostitution, human trafficking and finally the massive sexualization of the public arena which has without a doubt had its devilish effects which will be looked at later. The second wave constituted a movement of action, and in my opinion endless examination of society becomes dispensable if not followed by strong action for improvement.

Walby (1990, 3) has explained my standpoint rather thoroughly:

There are differences between radical feminists over the basis of male supremacy, but often this is considered to involve the appropriation of women's sexuality and bodies, while in some accounts male violence is seen as the root cause (e.g., Brownmiller, 1976; Firestone, 1974; Rich 1980). Sexual practice is seen to be socially constructed around male notions of desire, not women's. Further, sexuality is seen as a major site of male domination over women,

through which men impose their notion of femininity on women. Heterosexuality is socially institutionalized in contemporary society and organizes many other aspects of gender relations. Male violence against women is considered to be part of a system of controlling women, unlike the conventional view which holds that rape and battering are isolated instances caused by psychological problems in a few men.

Chapter 2- Pornography and the sexualization of the public arena

2.1- Pornography and the internet

What is pornography? In Icelandic law there is no definition of pornography (Guðbjörg H. Kolbeinsdóttir, 2002). Thus, it has proved relatively difficult to answer this specific question. Nonetheless paragraph 210 of the Icelandic penal law states that it is punishable through fines or imprisonment to publish, make, sell or exhibit pornography (Icelandic criminal code, no. 19/2004, paragraph 210). This seems strange because as far as I am concerned it has been published in Iceland via various magazines. Varied porn-papers are sold in gas-stations or bookstores and sex-tapes are sold in sex-shops. However no one gets charged because what can be classified as pornography has not been realised. By imposing this law it seems that the community is really concerned about these things when it in fact is not because the law is flawed. Anyhow, nowadays it is not necessary to purchase pornography in order to view it freely. In recent years pornography has been distributed on the internet and it has become a great industry, where improved technology has made it possible to view a great deal of it for free and download it (Garrahan, 2008). This has even made it possible for very young users of the internet to be affected because it is impossible to detect people's age through a computer. Also, the fact is that if the internet site specifically notes it is banned for persons under the age of eighteen, it usually is enough just to push a button with the promise that you are not under age. Even more than 50% of boys and little under 50% of girls with the average age of 14 years can say they have learnt a lot from watching pornography (Guðbjörg H. Kolbeins, 2004). The internet can be a dangerous place for children because it can be deceitful. For example it is alarming to see that some specific sites on the internet have deliberately tried to make young children go to their sites by

taking advantage of children's spelling-mistakes. A good example of this is the porn-site www.disnie.com which could be a likely mistake for www.disney.com. It is estimated that a large amount of children will at some point see sexually explicit material on the internet without specifically wanting it and there are many who have been in that exact position and on these grounds it is extremely important to protect users of the internet who do not want to see it and then especially children (Mitchell, Finkelhor, Wolak, 2003).

2.2- Pornography - definitions and explanations from a radical feminist point of view.

Nobody can reject the fact that pornography is to be seen and found all around us and nowadays it seems to be almost everywhere. But not all sexually explicit material is necessarily the same. A noted radical feminist, Russell (1993, 3) has a good explanation:

I define pornography as material that combines sex and/or the exposure of genitals with abuse or degradation in a manner that appears to endorse, condone, or encourage such behaviour...[but]...Erotica refers to sexually suggestive or arousing material that is free of sexism, racism, and homophobia, and respectful of all the human beings and animals portrayed.

Studies have shown some difference between men's and women's views of pornography which shows that men tend to be more positive towards it. However the difference between women's views of pornography and erotica is vast, because when watching erotica most often has very little bad impact on women pornography often does because they see it as belittling towards them (Senn, 1993). This can be for various reasons. For example the reason that pornography gives the impression that all women are sluts or because it imposes on them the ideal goddess-like image of a woman and thus looks down on other female body-types. As most feminists want to believe, erotica on the other hand does not seem to be a harmful or bad attribution to society. If we look back at pornography, a Nordic study on pornography and teenagers has for example shown that girls tend to watch pornography with someone if they on the other hand do watch it, and then this person is very likely to be their boyfriend and it is also interesting to point out that age is a factor here because older girls are more likely to watch it rather

than the younger ones and older girls (around 20 years of age) seem to constitute both the most liberal group of girls and the most critical (Löfgren-Mårtenson and Månsson, 2006). Moreover, most women watch porn with their partners and thus their partner's views of pornography could be affecting them without them even noticing it, yet another reasoning could be that the more they watch the more normal it all could seem to them. Pornography is the progeny of our patriarchy and we must not forget that "porn tends to legitimize and reinforce an unequal and prejudiced view of sexuality and the relationship between the sexes" (Löfgren-Mårtenson and Månsson, 2006). Although porn is not reality the actors and actresses are real people doing real things and the consequences are real as well. For young people pornography is a direct source of information, information they consider real and useful (Löfgren- Mårtenson and Månsson, 2006). In the aftermath the fact is that this makes it very likely for boys or men to integrate things they learn from pornography to their own sexual-practises and thus the degradation of women becomes a norm in their own bedroom, the fantasy turns into a reality.

To look at the roots of pornography's great prosperity, the modern pornography wave is believed to have its origins in the 1960s (Kutchinsky, 1991). Thereby pornography was made with more eagerness than ever before starting from this period. Thus it maybe is no wonder that the sex industry makes enormous sums of money each year. A renowned feminist, Dworkin, (2000, 29) has estimated the sum to be: "\$8 billion a year". Now in 2009, it is probably much more. When looking at modern societies from a critical point of view, people cannot be amazed at how enormous the sex industry has become because the sex industry is developed for men and by men. Society's essentialism is well reflected in the fact that "both boys and girls see it as "natural" that boys are more interested in porn than girls, not least because it is made "by and for men" (Löfgren-Mårtenson and Månsson, 2006). The sex industry is an emblem of men's supremacy in this world, where mostly white middle class men, try to maintain their power in the world by degrading women through the using and making of pornography (Russell, 1998). With pornography they retain their sceptre. The patriarchal power of pornography has been described thus:

It is the power men have over women turned into sexual acts men do to women, because pornography is the power and the act. It is the conditioning of erection and orgasm in men to the powerlessness of women; inferiority, humiliation,

pain, torment; to us as objects, things, or commodities for use in sex as servants. It sexualizes inequality and in doing so creates discrimination as a sex-based practice (Dworkin, 2000, 26).

According to Dworkin, discrimination by society is not just to be found in the labour market or via ideas of the female place and role in life which we looked at earlier. This is also to be found in pornography. When the patriarchy loosens its grip in one area it only tightens it in other arenas (Walby, 1990). The effects of the sexualisation of the public arena and pornography are good examples of this development which will be examined later. Women's increased freedom from the before mentioned private patriarchy has nowadays led to the tightening of patriarchies control in public arenas, for instance through the mass media and pornography and thus it is called a public patriarchy.

Furthermore, what Dworkin means by stating that porn objectifies women can be explained by examining the making of porn-films. For instance the camera is traditionally only directed at one body part at a time showing the woman as pussy or breasts instead of a whole human-being. She becomes an object created to satisfy the male lust. She is more of an object rather than a human being (McKee, 2005). Some say this objectification in pornography even reflects hatred towards women or at least it mirrors the producers' disrespect towards them (Andersen, 2006). The humiliation is also evident wherein women are often called things such as bitches, whores or sluts in these movies. In my opinion few could seriously argue that this is not degrading. The subordination evident in pornography can be harmful because it can maintain ideas saying that it is desirable to be a slut and furthermore pornography reveals the female body in its most extreme condition (Evans-DeCicco and Cowan, 2001) meaning that most often these actresses are attractive, blonde and with big boobs and slutty of course. In modern times this unrealistic body-image sadly has become the ideal model for every naïve girl to impersonate. Of course it is rather questionable to reach this kind of perfection.

2.3- Pornography and rape- a causal mode?

The connection between pornography and rape has been examined through various studies. One study of almost 1000 women, 18 years or older, showed that pornography or violent sex has become a normal aspect of the society (Russell and Trocki, 1993). As before noted we learn things from pornography, things that some of us will later put in use and thus watching violent pornography could have damaging effects upon our views of sex and sexuality. This is especially true for men because they are the majority of porn-consumers in society. Some findings have been rather alarming. For example one study showed that almost one third of male college students confess they would rape if they would get away with it for sure, and almost 60% confess to the same thing after watching videos showing women getting raped and enjoying it (Russell, 1988). This kind of pornography gives both the impression that rape and violence is manly and that the doer gets awarded for it. In porn-movies the rapist does not go to jail after raping, he just gets more pussy and the victim likes it, or so it seems. In fact pornography does not have to be very violent in order to increase the likelihood of someone raping, men just have to consume more of it in order to get that effect (Russell, 1988). Consequently, the situation is so serious that many men do not take “no” from a woman seriously while participating in sexual acts (Russell, 1988). The reason could be traced to many pornographic rape-scenes where “no” explicitly means “yes”, and the “no”, thus becomes eroticized. Furthermore, when the woman says “no” some men get even more turned on instead of losing their enthusiasm, which obviously would be considered more fitting during these circumstances. Rape can be explained this way: “It comprises all sexual violence where somebody penetrates another human being or tries to, and in that fashion completely breaks this person’s say in that matter” (Guðrún M. Guðmundsdóttir, 2004 A, my translation). There is an obvious connection between rapes and pornography because it has been examined that watching pornography can have the effects of inducing the longing to rape in men who have never even considered raping before and it can also lead people to become aroused by things that they have never considered arousing before and this does happen because when things are continuously shown in eroticized context, they become arousing (Russell, 1998).

Moreover, in pornography it is rather common to dress grown up women like schoolgirls with ponytails, ribbons and sometimes they are shown sucking on lollipops or even a comforter like little babies. Thus pornography has had the effect of making it

sexy to look like a child or even a toddler. The power of the patriarchy is discernible here, in that it has the effect of controlling our libido via the making of various films or pictures (Merskin, 2004). Thereby our culture has the effect of in fact controlling what we will see and therewithal it often deliberately manipulates the ideas we have and think are our own. So often many of us have seen the manifestation of abuse, oppression and humiliation towards women in pornography, that with time this manifestation becomes normal and practically arousing. The normalizing of violence is thanks to: "...the manly values in fields such as competitive sports, soldiery and the world of international trade. There are to be found attitudes such as competitiveness, relentlessness, good staying power, efficiency, effective virtues..." (Guðrún M. Guðmundsdóttir, 2004 A, my translation). To survive or make it men are taught to be crude and even violent and aggressive, which increases the possibility of this aggressiveness to transcend into their everyday lives and this possibly making them at higher risk of employing it on women. This can be done through physical, emotional or sexual-abuse. Furthermore women are the most likely group in society to encounter emotional, physical and sexual abuse and men comprise almost all sex-offenders in society (Guðrún M. Guðmundsdóttir, 2004 A). Male violence against women, as before noted, is one of the strongest emblems of the patriarchy in the world.

Rape is a very serious form of male violence against women and in the annual report of Stígamót for 2008 it says that women who have been raped in most instances are filled with feelings of shame and many have a bad self-esteem, furthermore, anxiety, sadness and guilt are also very common feelings (*Stígamót, 2008*). When women should be extremely angry and feeling hatred towards the offender they both are feeling ashamed and guilty. This sounds strange but the reason could be that some women do not have a high self-esteem and thus put the blame on themselves instead of the offender. In fact our ideas concerning what is considered masculine and feminine can be harmful for us and has the affect of diminishing women's independence (Ingólfur Á. Jóhannesson, 2004). Our ideas of masculinity embroider men's aggressiveness when our ideas of femininity have the effect of toning down these same urges in women which could have the affect of cushioning their own self-esteem.

Furthermore "the action[raping] was first defined in Icelandic law in 1869...in these law more lenient punishment was applied if the woman had a bad reputation although this definition was removed in 1940"(Guðrún M. Guðmundsdóttir, 2004 B, 18,

my translation). Not so long ago it was considered normal to blame the fault of rape upon the victims seeing that some put the blame on the girl on grounds of her revealing outfit or pointed out the fact that she had been drinking. The Icelandic criminal code (19/1940, paragraph 194) explains sexual abuse and the penalty of the action in this manner:

Whosoever has intercourse or other sexual contact with a person by using violence, threats, or other kinds of illegal enforcement, is guilty of rape and shall receive a prison sentence for a period no shorter than 1 year and up to 16 years. Violence constitutes the deprivation of a free will by confinement, drugs or other similar actions (my translation).

“According to the law it is not rape if someone has sexual intercourse with an unconscious person [because of alcohol] i.e. if she herself is in that condition because of her own decisions, because she has not been able to show defiance there is neither violence nor compulsion taking place” (Guðrún M. Guðmundsdóttir, 2004 B, 19, my translation). In Iceland for example it is hard work to prosecute rapists owing to the fact that a visible injury needs preferably to be evident in order to accuse the man (Guðrún M. Guðmundsdóttir, 2004 B). In my opinion the law is evidently flawed. In most cases the rapist is a person of acquaintance and of the only about 14% of rape cases which are reported in Iceland, the case is dropped in almost 41% of cases and only 25,9% of the remaining cases end with prosecution (*Stígamót, 2008*). Without a doubt this reflects injustice on the behalf of society towards women since it is rather likely because of the evident flaws of the legal system that many female rape victims simply give up instead of fighting an almost impregnable battle for justice. The improvements have reached the surface but not radically enough since unpunished violence against women still is a fact. Guðrún M. Guðmundsdóttir, (2004 B, 19) has noted that the ideas of Kaufman concerning the reason of men’s violence in society can be explained through three main points:

Firstly through their ruling position which is embedded into our social structures, secondly the persuasion that they should claim power or have passage to it and thirdly because of the fear of or the fact that they have no power.

Consequently being a man makes it easier to hurt and injure people.

Chapter 3- The exhibition, use and sale of women's bodies

3.1-The sexualization of girls

In 1958 a book called “Lolita” by Nabakov was published. This book deals with the alleged love-affair between a 12 year old girl and an older man. This book was very polemical in its day and has kept that status to this day. Nowadays it seems that this idea for example has transferred into the advertisement business. Young girls in advertisements are often wearing make-up and sexy outfits making them look a lot older than they really are and more inviting for men. This damaging presentation can be encountered both in TV-commercials and in advertisements in papers and magazines. This has even been visible in the clothing industry. Consequently the industry has been criticized for generating clothing like G-strings for very young girls, with often highly inappropriate texts. A good example is: “Is this your lucky night?” or even “porn-star” (Merskin, 2004). “Women in advertisements are namely consistently growing younger...[and]...sex and sexually related material is used to sell almost anything” (Þorgerður Þorvaldsdóttir, 2001, 24, my translation). Moreover, many web-sites show girls down to 6 years of age posing like adult women in very sexually explicit positions, where parents are often the producers selling videos and images of their children in the hope of making money (Brynja B. Garðarsdóttir, 2006). The fact that parents are even going as low as selling highly inappropriate pictures of their daughters is an alarming and disturbing verification that something is going awry in the world today where women's self-image in fact can become the victim, for the fact that:

It is an unstable phenomenon created by ceaseless interactive connections between the self and the environment throughout your life. A self-image is not incidental but rather interwoven with power-connections since it is a keystone to us that our self-image is given consent by others (Guðrún M. Guðmundsdóttir, 2004 A, my translation).

Moreover: “women develop their self-image through a gender which is based on submission however men build theirs through a gender which covers power” (Guðrún M. Guðmundsdóttir, 2004 B, 19, my translation).

To the opinion that our looks need to be accepted by our peers and the society we live in, it is self-evident that our self-image is largely developed during our examination of what is the standard we should want to achieve. Society's rule of desirable looks is far too harsh and almost infeasible, and the self-image takes the blame. Furthermore it has been established that "society makes greater demands concerning good behavior of women than men. Boys are allowed to be more boisterous and their freedom of function is generally more" (Helgi Gunnlaugsson, 2003, my translation). Specialists in pornographic studies say young women nowadays are under a great pressure to take part in sometimes abnormal sexual actions and group-rapes happen more often today than before (Guðbjörg H. Kolbeinsdóttir, 2004).

The female body represents sex in the world of imagination and the emblem of sexual activity is masculine. The relationship encountered here between femininity and masculinity and its symbolic presentation has become a very important part of the vast sexualization of the public space which can be seen today (Hirdman, 2004). In U.S.A this development is at its peak where beauty-pageants, even for small girls, have become very fashionable. In these pageants girls are literally transferred into women, wearing make-up, glitter, high heels and ball-dresses. Merskin (2004) believes this development is a bad thing because transferring small girls into sexual beings more or less could encourage men to adhere to child pornography or provoke the appetite of even raping young girls. As before noted the mass media has provoked this appetite even further by often transferring grown up women into girls, in pornography for example. To stop the evolution of this appetite, something radical has to be done. Men's urge to rape has its roots engraved in both cultural and social elements, inasmuch as the biological factor does not play a great role (Russell, 1988). Therefore it is evident that if we want to change this development we have to ripen our ideas of sex and sexuality and furthermore be careful when we mould the ideas of what is appropriate to be considered sexy for mature people. Transferring small children into something to satiate our sexual appetite is not the way to go. This regression has to be stopped.

3.2- Advertisements and the sexualization of the public arena

The concept "sexualization" is bound to a cultural and historical meaning of sexuality whereby for an example certain clothing, colors, and gestures have been attached to

some things or beings and the sexualization has been connected with some kind of body-type, age and gender, where the sole intention is connected to consumption and traditionally the sexualized gender has been female (Hirdman, 2004). The message advertisement- producers are sending female audiences is that they should always be ready to take part in sexual actions, be constantly thinking about sex, be ready to let other people rule over them and even be ready to be sexually abused. A very good example of this is a dolcegabbana advertisement which shows four men scattered around one woman. This woman is lying on the pavement and one man is seemingly holding her down. She has a painful look on her face and the men seem to be halfway through with ripping their clothes off. Everything points to the idea they are going to rape this woman (see <http://www.mimifroufrou.com>). Sadly it is rather easy to find these kinds of advertisements both on the internet, in magazines and even in television. For example there are countless advertisements which strangely have got the same theme of showing women licking milk or yogurt, with the underlying reference to sex in which the product on the picture is similar to sperm and the woman is licking it. In a slightly different way, advertisements directed at children and adolescents often have the hidden message of society's male-supremacy and gendered stereotypes. For example I had the doubtful pleasure of seeing a Yorkie- chocolate commercial on the internet (see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcjlzSod0CE>). It shows a girl who wants to buy a Yorkie -chocolate but she know that Yorkie is not for girls so she dresses up like a man with a moustache and enters a kiosk. The salesman is an older man and he decides to test the girl's manhood before serving the chocolate to her. He puts her through all kinds of tests to decide whether she is man enough to handle the chocolate. He lets her open a jar and make fart-sounds for example and she passes with flying colors. It is not until he is passing the chocolate to her that she loses her cover because he takes the opportunity to compliment her eye-color. Because of this she almost melts on the account of happiness. Lastly the commercial ends with these words:"Yorkie, big chocolate chunks of chocolate, it's not for girls", and the salesman tears the chocolate from the girl and eats it. This commercial implies that women, even the toughest ones, will melt because of petty compliments and that they are extremely obsessed with their looks. In fact it could be understood from this commercial that if a girl is complimented she will let her guard down. However the message pointed at us is also that women cannot have everything men have even though they try and consequently they should just accept that fact. This commercial makes the gap between men and women seem to

be vast and jokes about gender based discrimination. In my opinion this fosters the preservation of prevailing gender identities and has the effect of making this seem positive. Should gender based discrimination be considered only a hilarious joke?

Nowadays the focus in advertisements and commercials seems to be mainly directed at women's sexuality, counter to the older days when the focus seemed to be mostly on their wifely duties. Alas, even though women seem to have broken the chain which strapped them to their homes they sadly have entangled themselves in another and somewhat vicious bondage. This is the bondage of sexualization and its effects are as before mentioned both serious and various, where the grip of patriarchy makes sure they cannot come untied. Nevertheless, the pressure on women to be perfect can evolve into some kind of subordination, because patriarchy decides for them what they should like and dislike and even how they should want to be. In my opinion few women can seriously deny being affected from the images and ideas the media imposes upon them, therefore most women are in fact subordinated in a way. Moreover the public agency of patriarchy is more extensive than probably most of us are aware of:

Men have the power to create women's image, they are the editors, directors, photographers, designers etc. They have the power to define women. However even though women are gradually getting positions of authority the beauty-image seems not to be changing. Women's image provides that they are being stared at, the clothes they wear are more tight and colorful than the clothes men wear...their sex appeal is the only thing that matters...they try to look nice, stay in fashion and mind not being too boisterous, because they know they are being judged by their looks. The beauty-business, cosmetic producers and the sellers of various weight loss products make profits from keeping the image of female beauty in a tight leash. It is their vested interests to nourish women's inferiority complex and their feelings of imperfection.

(Þóra Þorsteinsdóttir and Þórunn H. Jónsdóttir, 2000, 42, my translation).

It is necessary to bear in mind the possible consequences of this merger between the beauty industry and the sexualization and the effects it has on all of us. Furthermore it is sad to imagine the inevitable effects this could have on young girls and

their innocence not to forget the danger this imposes for them to be sexually misused as before mentioned. It can be estimated that these messages broadcasted by the media for young girls to hear and see, could affect the viewers in the long run. Today these effects have been estimated to be the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases among children and adolescents, eating disorders, suicides, a high percentage of teenage pregnancies and last but not least this has had the effect of increasing the risk for young people to end up in some kind of sex-slavery (Merskin, 2004).

This evolution has made some women do almost whatever it takes to become sexy and reach the standards they notice the media is imposing upon them. Through looking at the model industry this development can easily be discerned. Each year female models have become thinner and thinner and many develop some kinds of eating disorders, like bulimia or anorexia. Nowadays even young girls seek the help of plastic surgeons to improve their looks, by getting breast implants, liposuction or even rhinoplasty. All this is without no doubt getting out of hand. On the other hand “it does not matter how men are dressed because nobody is watching them. It is men who stare at women, women only secretly monitor” (Þóra Þorsteinsdóttir and Þórunn H. Jónsdóttir, 2000, 42, my translation).

Theories about the “male gaze” were developed during the 1970s and have been very popular in the fields of gender studies, as this concept has had the effect of explaining the power men gain by looking at women (Hirdman, 2004). Men in the advertisement industry use this peeping Tom method to imply or try to show aspects of the female body which are forbidden and this they attain by using the right lighting and the best angle they can get (Merskin, 2004). This development can be seen in TV, movies, computer games and music videos for example and gives the impression men are dynamic but women only manageable objects (Merskin, 2004). Many feminists have considered this “as a form of violence against women as it is a reminder of women’s object status, sexualization, lack of power, as well as a violation” (Boyle, 2005, 125). In fact this phenomenon is held to be rooted deeply in men’s unconscious insecurities whereby Freudian ideas for example claim men objectify women to reduce their subconscious castration fear (Boyle, 2005). This is because women do not have penises and thus deep down the female body implies to men the threat of a castration. Therefore by reducing women to manageable, non-threatening and beautiful objects for the male pleasure, there is not anything there any longer to be afraid of. In the end the

advertisement industry and the mass media as well are very reflective of women's subordination in the world today. However patriarchy's power is even more visible in other fields such as prostitution and the trafficking in women.

3.3- An overview of prostitution in Iceland

When the first integral penal law for Iceland took effect in 1869 the term 'prostitution' was not used, however there was a clause about promiscuity which clearly referred to prostitution, meaning that it was punishable to make money from promiscuity. It was also punishable to lure children into promiscuity (Gísli H. Atlason and Katrín A. Guðmundsdóttir, 2008). Furthermore for most of the twentieth century, Icelandic people did not believe prostitution existed in society due to the fact that the Icelandic word *vændi* or "prostitution" was not yet a part of the vocabulary and thus this issue was not something Icelandic women fought for in their battle for equal rights (Gísli H. Atlason and Katrín A. Guðmundsdóttir, 2008). Even though prostitution was far from most people's minds there certainly were rumors of slutty ladies who visited men in ships and although their actions were not defined with the word 'prostitution' in those days, it is believed that in many instances it was still taking place in secret, and some cases have been traced to the occupation of the British and American soldiers (Gísli H. Atlason and Katrín A. Guðmundsdóttir, 2008).

In 1985 the first study concerning prostitution took place in Iceland. It "...was based on interviews with people in prostitution and it showed three types of prostitution: young junkies, organized prostitution and prostitution which was advertized in...newspapers" (Gísli H. Atlason and Katrín A. Guðmundsdóttir, 2008, 5, my translation). It was not until 1992 that the term "prostitution" was first used in Icelandic law when the legislature decided to insert into these laws the understanding that men as well as women could end up in prostitution, and that it should not be illegal if they did not profit a great deal from it. The prostitution debate reached its peak again in 1995 when strip-joints took root in Iceland and soon it became clear that both organized and unorganized prostitution was taking place in there and via other means (Gísli H. Atlason and Katrín A. Guðmundsdóttir, 2008). Gísli H. Atlason and Katrín A. Guðmundsdóttir (2008, 10) described this development in this fashion:

In a short period of time there sprouted sex-telephone-lines, various shops with sexual aids and erotic massage parlors besides that video shops started to advertize pornography...other companies like telephone-companies, newspapers and TV-stations have literally been marketing the sexual industry. The number of strip-joints reached its peak in 2000. In only five years the strip-joints had become twelve around the country...in the same year twelve to thirteen strip-joints were operated in Copenhagen where the number of citizens is much higher (my translation).

In my opinion it seems like the absence of the idea of prostitution in the nation's mind until the late twentieth century, reflected mindlessness and distraction, making it a lot easier for prostitution to be invisible and on the same time comprehensive. This reflects the nation's view that Iceland is only a small and safeguarded country where no evils occur. Yet, in the 21st century, soon enough people came to their senses and with time more law were incorporated. In 2003 an article against human trafficking was added into the penalty law (Icelandic criminal code, no.19/1940, paragraph 227)" and in 2007 strip-shows were forbidden in Iceland and lap-dance as well, however it was possible to apply for exemption from these law (Law concerning restaurants, accommodation and entertainment staging, no.85/2007, paragraph 4). Likewise, in 2007 the contents of the penalty law were changed when it was banned to advertize prostitution, however it was decided that it no longer should be forbidden to make a living through it (Icelandic criminal code, no. 19/1940, paragraph 206). Not surprisingly, this legislation was highly criticized by many feminists who believed it sent out the wrong messages to people with its sanctioning of prostitution.

Little is known of the scope of trafficking in women and children in Iceland and it has not been studied even though it is well known that it has been taking place for some period of time (Gísli H. Atlason and Katrín A. Guðmundsdóttir, 2008, 19). There have not been many studies of prostitution in Iceland but these studies have shown a strong connection between prostitution, violence, abuse and indisposition, furthermore the connection between strip-joints and prostitution has been confirmed and most of the prostitutes have been women from the Baltic countries (Gísli H. Atlason and Katrín A. Guðmundsdóttir, 2008). Lately examinations have implied that trafficking in women in Iceland sometimes is connected with marriages, where Icelandic men marry foreign

women, whom they then abuse by for example confiscating their passports and leaving them isolated (Gísli H. Atlason and Katrín A. Guðmundsdóttir, 2008).

For the last few years Icelandic law traditionally seems to have been reflecting the view that prostitution should not be a legitimate profession, because it has been forbidden to advertize it and make an intercession in these matters. Despite this the authorities traditionally have not been eager enough to make sure all rules are obeyed concerning the operation of strip-joints for example. Prostitution has neither been defined as “sexual abuse, equal rights affair between the genders, nor as a legal profession” (Gísli H. Atlason and Katrín A. Guðmundsdóttir, 2008, 29, my translation). As a result, this has only made the battle against it even more difficult for those who are concerned. Recently, the debates of prostitution have been polemical in that they revolve around the question of whether prostitution is a free choice or only one type of sexual-violence. It does not matter which side people are on because most agree that various social solutions need to be available for those who want out of this business. Sadly: “Stígamót, an informal grass root organization of women offering counsel and help for victims of sexual abuse, is the only scene where helping people in prostitution is particularly defined as one of the occupations” (Gísli H. Atlason and Katrín A. Guðmundsdóttir, 2008, 21, my translation). ‘Kvennaathvarfið’ and ‘Konukot’ are also places women facing desperation easily can seek out for aid. Even so, there are not many social resources at hand and there definitely is need for better expertise and programs for women facing this difficult situation (Gísli H. Atlason and Katrín A. Guðmundsdóttir, 2008).

As for the legal side, finally on April 17th 2009 Iceland implemented the so called Swedish way, where the blame is put on the consumer of sex, as it was forbidden by law to buy sexual services from prostitutes, where the punishment is up to one year or a fine when the prostitute is over 18 years of age, and up to two years if the prostitute is under 18 (Icelandic criminal code, no.19/1940, paragraph 206). Even though most prostitutes in Iceland traditionally seem to have been foreigners and possibly few people are in any connection with prostitution, we have to remember that: “No man is an island”. Everything in the world is intertwined and when we fight on the behalf of others, probably it will benefit ourselves in the end.

3.4-Prostitution and trafficking in women with the focus on the Nordic nations

According to Janice Raymond, a professor and an activist from the US, “the general definition of prostitution states that it is a sexual exploitation of women committed by another, most often men, for profit or in order to render pleasure” (Þorgerður Þorvaldsdóttir, 2001, 23, my translation). It does not necessarily have to consist of pure intercourse, rather she claims that strip-dancing could come under this category for the fact that women in this business often need to give away to men’s heavy petting and even touch them back although against their will and this could mean exploitation (Þorgerður Þorvaldsdóttir, 2001). Many women end up in prostitution for the simple fact that they perhaps have no other means to live from and thus prostitution could be the only way for them to get by and support their family. Many women start their work in prostitution at a very early age, many have been sexually abused and a vast amount consists of women who are junkies and/or alcoholics and see their only hope in financing their addiction through prostitution (Áshildur Bragadóttir, 2000, 26). “It is nonsense to say that prostitution is a choice. Their choice is an invalid one” (Áshildur Bragadóttir, 2000, 27, my translation). Thus prostitution seems to be a last resort for a great deal of women, something some women are in fact forced to do, whereupon their sense of self gets shattered:

When a woman has sold her body she sees herself as an outcast and even an outlaw in society...she has to dismantle herself emotionally from the selling...this is not very different from the experiences of rape victims...the person being raped is not present, during the rape she tries to disconnect herself emotionally from her body (Áshildur Bragadóttir, 2000, 26, my translation).

In prostitution there is no need for emotional involvement and this is what attracts so many customers, many of them without a doubt emotionally crippled similar to many of the prostitutes. “The study of McKegane and Barnard (1996) showed that the buyer is in most cases a man and the sexual service he is buying is most often humiliating and revolves around power and contempt” (Áshildur Bragadóttir, 2000, 25, my translation). But how has the development been in the Nordic countries?

In Sweden, Norway and Finland, the legislation of prostitution has undergone significant changes over the last decade. Sweden was first in banning the buying of sex in 1999. In Finland a prohibition against buying sex from victims of

human trafficking was introduced in 2007. And this year [2009] Norway, too, has decided to outlaw the purchase of sexual services (Moustgaard, 2009, 24).

Denmark traditionally has been the most liberal of the Nordic countries whereas Sweden has led the way in the fight against prostitution. Hence, in Sweden the sentence for buying a prostitute can be up to 6 months in prison not to mention the public humiliation it imposes upon a caught person and as a result “the number of prostitutes has decreased by about 40%”(Mees, 2009, my translation). In Norway and Denmark social measures against prostitution are mainly organized towards decreasing the damage it can have on society in that the rights of the prostitute are the basis of the measures and the prostitutes both receive condoms and information they need all for free, meanwhile other organizations aim at helping the women out of this profession (Sörensen, 2009). On the other hand in Sweden prostitution units work in cooperation with the police where the goal is more on getting the transgressors and helping women out of prostitution instead of supporting their choice by offering them condoms and lubricants (Sörensen, 2009). The results in Sweden have been stunning because nowadays there is “less street-prostitution and people connected with the trafficking in women increasingly avoid the country because of this legislation” (Elísabet Þorgeirsdóttir, 2004, my translation). Consequently “the more accepted prostitution is, the more widespread it becomes” (Gísli H. Atlason, 2004, my translation).

Throughout the years the Nordic countries’ notions concerning these matters have become increasingly similar on account of the increased human trafficking in these countries for the last years, and as a result all the Nordic countries had criminalized human trafficking in 2004 (Moustgaard, 2009). Instead of focusing on the problem that somebody is making a living through prostitution the concerns have been transferred to the buyer and he has increasingly become more accountable for his actions. Lastly, all the Nordic countries except Iceland and Denmark have defined what prostitution means in their law (Moustgaard, 2009). Considering the fact that Icelandic law has not yet come up with a definition of either, pornography, as before noted, or prostitution, in my opinion is rather suspicious and seems to indicate that the legislators do not care about these vital issues. On the other hand the views of people in Iceland are strong and show that some of us care, since, “according to the findings of Capacent Gallup, 70% of Icelandic people think the buying of prostitution should be illegal” (*Morgunblaðið*, March 30th 2007). However it is true that we live in a democracy where the common

citizen should have the last word and now our democracy finally has lived up to its name because as before noted recently (in 2009) it was forbidden by law to buy sexual services from prostitutes (Icelandic criminal code, no.19/1940, paragraph 206). Now Icelanders have finally joined Sweden and Norway in a united battle for humanity. Because of our initiative I doubt that Finland and Denmark will be far behind.

The underlying principle for the radical law in Sweden has been on the account of both “gendered power and radical feminism” (Moustgaard, 2009, 27, my translation). This means that the patriarchy in society is put to blame. Traditionally men have got more power than women, more power means more money and more money could mean that a person should not have to go as far as selling her own body for money, as some women sadly have been forced to do.

Even though all is not perfect regarding the law on prostitution in the Nordic countries, they all agree upon wanting to limit prostitution wherein many other European countries insist prostitution is and should be a legitimate profession (Parbring, 2009, B). Holland is a good example because prostitution has been legal there since October 2000 (Mees, 2009). The majority of prostitutes working in Holland are from “East- Europe or Southeast-Asia and...[are]...victims of human trafficking, seduced by promises of respectable jobs, or their parents simply have sold them...it is estimated that 50-90% of them are sex-slaves, who are raped at daily bases while the police sits idly by” (Mees, 2009, 21, my translation). Along the same lines, a survey which appeared in American Journal of Epidemiology revealed that the average life-expectancy of prostitutes in the US is 34 years. The frequency of homicides of prostitutes while working are 51 times higher than for women working in liquor-stores, the second most dangerous work for women” (Mees, 2009, 21, my translation). According to a study made in California “most men claimed that they were less likely to buy sex, at the risk of public exposure. For instance, 79% stated that they would stop buying [prostitution] if it was likely that their families would be alerted. And the total of...87% said it would scare them away, if they would risk having their picture or their name released in the local newspaper by the police” (Mees, 2009, 21, my translation). Consequently, forbidding the purchase of prostitution is a powerful way to diminish it.

Men who visit prostitutes have described the good prostitute this way: “intelligent, kind, warm, caring and cheerful... [and] creating a near girlfriend like

experience” (Jahnsen, 2009, 28). This pointing to the fact that even though some are definitely repulsed by their job they put on a face and act like they actually are enjoying it. The customer is put in the first place, he has the money and thus he gets the prize, the prize being the woman. Turning to other concerns, there has been a dominant view among men concerning the “market’s autonomous justness” (Jahnsen, 2009, 30) where men justify the buying of sex on the grounds that it is a mutual business where both partners profit, the men get sex and the women earn desired money. It is also very interesting to point out that many men pardon their buying of sex on the grounds that this is the oldest profession in the world, and last but not least some say men tend to get violent and aggressive if they do not get what they need from sex and on these grounds some think they have a good reason to seek out prostitution (Gísli H. Atlason, 2004). It is rather interesting to consider the fact that even men who are very liberal towards prostitution in general, do not want women who are closest to them to be working in prostitution, the fact being that it can be very painless to rationalize prostitution if it does not concern you and your closest circle (Jahnsen, 2009). Furthermore, even though the development in Sweden is a good one “the fact is that policemen are more likely to protect the buyers of prostitution rather than act on the law” (Inga S. Þórarinsdóttir, 2002, my translation). Thus if men buy sex and then break the law it is no problem for them to ask police- men not to send the letter concerning this matter to their home on the grounds that they are in a relationship, and consequently you could say policemen are almost not fit to efficiently do their job, because it is much easier for them to understand the buyers of sex than the prostitutes (Inga S. Þórarinsdóttir, 2002).

The media, politicians, authorities and interest groups have tried to influence people from the Nordic countries to take a critical stand against prostitution and this has paid off in Denmark for example where the proportion of the population that was against prostitution had increased from a little over one fifth to over 40%, from 2006 to 2009 (Parbring, 2009, A). The influence of all these pressure groups in our societies is clearly visible since nowadays the majority of people in Nordic countries want prostitution to be reduced by some means. The mass media, politicians, and other influencing fields of society work in coherence with the public attitude as a cooperative team before taking a standpoint in these matters (Parbring, 2009, A). Not surprisingly more women than men in the Nordic countries are against prostitution. Furthermore, it seems as the more educated people are the more they are against prostitution. Educated

women are for example more against it than other women and the more the public attitudes try to inform people of its harmful effects, more women and above all men take their stand against it (Parbring, 2009, A). The feminist scholar and activist Raymond, thus insists that “the legalization of prostitution and sexual services is not the answer. Such a step would merely reinforce the idea that it is acceptable to turn women’s bodies into merchandise” (Þorgerður Þorvaldsdóttir, 2001, 24, my translation). However sadly this is the reality today for the fact that the trafficking in women is taking place all around the world. But what does trafficking in women cover?

Trafficking in women and children is an international problem where women from poor countries are tricked to accept jobs in the western world by offering them high wages but afterwards they are forced to work in prostitution and in the sexual industry (Katrín B. Ríkharðsdóttir and Margrét K. Sverrisdóttir, 2002, 16, my translation).

Most if not all women trapped in human trafficking dream of a better life and some probably think they cannot sink any lower, yet regrettably the reality is most often not working in their favor. Often these women’s “passports are confiscated and they have to endure horrible violence without any chance of getting help, while often inarticulate in a foreign country” (Margrét K. Sverrisdóttir, 2002, 21, my translation). Then if these women have the courage to seek help often their chance of survival does not improve because most often they are just sent back to their home-countries where nothing except hunger and poverty awaits them (Rödland, 2009). This could sadly be the reason why some choose to endure the violence which consists in this business, instead of starving to death. Some could even be sending money to their family and children and thus make a decision that they have to properly do their job. However the biggest part definitely consists of women who are literally enslaved in this business, make almost no money and cannot escape. Human trafficking nowadays is an enormous business as the following citation clearly shows:

It is estimated that organized crime earn about 7 million dollars per year through trafficking in women. They have organized their connections through the internet where they seek out their customers. These criminals are believed to be, for example from Russia, Moldavia, Iraq, and Turkey... The scope of this industry is staggering; it is estimated that there are somewhat

between 700.000 to one million women and children which are treated this way. According to information from Interpol the amount is 120.000 [people] within the EU- union. It is believed that the first occurrence of human trafficking came up after 1980 and since then the extent has escalated at a high speed (Margrét K.Sverrisdóttir, 2002, 21, my translation).

In my opinion we can fight the threat of human trafficking by using many different means. First and foremost it is vital to not only change the attitudes of the prostitutes, if possible through educating them by any means available, but we also have to focus on the buyer and try to influence ideas amidst people in general. Men should be informed further of the risks purported in sleeping with prostitutes since it is likely that many of them are HIV positive, on the grounds that many of them “...are punished for refusing unprotected sex” (Amnesty international, 2001, 17). Even though some men can cheat on their wives I would say that infecting them with a lethal disease is another and more serious offense which they would think twice of before committing. In Finland for example men gradually have been informed that men who buy sex are sponsoring criminals and not the prostitutes (Margrét K. Sverrisdóttir, 2002).

Most of the Nordic countries are now finally seeing the benefits of banning the buying of sexual services, where the greatest plus could be that “when the buying of sex is forbidden, it is financially less profitable to send prostitutes into the country. Therefore such legislation might contribute to reducing human trafficking in relation to prostitution” (Rödland, 2009, 43). Moreover there are many other plausible solutions to this problem. Offering these enslaved women help, instead of sending them back home where they risk getting entangled in similar enslavement all over again, could be a clever solution. In Norway for example this is taking place, these women are offered psychological help and residence permit if they testify against criminals (Rödland, 2009). The mass media in my opinion should also take a look at its involvement in all of this. Sexualization of the public space namely has had the effect on many of us to trivialize the impact of varied material, for example: pornography, sexualization and lastly prostitution and trafficking in women. All these aspects of society are connected seeing that how we look at porn and sexualization often is in direct context with our views of prostitution and so on. Some say prostitution involves a choice. Still people have to know that it most often is not a choice and consequently if it is, it is a coerced

one. At last nobody in my opinion could say that the practice of selling coerced women into prostitution is their choice.

Conclusion

“Why do I think patriarchy is the reason for female subordination nowadays?” This is an easy question to answer. Patriarchy is a term which describes the unreasonable subordination women have had to face from the days of Christ and to this day. Patriarchy has had the effect of forcing women always to be one step behind men. In earlier centuries women’s rank was not much higher than that of a beast. They had almost no say in their own lives and inevitably their preordained destiny was to pile up children accompanied by being a good wife to their husbands. In the twentieth century at last, women’s status somewhat grew in western cultures and developed countries. With time the legislation branch offered them increasingly more and more equal rights and some got the opportunity to set their mark on the educational system and the labor market. Yet soon these so-called equal rights were not as equal as they first seemed to be. Still in the 21st century women get lower wages than men, even when they are equally qualified and working in the same fields as them. Traditionally they are under considerably greater risk of being raped or ending up in prostitution. Furthermore the problem of trafficking in women and children is steadily reaching the surface. Women’s situation in the world today suggests that the seemingly liberating changes for them towards equality, are in some understanding ineffectual external changes, because when the patriarchy changed its form from a private to a public patriarchy women’s subordination only changed its image. Consequently, in most developed countries women have similar legal- and citizen-rights as do men; however the ever-growing sexualization of the public space sometimes has turned them into somewhat tractable dolls for the patriarchy to play with.

Throughout the years patriarchy has traditionally had the effect of developing and even controlling our views and ideas. This has been done through the mass media, TV, the fashion industry, etc., where ironically men have been the more powerful gender. Through their business many contaminated ideas have had the chance to sprout without many of us noticing who scattered the seeds. Consequently the harvest has been

such things as; the sexualization of the public space with its abasement of women, following increasingly more violent pornography, the sexualization of young girls, child-pornography and child-abuse, not forgetting prostitution and the trafficking in women and children. Moreover the fashion industry among other businesses uses a clever technique to ensure female subordination in the world today, in that their nourishment comes from women's insecurities. Each year it is implied to women that they should be thinner and thinner and that beauty is the emblem of success. For this reason many women spend thousands of dollars each year on diets, plastic surgeries, clothes and make-up. This is a vicious circle which has no end and leaves some women with eating disorders, inferiority complexes and a bad self-esteem. Moreover, this is exactly what patriarchy wants. It wants women to be weak and docile plastic dolls, and in fact it has succeeded, for the reason that many women seem to be just that. Even 6 year old girls are made into plastic dolls for the male pleasure in all kinds of beauty pageants and on some internet-sites. Dehumanizing and often violent pornography which is mostly controlled and distributed by men, without a doubt has become one of the biggest groups of material on the internet. There women are often almost transferred into little girls, this having the effect of increasing men's desire for young looking women. In that way pornography both has had the effect of decreasing men's internal inhibition against raping both women and children. This evolution obviously is not good for women overall, and its subtleness in fact is the most dangerous aspect of it.

To really encounter their subordination, women have to open their eyes and look at the world they are living in with a more critical mind. The lack of power amidst women everywhere has had the effect that it is mostly them that are "exhibited, used and sold", not men. Both the powerlessness and the poverty of many women have had the effect of leading them to engage in prostitution, which in most cases is a choice but yet, a coerced one. However all is not lost. For example the solidarity of the Nordic nations has helped women to fight their battle for real equal rights. For the constructive impacts of various pressure groups finally people seem to understand the bad influence of pornography, prostitution and human trafficking. Likewise the enormous power of the mass media eventually has been harnessed for the benefit of women. As a result this has affected both genders and the results are that more people have become better informed and last but not least citizens are increasingly becoming more critical and negative towards these matters. Now three of the Nordic nations have pleaded for the

total ban of the purchase of sexual services, and this has become embedded into these nations law. These nations are firstly Sweden, secondly Norway and lastly Iceland. In my opinion these nations frame a great prototype for other nations to follow. In their fight against the subordination, subjection, and the abuse of women some of these nations for example have tried to offer women in prostitution both counseling, help and even resident permits. In view of increasing, open and critical discussions that are now taking place and the distinct effects all of this is having on people, it is evident that most of us do care. The efforts of feminists and other people pledging for human rights, have finally paid off. Although women's battle is not yet won, obviously something is taking place which has had the effect of improving their situation. With its formation of various concepts explaining female subordination throughout the years, the field of 'gender studies' with its arguments, has become an invaluable help in the struggle for serious equal rights. In my opinion, if everybody got the opportunity to know these concepts, people would open their eyes more widely and thus become more censorious of society. Therefore embedding these studies into elementary schools could be an effective way to affect people at an earlier age than before encountered. Hopefully the next few years will increasingly embrace the weakening of patriarchy. If we are united nothing is impossible. Once upon a time a wise man said, and I quote: "Anyone who knows anything of history knows that great social changes are impossible without feminine upheaval. Social progress can be measured exactly by the social position of the fair sex, the ugly ones included." (Karl Marx)

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