

Abstract

The present doctoral thesis is focused on consensual forms of sexual violence. In both theoretical and empirical aspects, it is based on existing information available in Czech as well as foreign research. Furthermore, this thesis utilises general findings of research on partner violence, as this topic has a long tradition at the Department of Sociology of the Faculty of Arts at Charles University. The selected topic is understood as a social phenomenon that is gradually becoming a part of culture. It includes a number of medical, psychological and legal aspects; the sociological approach, however, is central, both in employed methodology and in the utilisation of partial sociological theories.

This thesis endeavours to assess to what extent the issue of consensual sexual violence becomes a part of culture and to what extent there is a shift from the sphere of intimate relationships and communities to a more or less open market environment and the Internet. Given the breadth of scope and the highly specific nature of the topic, the present thesis makes use of several sources of both quantitative and qualitative data from 2015–2019. The paper explores in detail especially the attitudes and the degree of tolerance in the Czech population towards selected forms of violence, including consensual violence. It also addresses the issue of sensitive questions in surveys. Besides findings regarding stances and tolerance in this sphere, this thesis also provides insight into commodified aspects of BDSM: paid-for sexual dominance and FinDom, which is one of specific online paid services. The topic of sexual communities is likewise discussed. For this reason, the methodology necessarily includes triangulation.

Individual analyses in this thesis show that as a comparatively new cultural element, BDSM is not a particularly sensitive topic for the Czech public. The Czech population manifests relatively tolerant stances towards private consensual acts of violence; the attitude towards its paid forms is less permissive. BDSM appears to be a distinctive cultural element, as its perception is not strongly impacted by fundamental characteristics such as age, gender, religious beliefs and educational attainment.

Keywords: consensual sexual violence, sadomasochism among partners, BDSM, dominance, submission, findom, commodificatio