

# [Anthony impacts to the social fabric of](https://assignbuster.com/anthony-impacts-to-the-social-fabric-of/)

AnthonyMartinezProfessorTiptonSOC445-0127November 2017Street Level ProstitutionProstitution can be referred to as the actof engaging in sexual behavior or activity with another person in exchange forcompensation which can either be inform of money or other valuable goods andservices. According to Love (2015), it is nearly impossible to know an exactnumber of women who engage in prostitution since the only figures availablecome from the ones arrested by the police.

Such numbers are considered to betoo low as they do not capture the sex workers who have not been arrested. Street level prostitution is considered illegal and charged as a crime in manycountries because it takes place in the open streets in major towns, cities, and urban centers. The term street level is self-explanatory in that itexplains the term street-level prostitution as the one taking place in thestreets rather than secluded places such as brothels. Romero-Daza, Weeks, &Singer (2003) points out that most of the past research has focused on lookingat prostitution as an adverse effect which brings negative impacts to thesocial fabric of the society as well as bringing adverse effects on the healthand well-being of the community at large. Although, not all sex workers have theopportunity to leave this field of work and lifestyle. The paper below willfocus on looking at the concept of street-level prostitution under thestructural functionalism theory by reviewing the literature and making ananalysis in the end.             Adeviant topic refers to any discussion or subject which touches on any behaviorviolating societal or cultural norms of a certain place or region.

A normrefers to a social expectation that aims to guide human behavior in the societyby helping society members to understand what is right or wrong. Deviantbehavior is usually of sufficient severity to warrant disapproval from themajority of the society who feel that such behavior goes against what thesociety members believe in (Cobbina & Oselin, 2011). The concept ofdeviance is usually structured into criminal and non-criminal deviancebehaviors. Today, many people consider activities such as prostitution, alcoholism, being nude in public, stealing, lying and excessive gambling to bedeviant behaviors since they go against the society rules classifying such actsas immoral.

The concept of deviance maybe complex since norms vary from onesociety to another and therefore what is considered unethical in one communitymay not be immoral in another society. Also, escort services are legal, butprostitution is not. It is advertised and accepted over prostitution. The topicof street-level prostitution can be considered to be deviant in that it goesagainst societal and religious norms as the concept of engaging in sexualbehavior to be paid is illegal in nearly all groups. The common norms of thesociety portray prostitution as a deviant behavior as it goes against the rulesand expectations by which the societal members are conventionally guided(Cobbina & Oselin, 2011).

This becomes an issue of morality. Moreover, prostitution is also connected to drug abuse, drug dealing and the spread ofHIV and other diseases thus making it even more opposed by community members. The concept of structural functionalismviews the arrangement of the society as a complex system made up of differentparts which work together to promote solidarity and stability (Gouveia, Milfont, & Guerra, 2014). The theory of structural functionalism attemptsto explain the functionality of the society by focusing on the connectionsbetween the numerous social institutions that make up a community includingreligion, government, law, and education.

The concept of structuralfunctionalism sees the society in a structural way which is different fromother theories. The theory views the community as a machine with various partswhich work together meaning that each part of the society plays a moresignificant role in the overall picture. Even though the society is viewed as acomplex system made up of different parts, in the end, they work together withthe aim of promoting solidarity and stability. The major understanding is thatthe primary reason for the various parts of the society working together is toensure that the society members live together in a solid and stable society. The major emphasis of the structural functionalism theory is the emphasis onsocial functions.

The theory also centers on the understanding that all theindividual functions make up a higher society when combined. By viewinginteractions in the society as social functions, their significance and rolecan become easily apparent in the long run. According to Macionis (2012), theconcept of the society works just like the human body where it has some partssuch as organs, muscles, and bones. Even though each part of the body issignificant, they all depend on each other so that they can function well inthe end.

From the concept of functionalism, any disorder in the society leadsto change and instability since the other parts have to adjust to achievestability. The dysfunctionality of one part means that all other parts are alsoaffected creating social problems and leading to social change. Structural functionalism theory relates tothe topic of street-level prostitution in that it helps to explain how thedeviant topic leads to a social change in the society through creatinginstability or stability. Based on the concept of structural functionalismapproach, street-level prostitution continues to exist since many centuries agobecause it continues to serve the society in many ways. The dominantunderstanding is that an act or function cannot continue to exist in a societywhere it is considered useless therefore meaning that prostitution continues toserve the society in many ways. In sociology, the term function is used torefer to the positive effects of people’s actions while dysfunctions refer tothe effects which harm the society.

Functions work to keep the society workingin equilibrium while dysfunctions destabilize systems equilibrium. According toGoode (2008), the social customers and institutions which continue to existover an extended period tend to be those that are good for society because theyserve numerous useful functions. For instance, prostitution acts as a source ofemployment for many people who would otherwise be engaging in other illegalactivities like crime and drug dealing. Moreover, prostitution also serves animportant function in the society by providing sexually suppressed men with asex life outside their marriages thus also helping to keep the societal systemin equilibrium. Prostitution continuous to exist because people will alwaysengage in illicit sexual behavior and the fact that some are willing to pay forit makes the industry one of the most lucrative in the world. Moreover, manywomen engage in prostitution as a form of business which even though highlyrisky, does not require any startup costs. Prostitution as a latent function ofprovides a sexual outlet for people who have no chance of competing in themarriage market including the physically and mentally disabled. Street levelprostitution also continues to exist because it helps in reducing theincidences of rape and sexual harassment by providing men with people ready toengage in sexual activities for a fee.

However, prostitution has a majordysfunction in that it leads to increased crime and transmission of sexually transmitteddiseases such as HIV/AIDS. Many countries around the world such as Muslimcountries have completely banned prostitution after realizing it leads to ahigh prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases. According to the theory of structuralfunctionalism, there is a major confusion between prohibiting, regulating andlegalizing sex work and prostitution with each approach having its benefits andchallenges. For instance, street-level prostitution is viewed as a socialproblem because it is a deviant and illegal topic in the society. However, thepractice continues to thrive despite many countries enacting laws meant todiscourage the practice of buying or engaging in commercial sex. The fact thatprostitution is illegal and immoral does not seem to deter the prostitutesbringing in the question as to whether it would be better to legalize andregulate its operations.

According to Williamson & Folaron(2003), understanding the motivations, risks, protective strategies and theexperiences of street prostitutes is essential to enable the provision ofmeaningful intervention. Many people assume that prohibiting prostitution canbe a final solution without understanding that the practice continues to thrivedespite being considered illegal and immoral. Sullivan (2010) looks at the casestudy of Australia as one of the few countries in the world to legalize someaspects of prostitution such as legalizing licensed brothels in Queensland andlegalizing commercial sex businesses in New South Wales. According to Scoular(2010), laws matter a lot in the regulation and controlling of sex work toensure that it does not result in criminal activities or erode the socialfabric of the society. The author also questions the role of the law inregulating sex work especially in major urban centers where it can result inhuman trafficking and other crimes such as drug abuse and trafficking.

Furthermore, Street level prostitutionis one of the oldest fields of work. Though, now we are seeing an increasingdecline of the presence of the street prostitutes. Why is that? Well because oftechnology. Technology has made prostitutes easily accessible by just goingonline and calling one to meet you at a chosen place. As oppose to driving downthe streets trying to locate one.

This practice seems safer but is not. Everybody is blindsided on who is really on the other side of the computerscreen. One might believe they are meeting up with what they believe is thewoman they saw on a website. They might be setting there self-up to be robbed. So why do people choose prostitution? The discreetness is the main reason. Being discreet from their spouse, family, friends, and society.

If someone getshurt during the process of trying to participate in prostitution, that act willgo unreported to the police. Therefore, online prostitution is extremelydangerous because criminals have the upper hand. This also goes the other wayas well. The real prostitutes are vulnerable as well. They themselves cannotreport any crime that happens to them because they themselves are participatingin an illegal act. Not to say street prostitution is safer but the positiveside is you can see who you are dealing with. Another experience one would faceis an encounter with law enforcement.

Law enforcement heavily participates inonline prostitution stings to catch johns. Which leads to the next topic ofcriminalization. Prostitution is looked as immoral and deviant. Though, theprostitute workers are seen more as victims today than they were a couple ofyears ago. The one who pays for the acts are consider more criminal than the sexworkers themselves. Not to say that prostitutes do not see their fair share ofjail time, the focus is the Johns. Johns are those who pay for the sexual acts. Essential point is prostitution is illegal.

Sex workers feel they should havethe opportunity to be treated fairly. An interview Emily Bazelon states, “ WouldI like to live in a world where no one has to do sex work? Absolutely. Butthat’s not the case. So, I want to live in a world where women do it largelyvoluntarily, in a way that is safe” (Bazelon 2016).

The author implies street sexworkers are not safe from harm. Most street prostitutes have Pimps which theyreport to and pay a portion of their money to. Most of these relationshipsbetween the pimps and Prostitutes are physical.

At a certain point many ofthese people want out but are not able to. Pimps have workers who regulatetheir prostitutes. Meaning street work is easier to keep an eye on them.

Ifpaying for sex was legal, many workers would work feeling safe knowing thatthey can report any harm to them with authorities. They could contribute tosociety economically as well as mentally. Sex workers would also disappear fromstreets into a formal atmosphere such as business places. Continuing, according to the structuralfunctionalism theory, one can feel that there cannot be a perfect society freefrom deviance due to the different views people have on matters such asprostitution, religion, and governance.

Without deviance, the general standardsof behavior would be so high that the slightest slip would be regarded as aserious offense in the society. The research presented above is related to the topicin some ways such as helping to look at prostitution from a structuralfunctionalism approach as well as looking at the role of law in regulatingprostitution. In conclusion the concept of prostitutionis usually termed as unacceptable in the society because of its legality andimmorality. However, people must understand all laws made with the intention ofcriminalizing the act cannot succeed since it is the oldest profession in theworld despite being illegal and immoral all along. The primary way of dealingwith prostitution as a social problem is coming up with laws aiming to regulateinstead of prohibiting the practice. For instance, some aspects of prostitutionhave been legalized in some Australia cities including Queensland wherelicensed brothels are allowed to operate. The structural functionalism theory applies to the topic in that it helpsto explain the reason why prostitution has been able to thrive in the societydespite being illegal and immoral. Functionalists argue that prostitution isstill widely practiced because it serves the society through job creation andgives people an opportunity to engage in consensual sexual activities outsidemarriage.