



# Prostitutes, Sex Surrogates and Sugar Babies

Vojin Rakić<sup>1</sup> 

Published online: 8 January 2020

© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, part of Springer Nature 2020

## Abstract

Prostitution is a categorically moral activity, sexual surrogacy and sexual assistance are hypothetically moral, while sugaring is hypothetically immoral. First, some moral objections to prostitution will be refuted and it will be argued that prostitution is moral in principle. Second, it will be argued that sexual surrogacy and sexual assistance can be morally justified under certain assumptions. In that sense, they are hypothetically moral activities. Third, sugaring is immoral, unless its reason and conditions are known to both parties in the transaction. As this is mostly not the case, sugaring is hypothetically immoral. If sugaring is however not based on cheating, it is consensual and hence morally justified. In terms of moral adequacy, the taxonomy is as follows, in decreasing order of morality: prostitution, sexual surrogacy/assistance, sugaring. It will be shown that the moral adequacy of these activities is very similar from the perspectives of utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics. Finally, it will be contended that prostitution, sexual surrogacy/assistance, as well as morally appropriate forms of sugaring (mostly via sugaring agencies) ought to be encouraged by the state.

**Keywords** Prostitution · Sexual surrogacy · Sugaring · Categorically (im)moral · Hypothetically (im)moral · Legalization · Sugaring agencies

## Introduction

It has been argued that Moral Bioenhancement (MBE) can strengthen the motivation of humans to *act* in line with what they consider as moral (e.g., see Douglas 2008; Rakić 2018). In that way some steps can be made in the direction of superseding the gap between what we know is right and our actual behavior. But MBE cannot help us *understand* morality better. Comprehending morality requires education and a developed philosophical discourse in the scholarly community. This article

---

✉ Vojin Rakić  
vojnrakic@hotmail.com

<sup>1</sup> Center for the Study of Bioethics and Institute for Social Sciences, University of Belgrade, Belgrade 11000, Serbia

aims at the latter in a specific field of morality: it attempts to clarify, at a cognitive level, the moral appropriateness of certain sexual activities that are exchanged for financial benefits. They will be subsumed under prostitution, sex surrogacy and sex assistance, as well as “sugaring”.

It should be mentioned at the onset that literature on sexual exchange for money (prostitution, sex work) is rich and that its general review, even a brief one, is outside the scope of this article. I will however mention two general issues that are relevant to be referred to at the beginning of this paper. First, this paper’s endeavor to apply a few universal ethical standards to the theme it deals with excludes an extreme form of moral relativism. Such moral relativism denies that there are any universal moral standards. Conversely, in Lukes (2008) for example, it is made clear why the author does not support moral relativism. This does not mean, of course, that moral norms are everywhere the same and that they do not change over time [Hunt (2009), for example, deals with the social history of moral regulation, and Hunt (1997) analyzed this issue from a Gramscian perspective]. The point is rather that some moral norms (in fact, a quite small number of them) are universal. Second, although my terminology might suggest that I focus on female prostitution, sex surrogacy and sugaring, the argument applies also to male prostitution, sex surrogacy and sugaring [a useful collection of views on male sex work is contained in Minichiello and Scott (2014)].

## Terminology

The following definitions will be used in this paper (most gender based terminology in this paper is changeable; for example, “prostitutes” and “sugar babies” are usually referred to in the female gender, but they can and often are men or transsexuals):

**Prostitution**=The act of engaging in sexual activity in exchange for payment [I use the traditional terms “prostitution” and “prostitute” (but also “procurer”, for example), rather than the currently common terminology “sex work” and “sexual worker” in order to facilitate that my ethical argument also refers to those categories of people and phenomena the naming of which have traditionally been used in a pejorative sense].

**Prostitute**=A person who engages in sexual activity for payment.

**Procurer** (colloquial pimp or madam)=A person who lives, in whole or in part, on the income of a prostitute.

**Sex surrogacy**=Activities practiced by sex surrogates, that is, professionals trained in addressing issues of sexuality and other sorts of intimacy. A sexual surrogate typically works with a therapist in order to meet the client’s objectives.

**Sex assistance**=Activities performed by professionals supporting adults with disabilities in a broad range of issues pertaining to their sexuality.

**Sugaring**=A type of transactional relationship in which one person in the transaction may receive material benefits (e.g., money, gifts) in exchange for being in the relationship.

**Sugar baby**=A person who receives material benefits by sugaring.

Sugar daddy = A man who provides material benefits to the sugar baby.

Sugar mommy = A woman who provides material benefits to the sugar baby.

Hypergamy = The practice of establishing a partner relationship with someone from a higher social status.

Categorically moral = Moral in principle.

Categorically immoral = Immoral in principle.

Hypothetically moral = Moral under certain assumptions/conditions.

Hypothetically Immoral = Immoral under certain assumptions/conditions.

## Prostitution

As prostitution is the exchange of sexual activity for payment, its moral dilemmas can reside in sexual activity, payment and exchange. Sexual activity, payment and exchange, if not combined, are *prima facie* morally uncontroversial. Hence, it is only the combination of the three that can raise moral dilemmas. (I note that only prostitution of adults is being considered here. The arguments I use do not apply to child prostitution.)

Of course, not all types of sexual activities are morally uncontroversial. Moreover, in modern liberal societies, many more sexual activities are morally uncontroversial than it was the case in traditional societies. But even in the most traditional conservative societies having sex with one's spouse with the aim of acquiring offspring has not been considered as morally inappropriate.

Sexual activity involves various forms of exchange. As sexual activity is not being considered as categorically immoral, sexual exchanges shouldn't be either. It is then the exchange of sexual activity *for payment* that can theoretically be regarded as categorically immoral.

What can be wrong with exchanging sexual activity for payment? For some of the arguments that will follow, a comparison with Moen (2014) can be useful. Moen argues that casual sex and prostitution hardly differ in terms of their moral acceptability. His article focuses solely on the morality of prostitution and is in that domain significantly more extensive than my analysis here. I concentrate on five arguments against prostitution, the ones that are most relevant for the purposes of my article, and offer replies to them. Moreover, some of Moen's arguments are covered by my more general arguments, while many of them are refuted in this paper in a different way than Moen refutes them. Finally, unlike Moen, I bring my arguments into context with sex surrogacy and sex assistance, as well as with sugaring. I offer five general arguments favoring the categorically moral adequacy of prostitution, while Moen offers nine arguments designed to morally justify prostitution. Although there is some overlap in our moral legitimization of prostitution, Moen's and my arguments are mostly different and do not extend to the same phenomena. My arguments are the following ones:

1. Payment can be withheld. Prostitution can take a variety of forms. It can consist of, for example, sexual activities within a brothel, it can consist of the company

of a prostitute (escort) at parties, vacations, anniversaries, dinners (not necessarily combined with sex), striptease or “erotic massage”. “Sexual activity” refers here to a broad range of activities that contain a sexual component; it does not even have to include physical contact between two or more persons. But all of them have one feature in common. They are exchanged for payment.

If a prostitute has sex against her will and her payment is being withheld, it is possible to talk about “sex slavery”. Sex slavery is however not prostitution. A slave can be forced to perform various activities, including sexual activities, but in that case (s)he is primarily not a prostitute but a slave. Unlike a prostitute who receives payments for her activities, a slave does not receive payments for anything, including sexual services. Hence, it might be argued, cogently, that sex slavery is a form of rape. It is certainly not prostitution. Being enslaved means that the slave does not have the freedom to leave his/her job (see also Moen 2014: 78). Prostitutes do have such a freedom (although various restrictions may apply in practice in case of certain social issues, primarily poverty).

2. Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) may be spread by prostitution. This is possible as prostitutes are promiscuous in most cases. But promiscuity does not imply an increase in STDs if promiscuous individuals are regularly tested for STDs. Mandatory testing for STDs would be an excellent program benefitting prostitutes. Furthermore, not only that it would protect them and their clients, but it would also be a source of revenue for the state (see Aral and Mann 1998).
3. Prostitutes are being “exploited”, as they do not enjoy their job. Moreover, they do not prostitute themselves on a *genuinely* voluntary basis.

This is not a cogent argument. First, a lot of employees do not enjoy their jobs. That does not mean that they are being “exploited”. Second, the prostitute, even if she does not enjoy sex with her client, may enjoy the fact that she can expect payment after the sex. She can enjoy her sexual activity because she knows that its result will be enjoyable (see Klepper 1993).

4. In selling her body for sex, the prostitute’s body is being treated as a commodity (see Papadaki 2010).

This is also not a persuasive argument. First, a lot of people sell their bodily work. The argument that they do not sell their bodies, but use them to perform work, a certain skill or technique, is also refutable. Prostitutes, namely, also do not simply “sell” their bodies. They use them to perform certain skills or techniques. They also work. Second, it might be argued that models who advertise clothing or make-up treat their bodies as commodities, as they do not perform certain skills. Especially in the case of advertising make-up, the model hardly needs to have any skill. Nonetheless, advertising make-up is not considered to be a *prima facie* morally dubious activity. Third, people already legally sell their body parts: blood, sperm, eggs, plasma or hair. In the case of surrogate motherhood, they also rent body parts (the uterus in the first place). If all the above mentioned activities are not immoral or outlawed, there is no reason prostitution should be.

5. Prostitutes are being used as means to an end. Along Kantian lines, it might be argued that using someone merely as a means to an end violates the principle of humanity.

However, we use people on a regular basis in ways that allegedly violate the principle of humanity. For example, I order a wine and use the waitress to bring me the beverage. Am I violating the principle of humanity in that way? No, because she gets paid (and possibly tipped) for bringing me the wine.

The same applies to prostitutes. The client has sex with a prostitute, she performs pleasurable activities on him, and the client pays (and possibly tips) the prostitute for the pleasure he has enjoyed. It is not a violation of the prostitute's humanity because it is a trade that occurs between two consenting individuals for mutual benefit. In general, whenever there is an exchange of a service for a payment between consenting individuals for mutual benefit, the service provider is not being used as a means to an end in a way that might violate the principle of humanity.

All these arguments support the thesis that prostitution is not immoral in principle, but conversely, categorically moral. Legalizing and promoting it would moreover be morally justified. Legalizing prostitution would have the following effects. First, the decriminalization of prostitution would diminish the influence of criminals in this profession. Second, the role of procurers (further in the text "pimps") would be regulated. Although a lot of pimps are already important for the protection of prostitutes, they sometimes engage in illegal activities (e.g., getting prostitutes addicted to drugs, using drugs to pay them). A legalization of the activities of pimps would benefit morally and legally operating pimps, the prostitutes and their clients [for favorable views on "managers in the sex industry" (pimps), see Bruckert and Parent (2018)]. Third, prostitution would become taxable. Anything that is taxable is a revenue for the state. So is legalized prostitution. Fourth, legalization of prostitution would have a positive impact on the labor market: more taxable prostitutes, more taxable pimps, lower unemployment rates.

## Sex Surrogacy and Sex Assistance

Sex surrogacy and sex assistance open up very complex themes that are outside the scope of this article. The only purpose of addressing them here is to show their ethical status in relation to prostitution and sugaring.

Sex surrogacy and sex assistance are legalized activities in some countries, mainly in the developed world. All the arguments in favor of the notion that prostitution is categorically moral also apply to sex surrogacy and sex assistance, with one exception: sex surrogates and sex assistants deal with vulnerable groups—something that has ethical repercussions. Vulnerable groups are more prone to being hurt by their surrogate or assistant. The clients/patients of surrogates or assistants sometimes have a very limited number of potential sexual partners at their disposal, if any. They might therefore be more inclined to develop an emotional bond with their surrogate/assistant. Hence, sexual surrogacy and sexual assistance are activities that can inflict harm on the customers/patients, and cannot be considered as categorically moral, that is, moral in principle [for a critical approach to sex surrogacy, see Freckelton (2013); see also Hope Witkin (1977)]. They are hypothetically moral, in the sense that they ought to be performed in such a way that the vulnerable client/patient remains emotionally unharmed. Otherwise, they are not moral.

In general, unlike sex assistants, sex surrogates do not have only disabled people as their patients. Their clients' problems may range from erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation and vaginismus to lack of experience or confidence. Nevertheless, it is imperative that *both* sex surrogacy and sex assistance be performed by trained personnel—not only sexually, but also psychologically, protecting their clients/patients from potential emotional harm. Moreover, it is the patient's therapist who should prescribe sex surrogacy/assistance if it is medically indicated. A full legalization and moral destigmatization of sexual surrogacy and sexual assistance, as well as investments in the medical, psychological and sexual education of appropriate personnel is a pre-condition of performing these professions in a morally acceptable manner and helping those in need of such type of surrogacy and/or assistance.

## Sugaring

As in the case of other forms of sexual exchanges, consent is essential for the exchange between sugar babies and sugar daddies. But unlike prostitution (in a narrower sense, as defined in this paper), in this type of exchange the category of *informed* consent is essential. If the sugar baby gives the sugar daddy truthful information on her emotional bond (or lack thereof) with him (or vice-versa) the exchange is morally justified. If not, we deal with cheating, exploitation, fake exchange, the use of people as means to an end and other elements of degradation of humanity. On the other side, in the case of genuine exchange between sugar babies and sugar daddies, we deal with a regular, moral form of prostitution.

Unlike prostitution that should not only be legalized but also acquire the status of a morally apposite profession, sugaring based on cheating deserves to be outlawed, from an ethical point of view. In case that such type of exchange is discovered, the sugar baby (and in some cases the sugar daddy or mommy) should be charged with committing a felony.

Nonetheless, the prospects for sugaring aren't that dreary. Modern technologies have also here a potentially ethical role, as they can develop sugaring practices that are based on informed consent without one party being double-crossed in the transaction. On online sugaring platforms one can register as a sugar baby or sugar daddy and specify the terms of the transaction. In that case, sugaring is a type of prostitution and loses its morally abhorrent status.

Let us look at the following four vignettes:

1. Mr Klaas Janssen is a successful businessman. He is 69 years old and a millionaire. Susanne (25) is considered by most men and women as very attractive. She works as Mr Janssen's secretary. She is determined to marry him and 1 day inherit his wealth. Mr Janssen has no children. Susanne is not explicit in her intentions, but Mr Janssen is nevertheless aware of them. Susanne knows that he is. Mr Janssen and Susanne marry. Susanne gives birth to a child, Klaas jr. For 15 years they live rather happy lives. After Mr Janssen's death, Susanne and Klaas jr inherit Mr Janssen's wealth.

2. Dr Alan Smith (35) is a divorced university professor, adviser to the government, an established social scientist with an excellent career. He is a home owner and has no financial problems. Irma (21) is a rural beauty with ambitions to work at the university (like Alen) and to advise the government (like Alen). Alen falls in love with Irma. His suspicions that she is a sugar baby are diluted by the fact that she was an excellent student and that she seems to have the potential to build an academic career. Irma moves into Alen's home. After a few weeks Irma approaches the Prime Minister, suggesting that she might trade sex in exchange for a position in his office. The Prime Minister tries to limit the transaction to sex only, but Irma makes clear that only a full transaction is acceptable to her. The potential "romance" with the Prime Minister does not succeed. Irma switches to opening Alan's Will (1 month after they met) and asks him to include her in it. Alan refuses. Irma does not give up. She insists on expensive hotels, restaurants, cheats Alan on finances, but also continues to be determined to build a university career. She is not interested in having children. Alan is, and breaks up with Irma. But Irma is persistent. She returns to Alan, at once expressing the wish to have children. She presses Alan for a month. Alan gives in. After some time Alan and Irma get a daughter Sarah. Alan and Irma's mother care for the child, so that Irma has the opportunity to pursue her career. As the child develops a strong bond with her father and not with Irma, while Alan continues to be successful in his career, Irma becomes jealous and hateful both to Alan and to her child. She begins to physically abuse Sarah. After 10 years of marriage, Alan files for divorce. Irma does not want a divorce. As Alan insists, she has no choice but to accept it. Irma's strong political connections (built during her sugaring career), persuade the public prosecutor to drop the charges of child abuse against Irma, while the judge accuses the father of alienating Irma from her and Alen's child. Moreover, Irma decides to file charges against Alan's alleged psychological abuse of Irma. Consequently, Alan is prohibited from seeing Sarah, the child and Alen suffer emotionally, but Irma seems to enjoy to see Alan and her daughter suffer. Alan's career suffers profoundly, but his daughter Sarah remains close to him. With 15 years of age she moves to Alan's home and aborts all communication with Irma.
3. Mr Jack Wilson is 70 years old and a millionaire. His wife has died and Mr Wilson becomes interested in having a relationship with a much younger woman, preferably in her twenties. Jill is 23 years old. She was a good student and wishes to enroll into a postgraduate astro-biology program at Princeton University. She comes from a poor family, does not obtain a stipend, and her tuition cannot be waived. Nonetheless, her dream remains to graduate astro-biology at Princeton. Jill visits a sugaring site, registers as a sugar baby, meets Mr Wilson who registered as a sugar daddy. They arrange the conditions for the transaction they wish to have. Jill will move into Wilson's home, have regular sex with him and agree with other women joining their sexual activities whenever it pleases Wilson. Moreover, Jill will accompany Wilson at parties, dinners and vacations. In return, Wilson will take full care of financing Jill's graduate studies in astro-biology, finance everything that the household needs (Jill will do the purchasing) and pay in full for Jill's clothing, her study trips, as well as their common vacations.

4. Jack Levy is a well-known writer. His books sell well and with the passing of years Jack becomes very wealthy. He is 55 years old. Florence is 25 and studies art. She meets Jack and falls in love with him. Florence finds Jack charming, is impressed with his creativity and brightness, as well as his ability to make money. As Jack has also fallen in love with Florence, the two begin living together and marry a few years later. Florence gives birth to two children.

Vignette 1 has the attributes of a consensual transaction. It resembles therefore regular prostitution and appears therefore categorically moral. As the relationship is not based on explicit informed consent, this type of sugaring might raise certain moral dilemmas—dilemmas prostitution never raises. However, Mr Janssen and Susanne develop a relationship that might have acquired emotional features with the passing of time. In that sense, it has become something more fulfilling than prostitution usually is. Moreover, a child was born out of that relationship, which generally does not happen in prostitution-based transactions. Having developed emotions to each other and having given life to a child, Janssen and Susanne have elevated their relationship into something that is morally superior to prostitution.

Vignette 2 is also a consensual transaction, but one that is based on cheating. Irma is a double-crosser and profoundly immoral. Her university career and social status protect her from being treated as human vermin in the society she lives in. Irma's sugaring is in any respect less moral than prostitution is. Her moral repugnance is of such magnitude that she cannot even build a normal relation with her child who despises her.

Vignette 3 is an example of "pure" sugaring. It is consensual and marked by full disclosure of the reasons for the transaction. The transaction is obviously morally superior to the case from Vignette 2, but also to the case described in Vignette 1. In Vignette 1 a happy, perhaps even emotional, relationship develops and a child is being born (neither taking place in the case of Vignette 3). Nonetheless, the transaction itself is in Vignette 3 morally superior to the one from Vignette 1, because its terms are precisely specified. In Vignette 1 some suspicion is being left as to the motives of the transaction between Janssen and Susanne. In Vignette 3 everything is clear.

Vignette 4 appears not to deal with sugaring. To some individuals the very idea of a beautiful very young woman having an older or middle-aged partner raises eyebrows, but they should be careful in their judgment. Levy and Florence are in a truly loving relationship. The exchange taking place between them is primarily love.

Conclusion 1: If we consider the morality of the sugaring transactions taking place, the taxonomy of the vignettes is, in decreasing order of moral adequacy: Vignette 1, Vignette 3, Vignette 2. However, if we look not merely at the transaction, but also at the relationship that has been built on the transaction, the taxonomy of the vignettes is, in decreasing order of moral adequacy: Vignette 3, Vignette 1, Vignette 2. Vignette 4 is not a case of sugaring and is therefore excluded from the sugaring taxonomy.

Conclusion 2: Hypergamy is the practice of establishing a partner relationship with someone from a higher social status. It is hypothetically moral. In order to be morally appropriate it has to be based on a sincere transaction (vignettes 1, 3 and 4).



Hence, hypergamy is a broader concept than sugaring: hypergamy, unlike sugaring, includes Vignette 4.

## Deontology and Virtue Ethics

I do not pretend to offer a theoretically and contextually rich elaboration of utilitarianism, deontology or virtue ethics, as that would violate the thematic unity of the paper. This might facilitate the treatment of, at times, contentious positions as objective fact, but this risk is hopefully outweighed by the benefits of concise and clear argumentation. In what follows, I will attempt to offer such an argumentation in the most concise form.

We discussed the moral adequacy of prostitution, sex surrogacy/assistance and sugaring from a utilitarian perspective, and mentioned a “Kantian perspective” in the case of prostitution as alleged “violation of humanity”. A central issue was sincerity, aimed at all parties in the transaction obtaining benefits, while none being harmed. Prostitution, in principle, turns out to be such a transaction. From a utilitarian standpoint, prostitution is therefore categorically moral. Sex surrogacy and sex assistance are also transactions in which both parties in the transaction are supposed to benefit. But because the clients/patients in sex surrogacy and sex assistance belong mostly to vulnerable groups, the transaction can be detrimental to the client/patient. Sex surrogates and sex assistants ought therefore to be properly trained personnel. But even then the fact that their clients/patients are sometimes unable to have any sexual-emotional partner other than the surrogate/assistant, might make the whole transaction harmful to the client/patient. Hence, sex surrogacy and sex assistance are hypothetically moral. In sugaring the transaction is generally insincere. Hence, one party frequently benefits, while the other party expects the benefit (s)he will never obtain. His/her expectations are betrayed. Hence, sugaring is hypothetically immoral.

If we look at the discussed transactions from the perspective of deontological ethics and virtue ethics, the conclusions will be similar. The central trait pertaining to the moral appositeness of the discussed transactions is sincerity. This disposition is being valued both in deontological ethics and in virtue ethics. Telling the truth is an important moral disposition in deontological ethics, while truthful characters are considered as virtuous.

From the perspective of deontological ethics, prostitution is, *prima facie*, a categorically moral activity, as it is a sincere, truthful transaction. For deontologists, sex surrogacy and sex assistance are also categorically moral—for the same reason as prostitution is. Sugaring is in most cases insincere and is therefore for deontologists hypothetically immoral.

From the perspective of virtue ethics, prostitution, being a sincere transaction, is a *prima facie* virtuous activity. Prostitution is truthful. Some virtue ethicists may object, arguing that being a prostitute is not a virtue, as the character of a prostitute is allegedly morally dubious. But it has been shown already that prostitution is not less moral and not less of a virtue than many professions that do not carry a stigma. It has been argued why this stigma is a prejudice and therefore unjustified. Similar

arguments apply to sex surrogacy and sex assistance. There is nothing dishonorable in these occupations. On the contrary, their sincerity and truthfulness guarantee their morality (provided that we focus on these criteria for determining how morally apposite a sexual activity is). The discussed dangers of sex surrogacy and sex assistance make them *hypothetically* moral, unlike prostitution that is *categorically* moral. Finally, the untruthful, manipulative nature of most sugaring activities make them, also from the perspective of virtue ethics, hypothetically immoral.

In sum, it has been shown that the moral adequacy of financially supported sexual and emotional transactions vary in quite similar ways in utilitarian ethics, deontological ethics and virtue ethics, in the following order of decreasing ethical adequacy: prostitution, sex surrogacy/assistance, sugaring.

## Conclusion

In order to safeguard the morality of prostitution it is of paramount importance not only to legalize it, but also to morally destigmatize it. In addition to all the discussed reasons pertaining to transparency, consensus and sincerity, the safety of prostitutes and their clients (protection against crime and the spread of STDs), as well as the fact that taxable prostitution benefits the state and its citizens, leaves no doubt regarding the status prostitution ought to have in society.

The same applies to sex surrogacy and sex assistance. Additionally, sex surrogates and sex assistants ought to be trained medical personnel with an excellent background in medical psychology, whose sexual activities extend primarily to vulnerable groups. Funding their medical, psychological and sexual training is an investment that deserves strong support.

Sugaring should be made morally less repulsive than it currently is. The best way to do that is to stimulate the establishment of agencies that specialize in sugaring. There are already successful examples of online sugaring. By making sugaring transparent, sincere and truthful with the help of sugaring agencies, it can eventually become a categorically moral activity—similar to prostitution.

The professionalism of sugaring agencies is of paramount importance. An essential element of this professionalism is that the terms of the transactions are precisely specified, in order to ameliorate various concerns of those who engage or plan to engage in a sugaring transaction. So says one person who alleges not to know anyone who has experienced online sugaring: “When these relationships fail—at least in part—because intimacy expectations are not met, then the sugar baby will always be at higher risk for blame, because the conditions are unfair and unclear to begin with.” (see <https://kenan.ethics.duke.edu/sugar-babies-sweet-or-sour/>; last accessed on 24 December 2019). On the other side, more positive online sugaring experiences (based on precisely specified conditions) are evidenced by a former sugar baby in the *Telegraph* newspaper (see <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/sex/online-dating/9285032/Dating-older-men-Why-should-I-be-ashamed-of-sugar-daddy-dating.html>; last accessed on 24 December 2019). For a sort of empirical analysis of sugaring, Daly (2017) may be of some use.

As a concluding remark, a comment would be appropriate regarding the discrepancy between my view that prostitution is categorically moral and the traditional view of prostitution in Western civilization. In the entire paper, I largely focused on consensus in sex, truthfulness and sincerity as on essential moral criteria for adjudicating how ethical a sexual exchange is. That is not intended to suggest that other criteria are irrelevant for determining how morally appropriate a sexual activity is. Nevertheless, consensus, truthfulness and sincerity are essential criteria in utilitarian, deontological and virtue ethics perspectives. If we build our argumentation on them, we arrive at the conclusion that the alleged immorality of prostitution is a traditional convention rather than a cogent ethical viewpoint.

## Compliance with Ethical Standards

**Conflict of interest** The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

**Human and Animal Rights** This essay did not rely on any experimentation with human or animal subjects.

## References

- Aral, S. O., & Mann, J. M. (1998). Commercial sex work and STD. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 25, 455–456.
- Bruckert, C., & Parent, C. (2018). *Getting past “the pimp”: Management in the sex industry*. Totonto: University of Toronto Press.
- Daly, S. (2017). *Sugar babies and sugar daddies: An exploration of sugar dating on canadian campuses*. Master of arts thesis in law and legal studies submitted to Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.
- Douglas, T. (2008). Moral enhancement. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 25(3), 228–245.
- Freckelton, I. S. C. (2013). Sexual surrogate partner therapy: Legal and ethical issue. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 20(5), 643–659.
- Hope Witkin, M. (1977). Ethical issues and sex therapy. *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy*, 3(2), 8–12.
- Hunt, A. (1997). Moral regulation and making-up the new person: Putting Gramsci to work. *Theoretical Criminology*, 1(3), 275–301.
- Hunt, A. (2009). *Governing morals: A social history of moral regulation*. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press.
- Klepper, H. (1993). Sexual exploitation and the value of persons. *Journal of Value Inquiry*, 27, 479–486.
- Lukes, S. (2008). *Moral relativism*. London: Profile Books.
- Minichiello, V., & Scott, J. (Eds.). (2014). *Male sex work and society*. New York, NY: Harrington Park Press.
- Moen, O. M. (2014). Is prostitution harmful? *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 40, 73–81.
- Papadaki, L. (2010). What is objectification? *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, 7, 16–36.
- Rakić, V. (2018). Incentivized goodness. *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, 21(3), 303–309.

**Publisher's Note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.