Making and Managing the Discredited Victim:
Reproduction of Sex Work Stigma in Canadian News Media, 2010-2019

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Abstract

As changes to Canadian sex work policy were made in the 2010s, increased attention was positioned toward sex work broadly and, importantly, within news reporting. This analysis investigates the ways in which stigma is present and reproduced within, and aids in determining the framing of, this news reporting. Pairing a historical overview of sex work and a theoretical framework based in stigma, cultural studies, and narrative framing, a content analysis and discourse analysis of 100 news reports was performed to find themes that indicate the presence of stigma as reporting on sex work was divided into narratives positioning sex workers as villains, victims, or heroes. The results of these analyses indicate the presence of stigma explicitly in narratives framing sex workers as villains. However, amidst a discursive turn in the framing of sex work in news reporting corresponding with legislative change, the presentation of the sex-worker-as-victim was a role that was repeatedly discredited through more implicit stigma, and narrative frames associating sex workers with the hero role are presented as a new method of stigma management.

Keywords: sex work, stigma, news reporting, narrative framing

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INTRODUCTION

Like strange mechanical grotesques,
Making fantastic arabesques,
The shadows raced across the blind.

We watched the ghostly dancers spin
To sound of horn and violin,
Like black leaves wheeling in the wind.

- Oscar Wilde, The Harlot's House (1882)

Miss Mona: You ain't never gonna be no more than you are right now - a chicken-shit sheriff in a chicken-shit town!
Sherriff Ed Earl Dodd: You may be right, but it's a hell of a lot better than being a whore.

-The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas (1982)

I've never talked to a boy or a girl who said, 'yeah, when I grow up I want to be a hooker'.

- Calgary police chief Rick Hanson, CBC (2014)

As vast changes occurred to Canadian sex work and Canadian sex work policy in the second decade of the 21st century, most notably through the introduction of *Bill C-36*, discourse surrounding sex work boomed – whether that be in support of, or opposed to, sexual labour. While sex work has been in the public consciousness since long before Oscar Wilde wrote The Harlot's House in 1882, the 2010's saw local and national news reporting coverage of sex work at a volume that had yet to be seen in Canadian news media. Coverage included not only the reporting of events but also opinion writing, multi-media presentations, interviews, and deep dives into how sex work has changed over time in a Canadian context. This decade marked a drastic shift – for better or for worse – that thrust sex work to the top of public consciousness. As is illustrated in the above quotations spanning a 130-year period, the stigma associated with sex work and the workers performing this labour persists through time in varying contexts. The tropes found in these and other works of fiction— such as the desperate tart, the diseased harlot,

the disposable sex worker, the hooker with a heart of gold, and the down-and-out prostitute with no other options – are not only found in novels, films, and music, but are employed in works of non-fiction including in news media.

To examine the presence and reproduction of stigma attached to sex work in news reporting, this thesis analyzes 100 news reports from a single national news publication (the CBC) from 2010-2019. This analysis holds two goals: the first is to look at broad patterns of how sex work is framed in news reporting and how these patterns work to reproduce stigmatized assumptions about sexual labour; and second, to contextualize these patterns and look specifically at the discursive practices and power relations that take place in this reporting. The goal of this thesis, overall, is to not only look at and ask how, but also why, stigma remains pervasive in reporting on sex work over time, how this stigma has changed, and how patterns within these reports aid in reproducing stigma and negative conceptualizations of sex work on a large scale.

The Matter of Language: Language Matters

Throughout this thesis, the term "sex work" is used in reference to all sexual labour, a term first coined by activist, artist, and sex worker Carol Leigh a.k.a. The Scarlot Harlot in 1978. Using the term "sex work" moves past the stigmatizing assumption that all sex workers perform outdoor sex work, or prostitution, and instead offers a broader umbrella term that allows for a fuller, more nuanced sociological analysis of sex work. In this way, the term "sex work" includes outdoor and indoor sex workers, porn actors, escorts, strippers, live online camera "cam" models, among others. It must also be noted that, while the umbrella term "sex work" is used primarily throughout this thesis, in discussions that include references to specific types of sex work, as

well as discussions of policy or reports that make specific reference to prostitution rather than sex work, these alternative terms will be used.

This decision to use the term sex work follows many activists, researchers, and supporters of sex work who argue that use of the term is a means of recognizing the agency of the workers that sex work is a legitimate form of labour. As Durisin, van der Meulen, and Bruckert (2018) explain their use of the term, "we use this language…to connote a demand for social and economic justice for some of the world's most marginalized and stigmatized workers" (p.4). My use of this term also serves to acknowledge a clear position that this thesis takes on sex work. To examine a controversial and politicized topic such as sex work, this thesis is explicitly pro-sex work and follows the sex work is work paradigm recognizing both the importance and legitimacy of sexual labour.

Finally, by using the umbrella term "sex work," this thesis is focused only on work which is consensual. As will become evident in latter chapters when results are reported, human trafficking discourse is often used alongside sex work discourse, with these terms frequently being conflated with one-another. Just as other forms of work can engage in human trafficking or enslavement, most notably those in resource extraction, fisheries, farming, and so on (International Labour Office, 2013), sex work has a well-documented history of exploitative practices, including various forms of violence. However, this thesis takes the position that getting paid for sexual acts is no more inherently exploitative than taking money for the fish that one catches. Thus, this thesis focuses on consensual sex work only in an effort to clearly distinguish sex work from sex trafficking, as well as to limit the scope in order to give the subject the full attention it deserves.

Outline of Thesis

The first chapter – Developing Stories of Sex Work – provides a review of previous literature and a historical overview of sex work to grasp how sex work has been understood leading up to a contemporary Canadian context. Beginning with a discussion of the history of sex work starting in the 14th century, varying conceptualizations of sex work are covered culminating in a discussion of how sex work came to be seen as immoral and obscene. From here, morality and obscenity remain at the forefront as the 20th century sex work debate led largely by abolitionist feminists and conservatives is outlined. The result of this was the R v. Butler case (1992), the consequences of which lead this chapter into the twenty-first century where the contemporary understanding of sex work is defined, the continued moral crusade against sex work is discussed, and details from the landmark Bedford v Canada case (2013) and subsequent *PCEPA* legislation (2014) are outlined. Finally, the consequences of *PCEPA* are discussed through the lenses of both structural harm and social condemnation, ending with an analysis of the sites wherein these consequences take place and the role of the media in this.

Chapter 2 – (Re)producing the Quintessential Whore – outlines the three theoretical frameworks used to guide this thesis. The first builds off of Erving Goffman's work on stigma (1963) as well as more structural developments of stigma related to both gender and sex work specifically. Second, an overview of feminist cultural studies will be given to tie in the role of media in the reproduction of stigma. Finally, the third section of chapter 2 presents the role of rhetoric in reproducing stigma, particularly through the use of three key narrative frames in the hero, the victim, and the villain. Chapter 3 – An Understanding From All Angles – the methodologies used to perform this research will be outlined. For broader patterns within news

reporting, a directed content analysis which will be supplemented by a critical discourse analysis to provide more context to the patterns and phenomena found within the content analysis.

Chapter 4 – Reporting the Big Picture – presents the results for the content analysis, while Chapter 5 – Contextualizing Narratives – presents the results of the discourse analysis. Results for the codes used in the directed content analysis will be reported, as will contextual information found during the critical discourse analysis that situates major patterns within these codes and in relation to the reproduction of stigma. These chapters discuss who speaks, what is spoken about, and how sex work is framed in news reporting. Chapters 4 and 5 also discuss and demonstrate the ways in which stigma is reproduced in news media in a decade of great change in relation to sex work policy. This stigma is also presented in relation to the narrative frames that are used in presenting stories of sex work. Chapter 6 – The Discredited Victim – includes a discussion of the reproduction and management explicit and implicit forms of stigma in relation to the roles of the hero, the victim, and the villain. The sixth chapter also presents a new effect of ongoing sex work-related stigma referred in this thesis as “the discredited victim.” Finally, this thesis will conclude with a discussion of where sex work rhetoric can go from here, combatting sex work stigma in news reporting and beyond, and recommendations for further research on this topic.

CHAPTER 1. LITERATURE REVIEW: DEVELOPING STORIES OF SEX WORK

Often referred to as the world's oldest profession, selling sex has taken various forms and has, over time, been conceptualized in a number of ways – many of which have led to criminalization and other oppressive measures of control (Ashford, 2008, p.47; Bruckert & Parent, 2013, p.57). These conceptualizations and their consequences shift historically, geographically, and socially as different perspectives on sexuality, gender, and what is deemed acceptable as labour arise within varying contexts. These shifts make sex work an interesting arena to observe changing views on labour that is frequently gendered and laws that are rooted in misogyny. Analyses of sex work, and sex work as an area of study more generally, expanded to match the foregrounding of sex work in the public consciousness and the changing regulatory maneuvers used to control sexual labour over time. The body of literature that has developed around sex work covers a range of subjects in varying contexts, mirroring the broad nature and far reach of sexual labour and its conceptualizations. This work traverses both qualitative and quantitative methods, a range of disciplines, numerous theoretical frameworks, and mediums of presenting this research.

1.1: The History of Sex Work – The Beginnings

Sex work today remains a topic that is considered provocative or controversial, a framing of this form of labour that has lasted centuries. This framing of sex work, in its persistence, has far-reaching impacts on political discourse, media discourse, as well as the development of criminal provisions to regulate – and to some extent eliminate – the ability to perform sexual labour. Current regulatory provisions of sex work and the ways in which we think about sex work, therefore, are not solely the product of contemporary thought, but rather a result of changing conceptualizations of sexual labour that have developed over time. With this in mind,

historical contextualization is important for the analysis of sex work and the stigmas attached to this form of labour. To properly contextualize sex work in the 21st century in Canada for the purposes of this thesis, we must begin in Europe during the 14th century.

1.1.1: Once Necessary, Now Punished: Europe in the 14th – 18th Centuries

Throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, particularly the late-14th and early-15th centuries, sex work was encouraged by the state and institutionalized as a deterrent for heresy, protest, and homosexuality amongst youth (Federici, 2004, p.49). During this period of institutionalization, penalties against sex work were removed, and sex workers came to be seen as performing a public service that, for the most part, took place either outdoors or in managed and tax-funded brothels (Federici, 2004, p.49). While still considered an immoral practice it was seen as an important part of public regulation of other activities, and accepted as such not only by governments across Europe but, as Federici (2004) notes, "even the church came to see [sex work] as a legitimate activity" (p.49).

As the 15th century progressed through to the early 16th century, the number of sex workers rose drastically, and public perception and legal conceptualizations of sex work began to shift as women's labour in general became devalued. Federici (2004) attributes this institutional shift and reorganization of acceptable labour to "a climate of intense misogyny, characterized by the advance of the protestant reformation and witch-hunting" (p.94). With this devaluation, sex work saw new restrictions that soon turned to criminalization. New criminality was outlined as follows:

> [sex workers], especially streetwalkers, were subjected to severe penalties: banishment, flogging, and other cruel forms of chastisement. Among them was 'the ducking stool'…whereby the victims were tied up, sometimes they were forced into a cage, and then were repeatedly immersed in rivers or ponds, till they almost drowned…the raping of [sex workers] ceased to be a crime…[and sex workers] should not be allowed to stat and sleep in the streets and under porticos of the town, and if caught should be given a hundred

> lashes, and then should be banned from the city for six years in addition to having their heads and eyebrows shaved. (Federici, 2004, p.94)

It is here that varying and oppressive understandings of sex work begin to take shape, themes that remain throughout other conceptualizations of sex work as well as criminal policy both after the 16th century and outside of the European context.

1.1.2: Vagrants, Immorality, and Dangerous Criminals: 19th and Early 20th Centuries

Without much change for some time, the early- and mid-19th century saw debates around sex work in Europe, particularly in England and its Canadian colony, at the foreground of political conversation (Parent & Bruckert, 2013, p.9). It is in this period that different conceptualizations of sex work begin to take over sexual labour strictly being seen as a criminal activity, and for the first time in public and political discourse, multiple conceptualizations exist at once. Within these debates, sex work was seen as a necessary evil that many pushed to be regulated as a means of protecting decency, health, and the public and social orders (Parent & Bruckert, 2013, p.9). Alongside debates centering a necessary evil perspective, a strict anti-sex-work perspective led by prostitution abolitionists emerged. These groups were mainly led by white upper-class women, and saw sex work as a social evil and a form of slavery that needed to be eradicated entirely through criminalization not only for sex work, but for all activities associated with it (Parent & Bruckert, 2013, p.9-10).

These debates informed much of the early sex work policy in the Canadian colony as well as policy in post-confederation Canada in the 19th century, utilizing the perspective that sex work is a social evil. With sex work criminalized in these early policies, the focus of these provisions was “aimed at two areas: reducing residential brothels, street prostitution, and vagrancy; and ‘protecting’ girls and women under twenty-one years of age from defilement through ‘false pretences’” (van der Meulen & Durisin, 2018, p.27-28). Here, sex work is re-

conceptualized not only as a social evil that works in opposition to morals at the time, but also as a dirty activity and a nuisance to the 'innocent' communities within which sex work takes place.

Sex work was criminalized as a form of vagrancy with the goal of reducing the trade, however this criminalization did not focus solely on the activities of sexual labour itself, but also "meant that women could be subject to vagrancy charges and detention merely for being prostitutes" (van der Meulen & Durisin, 2018, p.28). The conceptualization of sex work as a form of immoral vagrancy, and its subsequent criminalization, begins a trend that continued throughout regulations and popular conceptualizations of sexual labour from this point into the present. This trend also showcases the shift from conceptualizing solely the labour as immoral and dirty to the conceptualization of sex workers as existing outside of what is considered normal. Here begins the perspective on sex work that builds the foundation of future policies in Europe and within Europe's colonies such as Canada – one wherein "their labour is who they are rather than (one aspect of) what they do" (Bruckert & Parent, 2013, p.71). This moves the criminalization of sex work from the act of performing sexual labour to one's participation in, or association with, sexual labour. This is exemplified most explicitly in early Canadian sex work laws, such as Canada's first criminal code, and its criminalization of status rather than action (Campbell, 2015, p.30).

The first official Canadian sex work policies were developed and implemented within Canada's first criminal code in 1892, guided by restrictive Victorian views of sexuality and the conceptualization of sex work as a form of vagrancy and an immoral act. These policies presented the criminalization of sex work as offences against morality following a movement of moral reform that worked to maintain the "safety" of white women from the perceived dangers of sex work, working alongside the strengthening of the conceptualization of sex work as a form

of slavery and a panic surrounding white slavery and the trafficking of white women (Parent & Bruckert, 2013, p.10; van der Meulen & Durisin, 2018, p.29-30). Van der Meulen & Durisin (2018) note that this was:

> an attempt to eradicate the sexual double standards and to encourage the same (white, female) standard of chastity and purity… [supporters of this moral reform movement saw] the strengthening of family values as a way to save society from moral decay, and since women were viewed as the guardians of the family's welfare, they in particular needed to be shielded from male licentiousness; eradicating prostitution was seen as a good place to start. (p.28-29)

The first criminal code of Canada "criminalized 'the nightwalker' or 'common prostitute' in a public place if she did not, when asked, provide a satisfactory account of herself" (Campbell, 2015, p.30). These laws, still guided by a restrictive view of sexuality and labour fuelled by misogyny, work under the goal of the complete eradication of sex work.

1.2: Collaboration, Morality, and Obscenity – Late 20th Century Ideas

The restrictive view of sexuality, and thus sex work, showcased in the previous section continued through the 20th century. The late 20th century in particular saw sexuality become a more politicized and sharply contested topic that would threaten and undermine the acceptable social order, often represented as dangerous and out of control (Gotell, 2000, p.56). This era was defined by an acute focus on portrayals of sex and a growing anti-pornography sentiment that crossed political and social boundaries. Sex work, at this time, was largely condemned as an immoral and obscene act that would eventually destabilize the moral backing of society. This instability was the particular focus of discussions condemning pornography, which was considered a direct threat to the unit of the family, one of the foundations of a stable and well-functioning society (Gotell, 2000, p.64). The perceived threat of pornography, developing into a threat of sex work more broadly, led to a sexual panic and a fear that visible sexual acts that were thought to be immoral would corrupt those that view or witness them.

The opposition to sexuality and sex work in the late 20th century, and the transformation of these concepts into problems for the greater social order, can be attributed to a growing moral panic against sex work. The late-20th century moral panic, however, required an agent to act as a target to blame for the perceived moral decline and social disorder caused by said decline (Gotell, 2000, p.55). With sexuality positioned as a target, and sex workers as agents "perpetuating" the persistence of this target's presence, actions were taken to eliminate sex work in the form of a moral crusade. Moral crusades, as per Weitzer (2007) who mobilizes concepts developed by theorists such as Becker (1963) and Spector & Kitsuse (1973), are movements that:

> define a particular condition as an unqualified evil, and see their mission as a righteous enterprise whose goals are both symbolic (attempting to redraw or bolster normative boundaries and moral standards) and instrumental (providing relief to victims, punishing evildoers). To achieve their aims, activists seek to generate widespread public concern about a problem and lobby political elites to either intensify punishment of offenders or criminalize acts that were previously legal. Moral crusades advance claims about both the gravity and incidence of a particular problem. They typically rely on horror stories and 'atrocity tales' about victims in which the most shocking exemplars of victimization are described and typified. (p.448)

The moral crusade against sex work, particularly in the late 20th century, was widespread throughout public discourse and aided in positioning "official" voices on the matter. Many elected officials, police, anti-trafficking activists, and activists supporting other causes adopted an anti-sex work stance to oppose the perceived injustices caused by pornography or sex work generally. These crusades, particularly when positioned against sexuality and sex work, relied on "grand and unverifiable claims" about the supposed social evil of sex work that has effects on both the individual and more structural factors (Weitzer, 2007, p.450).

Two main voices took up the anti-sex work mantle and led the moral crusade against sex work in the 1970s and 1980s: second wave abolitionist feminists and conservative, particularly religious conservative, organizations. These two movements, acting as a "collaborative

adversarial movement" (Whittier, 2014, p.176), maintained their oppositional ideologies and agendas on most subjects. Expanding on this idea of a collaborative adversarial movement in the context of second wave abolitionist feminists and conservatives, Whittier (2014) contends that:

> [these movements] did not have pre-existing ties, overlapping networks, or compatible collective identities, and they did not develop agreed-upon frames or coordinate strategically. They explicitly opposed each other's larger social movements, ideologies, and agendas and did not engage in shared collective action. At least around the issue of pornography, however, they were not countermovements either. Instead, they interacted sporadically because of their similar goal and because this goal drew them into the same state contexts. Such groups that are simultaneously friends and enemies, known in popular culture by the port-manteau "frenemies," are widely recognized but rarely analyzed systematically. (p.176)

When it came to sex work, however, these movements shared a common goal: to reduce, or all-together eliminate, sexual labour. Each movement framed sex work in different ways, but showcased common threads in their opposition that centered around immorality, corruption of the innocent, and violence.

The particular group of second wave feminists included in the late-20th century anti-sex work adversarial movement are abolitionist feminists, who argue that the sex industry should be entirely eliminated due to its inherent objectification, and oppressive treatment, of women (Weitzer, 2007, p.450). Noting that this view represents a narrow set of concerns, Gotell (2000) finds that the abolitionist feminist perspective opposing pornography "reflects a politics of simplified certainty in which the complexities of sexuality are reduced to an assertion of male domination, and pornography is constructed as both the ideological support and the expression of male sexual power" (p.62-63). The abolitionist feminist perspective centres oppression through the assumption that all sex work is violent, and all sex work has the goal of ensuring the continued subordination of women. This argument relies on the belief that all women in pornography act as an image of passive and silent victims of male violence, while

simultaneously situating both the state (including its laws) and abolitionist feminists as the protector of these victims (Gotell, 2000, p.70). Important to note is that this group's place in the debate about sex work and intense anti-sex work stance was separate from more mainstream feminists who, though at times oppositional to sex work, were noticeably less active and often overshadowed by the abolitionist perspective on this topic (Weitzer, 2007, p.450).

An abolitionist feminist perspective is best exemplified by the works of Catharine Mackinnon, a vehement anti-sex work scholar and feminist activist. Focusing on pornography and employing this anti-sex work perspective, as well as directly opposing those that see pornography as freedom of expression, MacKinnon (1993) argues that:

> In pornography, women are gang raped so they can be filmed. They are not gang raped by the idea of a gang rape. It is for pornography, and not by the ideas in it, that women are hurt and penetrated, tied and gagged, undressed, and genitally spread and sprayed with lacquer and water so sex pictures can be made… Similarly, on the consumption end, it is not the ideas in pornography that assault women: men do, men who are made, changed, and impelled by it. (p.15)

Here, the correlation between sex work and violence used by abolitionist feminists is presented bluntly. Pornography is classified as a form of rape, and only its eradication can result in an end to the violence against women that is perpetrated by the action of producing and disseminating a sexually explicit product. In positioning pornography in this way, abolitionist feminists aimed to garner public outrage and panic over the oppression of women and the ongoing violence against women that has been sanctioned by the porn industry. MacKinnon's, and other abolitionist feminists', explicit stance correlating pornography with violence specifically was similar to the basis of the development of conservative anti-sex work arguments, acting as the connective basis for the (often indirect) collaboration between these adversarial movements.

Largely removing the focus on the oppression of women, conservatives, and more specifically religious conservatives, maintained that sex work was a form of sexual violence that

offended public decency, promoted moral decline, and posed an immense threat to the family (Gotell, 2000, p.64). Conservative ideology in Canada is defined by its intolerance and reactive nature, standing in opposition to social change and looking to increase the role of authority while accepting more intensive punitive measures for those that do not fall in line of the traditional social order, one that centres the family, morality, and innocence (Blais, Mungall, & Prusyers, 2022, p.2; Gordon, 2021, p.55). As noted by Whittier (2014), pornography was particularly "objectionable to conservatives because of its depiction of non-marital sexuality and its incitement of lust and masturbation, which they saw as part of a larger set of challenges to the family and children's innocence" (p.181). By placing sex work in the position of the threat to this traditional social order, with a focus on pornography as a particularly dangerous and enticing threat, sex work became the target of both legislative and discursive action that aimed to eradicate it. In turn, as Gotell (2000) finds, "by subsuming pornography into violence and by inserting it into a broader law-and-order agenda, government actors have [further] contributed to the construction of a sexual panic" (p.70).

The focus on what is deemed morally acceptable for conservatives paired with the assertion that sexuality is a site of danger and a threat to the social order was used as justification for the perpetuation of anti-sex work discourse. However, unlike the other half of the collaborative adversarial movement, conservatives have been able to use these assertions and their presence within government, particularly at the federal level, to justify the creation and implementation of regressive and repressive policy that is backed by their ideologies (Gotell, 2000, p.60). This was the case in 1985 as Conservative leadership at a federal level introduced *Bill C-49*. With morality at the forefront and mobilizing their power at a state-level through legislation, Conservatives introduced a communication offence to the Canadian criminal code

that criminalized communication in public spaces for the purposes of selling or obtaining sexual services. The advent of this offence marked an action related to the moral crusade against sex work showcasing the created sexual panic being placed directly into the public view, and an explicit indication that the violent, dangerous, and "morally obscene" sexual acts have long occurred in plain sight.

Canadian sex work was thus regulated under four key sections of the criminal code in place from 1985 onward: S.210, keeping a common bawdy-house; S.211, transporting person to bawdy-house; S.212, procuring; and S.213, offence relating to communication for the purposes of providing sexual services and offering, providing, or obtaining sexual services in a public place (Criminal Code, 1985) [expanded details of these four sections of the criminal code and their subsections can be found in Appendix I]. While these provisions did not directly criminalize the act of sexual labour, it instead criminalizes all activities associated with performing sex work, monetizing sex work, and creating a safe working environment. The introduction of these provisions marked a period that saw the disproportionate charging and displacement of sex workers, excessive punitive measures on the part of police targeting sex workers, and an increase of violence on the streets directly targeting sex workers (van der Meulen & Durisin, 2018, p.33). These provisions also underscored the discourse presented by Conservatives that sex work is inherently harmful on an individual, as well as societal basis and posed a threat if it were performed/obtained in a publicly visible space.

With the legislative maneuvers taken within the moral crusade of sex work, the end of the 1980s and the 1990s saw an immense anti-sex work turn in politics, focused once again, on pornography. The new politics of anti-pornography in the late 20th century worked to make

unverified claims about the dangers lurking in both the making, and consumption, of pornography. Gotell (2000) recalls that:

> The constraining norms of the pornography debate as mediated through this new politics were as follows: sexual representation was viewed as harmful; sexuality was defined as inherently violent and dangerous; pornography was increasingly subsumed within the social problem 'violence against women'; and the necessity of new forms of legal regulation became widely accepted. (p.60)

With the "harmful" sex work situated in public view, and pornography situated as harmful representations of violent sexuality, both conservative and abolitionist feminist anti-sex work discourse had permeated the public consciousness. This was paired with a more legally-focused moral crusade backed by the panic caused by sexuality that does not align with what conservatives believed to be "morally acceptable" and representations of this sexuality in images, videos, and other forms of pornographic media. What came from this were stringent tactics of framing pornographic material as obscene and, when challenged, presenting arguments featuring morality-laden discourse to uphold this frame.

Obscenity was the subject of the case of R v. Butler which reached the Supreme Court of Canada in 1992. In this case, the criminal prohibition of obscenity – including both the possession and distribution of obscene material (pornography) – was called into question as violating one's right to freedom of expression under section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Cossman, 2000, p.107). R v. Butler (1992), if ruled in favour of Butler, would pose a threat to policy that had already been implemented and threaten the conservative principle that the criminal law should be used to maintain the moral order that has been deemed acceptable (Gotell, 2000, p.72). Similarly, a ruling in favour of Butler would oppose the abolitionist feminist support of the criminal regulation of pornography in an effort to eliminate it altogether (Gotell, 2000, p.72). The ruling in R v. Butler (1992), however, did not favour Butler, instead upholding

the constitutionality of section 163 (prohibition of obscenity) of the Canadian Criminal Code (Cossman, 2000, p.107). The ruling in Butler (1992) as per Valverde (1999):

> states that obscenity is now to be regarded as a subset of the larger category of pornography (previously unknown to law). Pornography, constructed as the realm of what the court calls "explicit sex" (as if sex itself rather than its representation could be said to be explicit or not) is divided into three types. Type 1 consists of "explicit sex with violence"; this is "almost always" obscene. Type 2 consists of "explicit sex" not involving violence, but which *is* "degrading or dehumanizing" – a phraseology that, like the use of the adjective "explicit" to modify "sex", suggests that it is the sexual conduct of the models or actors, not the picture or text, which has the power to degrade. Type 3 covers much of soft-core porn, and is said to consist of material that does not involve children, is not violent, and is not degrading or dehumanizing. (p.186)

This ruling, ultimately, showcases the deep-rooted nature of the moral crusade against sex work, or pornography more specifically. It has been framed, within a legal ruling, as a violent practice that is degrading and dehumanizing that directly threatens the social order that has been upheld by conservative ideology and the related anti-pornography discourse that has been perpetuated by conservatives and abolitionist feminists.

1.3: Continued Crusades, A Dominatrix, and Drastic Shifts – Sex Work in the 21st Century

As outlined in the previous section, the late twentieth century saw a rise in anti-sex work and anti-pornography discourse with abolitionist feminist and conservative ideologies at the forefront of the associated moral crusade. Eradicating sex work was seemingly the widespread goal as the twenty-first century approached, however these groups could not have imagined the number of individuals who would jump at the chance to engage in sex work. Whether through more "traditional" means such as street-based sex work, stripping, and escorting or more contemporary advents including the boom of online forms of sex work; sex work in the twenty-first century is defined by its diversity, its vibrancy, and its accessibility to those that wish to participate thanks to both the changes to the sex industry and the continued work of both individual, and organizations run by, sex workers. While more accessibility may lead to a certain

increase in acceptability, there remains an undercurrent of a crusade against sex work with its basis in conservative anti-sex work and moral-focused ideology permeating both public discourse and new legislation.

1.3.1: What is sex work today?

The general nature of sex work today is best defined by Weitzer (2010), noting that "sex work [put simply] involves the exchange of sexual services, performances, or products for material compensation…the sex industry refers to the workers, managers, owners, agencies, clubs, trade associations, and marketing involved in sexual commerce, both legal and illegal varieties" (p.1). Sex work is heterogeneous and includes a diversity of forms of labour including: street-based or outdoor sex work, indoor sex work, escorting, online sex work, stripping, and pornography, among others (Attwood, 2010; Bothe et al., 2021; Brock, 2017; Büschi, 2014; Campbell et al., 2019; Cunningham & Shah, 2018; Dean, Ruszczycky, & Squires, 2014; Drucker & Nieri, 2018; Henry & Farvid, 2017; Jones, 2015; Jones, 2020; Jones & Hannem, 2018; Koken, 2012; Krüsi et al., 2012; Law, 2015; Lyons et al., 2017; Price-Glynn, 2010; Rexhepi, 2021; Rubattu, Perdion, & Brooks-Gordon, 2023; Sanders et al. 2018; Sanders & Hardy, 2014; Wakefield & Brents, 2020; Walby, 2012; Weitzer, 2021; Werner, 2020). These forms of labour are not always mutually exclusive as many engage in multiple types of sex work (Escoffier, 2007, p.176). In the twenty-first century, though these categories overlap, forms of sex work (for the purposes of this thesis) can be divided into three sub-categories: outdoor, indoor, and online.

Outdoor or street-based sex work, commonly referred to as prostitution, is defined by a transaction that initially "occurs in a public place (a sidewalk, park, truck stop), while the sex act takes place in either a public or private setting (alley, park, vehicle, hotel, etc.)" (Weitzer, 2010, p.8-9). Outdoor sex work is a long-standing form of sex work that makes up the basis for many

policies that have, over time, criminalized sex work and/or its related activities. Within a Canadian context, all sex work policy and criminal code provisions fall under the category of prostitution – not recognizing other forms of sex work in the process. While all sex workers are stigmatized to varying extents and have gradually achieved more acceptance over time, in the eyes of both the public and Canadian policy, outdoor sex workers are considered the most stigmatized (Abel, 2019, p.1925; Cao, Lu, & Mei, 2017, p.1172). Armstrong (2019) finds that outdoor sex workers:

> bring what is considered to be a private act into the public space and as such they are seen to disrupt not only [patriarchal] conventional norms regarding women's sexuality, but also the moral fabric of society…Because they are seen as polluting the urban landscape with their presence, street-based sex workers have been 'othered' to a greater extent than indoor [and other] sex workers and are therefore highly stigmatised. (p.1291)

Outdoor sex work is representative of what has long been deemed immoral as it poses the most immediately visible threat to the moral and traditional conservative ideology that makes up the majority of policy and common perspectives on sex work.

Indoor sex work includes all services wherein transactions take place indoors and face-to-face such as escort services, stripping, and massage parlours (Chin, Kim, Takahashi, & Wiebe, 2015, p.534). Excluding all online sex work as that operates somewhat differently, indoor sex work represents the majority of in-person sex work that takes place in Canada (Sterling, 2018, p.101). Unlike outdoor sex work which usually includes processes of strolls or multiple locations to communicate, sell, and perform sexual services, indoor sex work occurs within a single indoor space where sex workers "meet clients, form social networks, and negotiate the terms and conditions of their work" (Sterling, 2018, p.101). As this definition has been expanded to include stripping, indoor sex work can include full-contact services, companionship, as well as live performance so long as the performer is in the same room/building as the consumer. Stripping in

particular presents an interesting form of indoor sex work as it is based on performance rather than physically providing sex acts – presenting the idea of sex and eroticism rather than the sex itself (Escoffier, 2007, p.192).

The most important progression and transformation in sex work in the twenty-first century took place online. Online sex work, put simply, takes place through the internet, and includes such services as advertising offline sexual services, webcamming, and pornography, among others. The internet has greatly reshaped sex work, expanding the market of sexual services making both the sale, and consumption, of sexual product/performance more accessible (Jones, 2015, p.561). For advertising services occurring offline, the internet has given sex workers, particularly escorts both represented by escort companies and working independently, a space for advertising specific services, scheduling, and screening clients prior to meeting (Jones, 2015, p.562). Maintaining contact with clients but remaining online, webcamming is the performance, and sale, of interactive and computer-mediated sex online, specifically on livestreaming platforms (Stegeman, 2024, p.330). Cam performers and models "often incorporate elements of intimate conversation with their clientele as well as erotic striptease and explicit sex acts" (Rubattu, Perdion, & Brooks-Gordon, 2023, p.63).

Pornography has become an increasingly frequent consumed form of media, particularly with the advent of the internet and the ability to self-produce content. This can be exemplified by the website Pornhub, an aggregate website including both studio and self-produced pornography, which "is now, by one measure, the 27th most popular website in the world" (Thurman & Obstur, 2021, p.416). Pornography, in a definition developed by Ashton, McDonald, & Kirkman (2019), is understood as "material deemed sexual, given the context, that has the primary intention of sexually arousing the consumer, and is produced and distributed with the consent of all persons

involved" (p.163). This includes images, videos, explicit erotic fiction, among other mediums and may be self-produced or produced and distributed through both small and large porn studios. With the advent of internet, pornography has also developed into its most easily accessible and diverse form, leading to "unprecedented visibility of sexual subcultures, diverse sexual preferences, niches, and tastes" (Brennan, 2019, p.140).

1.3.2: Moral Crusades and Legal Crusades Today

While sex work in the twenty-first century has diversified and become much more acceptable, the new levels of visibility have formed the basis of an ongoing moral crusade against sex work. Weitzer (2010) defines a moral crusade in the 21st century similarly to moral crusades discussed in section 1.2, noting that:

> some are motivated by [supposedly] genuine humanitarian concerns and desires to help victims, while others are mainly interested in imposing specific mores on others, especially when conventional rules appear to be unravelling, thus creating anxiety about the erosion of normative boundaries or threats to a cherished way of life. (p.63)

To paint sex work as evil, the "crusaders" – once again represented in a contemporary context by abolitionist feminists and conservatives – frame this form of labour as a social problem. However, "social conditions become 'problems' only as a result of claims-making by interested parties, claims that may or may not reflect actual social arrangements" (Weitzer, 2007, p.448). In the case of sex work, morality is used as a basis for transforming a condition into a problem – positioning sex work directly in opposition to tradition, morality, and what is understood as "normal" as a means of gathering support for sex work policy and programs guided by an anti-sex work ideology.

The moral crusade has three central characteristics: "inflation of the magnitude of a problem [and] assertions that far exceed the available evidence…horror stories, in which the most shocking cases are described in gruesome detail…[and finally] categorical conviction"

wherein crusade members assert that the evil is exactly as they present it (Weitzer, 2010, p.63). Similar to the strategy used by both conservatives and abolitionist feminists in the late-twentieth century, the contemporary moral crusade against sex workers returns to the myth of coercion to frame much of the crusade. This has been done in a contemporary context by using the fear and horror stories of sex trafficking to oppose all sexual labour – whether this is unfree or consensual. Discussing the crusade's turn in conflating sex work with sex trafficking, Weitzer (2007) finds that:

> the conflation of trafficking and prostitution is motivated by the crusade's ultimate goal of eliminating the entire sex trade, a goal that is frequently articulated…This does not mean that coercive sex trafficking is fictional. Force and deception are realities in the sex trade, and the perpetrators deserve stiff punishment. (p.455;467)

This conflation by moral crusaders also paints the "problem" of sex trafficking and sex work in black and white without recognizing the nuances of both, particularly on the subject of intent, consent, agency, and exploitation (Weitzer, 2010, p.68). Sex trafficking is understood as an exploitative and non-consensual practice that coerces individuals into performing sex acts that removes all agency from the victim that is forced to perform (Abel, 2019, p.1929; Davies, 2015, p.79). Sex work, on the other hand, is a form of labour that requires consent to be considered sex work and maintains the agency of the worker throughout performing this labour (Weitzer, 2010, p.68).

The connection between sex trafficking and sex work aids in building the moral crusade's trope of the sex worker as victim and situating those purchasing sex as caricatures of evil predators (Weitzer, 2010, p.68;73). By doing so, the crusade's goal of eliminating sex work altogether is cleverly hidden behind saviour narratives that make it appear as though it is "the right thing to do." Weitzer (2007) notes that:

> Prostitution is depicted as immoral or intrinsically harmful, and systems of legal prostitution as dens of iniquity and oppression. As is typical of moral crusades, activists (and now government officials) have presented questionable statistics and anecdotal horror stories as evidence of a worldwide epidemic of coerced prostitution. The crusade's sweeping claims are contradicted by academic research on the sex industry, including comprehensive reviews of the scholarly literature. (p.467)

The horrors of sex trafficking being intertwined with the fictional and morally driven "problem" of sex work overshadows any opportunity for a pro-sex work perspective to shine through, further pushing the moral crusades perspective as the only acceptable one to listen to. The effects of this crusade and the conflation between sex work and trafficking come explicitly and directly into the public and legal consciousness with both the Bedford v Canada case and *PCEPA* (2014) – a legal challenge and subsequent policy development that defined contemporary sex work experiences.

1.3.3: Bedford v Canada and *PCEPA*

To understand the current legal context sex workers must navigate, it is important to highlight the Bedford v Canada charter challenge, a court case that laid the necessity and groundwork for contemporary sex work policy in Canada. In October 2009, a trial began in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice on a filing originating in 2007 from three applicants who actively work in sexual labour – Terri-Jean Bedford, a dominatrix, Amy Lebovitch, a sex worker and researcher, and Valerie Scott, a sex worker and activist. This case centred on three of the four regulatory provisions within the criminal code: the keeping of a bawdy-house (s.210), public communication for the purposes of prostitution (s.213(1)(c)), and living on the avails of prostitution (s.213(1)(j)) (Belak, 2018, p.49). The central argument of this case was that:

> these restrictions on prostitution put the safety and lives of prostitutes at risk, by preventing them from implementing certain safety measures — such as hiring security guards or "screening" potential clients — that could protect them from violence…the prohibitions all heighten the risks the applicants face in prostitution — itself a legal activity. They do not merely impose conditions on how prostitutes operate. They go a critical step further, by

> imposing dangerous conditions on prostitution; they prevent people engaged in a risky — but legal — activity from taking steps to protect themselves from the risks. (R v Bedford, 2013, p.1103;1105)

Passing through the Ontario Superior Court in 2010 after a year of deliberation, the decision sided with the applicants finding that the provisions highlighted infringed on the right to liberty and security of the person under section seven of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Belak, 2018, p.49-50). This case moved to the Court of Appeals in 2011 after this decision was appealed by the attorneys general, with a decision siding with the state in 2012 (Belak, 2018, p.51).

This case was subsequently moved to the Supreme Court of Canada after being granted a one-day hearing on 13 June 2013. On 20 December 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada issued a unanimous decision stating sex work provisions were unconstitutional on the grounds of violating one's right to personal security and were to be struck down. With this decision, for the first time, the Supreme Court introduced sex-worker agency into conversations of sex work within a legal context in Canada (Belak, 2018, p.55). One of the major components of this unanimous decision was directed to the federal Canadian government, ordering the Canadian government a one-year period to develop new legislation that followed parameters outlined in this decision or allow sex work to be decriminalized and go without state-inflicted regulation (Belak, 2018, p.52-53).

Following the Bedford decision, the federal government quickly began to build new legislation to keep prostitution related offences in the Criminal Code, opting to follow "the Nordic model that would criminalize buyers rather than sellers of sex" (Baker, 2017, p.423). The product of this period is the current sex work legislation guided by *Bill C-36, The Protections of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA)*, a policy document legislated in 2014 that

posits three key points: all sex work as a nuisance to the communities within which sex work takes place, all sex workers as exploited persons that are in some way victims of the 'dangers' of sex work, and all advertisers, beneficiaries, and purchasers of sex as perpetrators of exploitation (Krüsi et al., 2016, p.1140). This legislation was developed with the goals of:

> [treating sex work] as a form of sexual exploitation that disproportionately impacts on women and girls…protect those who sell their own sexual services; protect communities, and especially children, from the harms caused by [sex work]; and reduce the demand for [sex work] and its incidence (Department of Justice Canada, 2014, p.1)

However, with these claims rooted in narratives of exploitation and danger, *PCEPA* (2014) presents another instance of "discourses that frame sex work as violence against women [and] locate state actors and police as agents of protection or salvation, contradict[ing] sex workers' own narratives and analyses that centre human rights violations as rooted in social stigma, discrimination, and the criminalization of their lives and work" (Durisin, van der Meulen, & Bruckert, 2018, p.3).

The group in charge of the development and implementation, much like previous oppressive sex work policies with a noticeable anti-sex work discursive backing and extreme right-wing tone, was the then-in-power majority Conservative federal government led by Stephen Harper. As noted by MacNeil (2014), "prior to the May 2011 federal election, Canada had never really experienced an intensely right-wing majority government…Canadian parliaments had habitually maintained a more-or-less moderate and centrist orientation" (p.174). This intensely right-wing Conservative majority resulted in a return to morality-based conservative ideology to be amplified through policies in various areas of federal jurisdiction, such as sex work. Claggett (2021) argues that then-Conservative justice minister Peter MacKay used moralizing "discursive strateg[ies by] homogenizing the nature of sex work. Regardless of whether the sex work includes informed consent, safe practices, and expressions of freedom and

pleasure, MacKay continued to view it as a 'social harm'" (p.195). This expression of harm, disseminated through speech and subsequent documents introducing *PCEPA* (2014), not only grounds this perspective in a particular moral framework, but also returns the sex work debate to the all-too-familiar moral discourse that defined the late 20th century.

With the introduction of *PCEPA* (2014), and considering the discursive goals of this legislation, the criminalization of sex work in Canada shifted from criminalizing the act of selling sex to criminalizing the act of purchasing sex and their related activities. With this, new provisions in the criminal code were introduced: S.213, offences in relation to offering, providing or obtaining sexual services for consideration; and S.286, commodification of sexual activity - inclusive of obtaining sexual services for consideration, obtaining sexual services for consideration from person under 18 years, material benefits, procuring, advertising, and parameters of both immunity and exceptions (Criminal Code, 2014; Criminal Code, 2019) [expanded details of these sections of the criminal code and their subsections can be found in Appendix II]. These new provisions in *PCEPA* (2014) ushered in a new legal context for sex workers to navigate that is marred by a conservative moral ideology and the perpetuation of the trope that all sex workers are exploited persons. The contemporary sex work policy introduced in *PCEPA* (2014) actively worked against recognizing sex work as a legitimate form of labour, following instead the narrative of victimization and the necessity of the saviour that has long been used in anti-sex work discourse.

1.4: Law, Condemnation, and Sex Workers Today

Though law makers and those in law enforcement claim to be helping "rescue" people from the clutches of the dangers of sex work – or more aptly, prostitution – when we focus on the voices of sex workers, we instead see harm caused by these "rescue" attempts. The ongoing

legislative attempts to regulate, and ultimately eliminate, sex work that have been introduced in *PCEPA* (2014) do not reflect the wants, the needs, nor the recommendations of sex workers themselves. Instead, *PCEPA* (2014) represents a more contemporary version of the moral crusade that was last seen to this extent during the backlash against pornography headed by conservatives and abolitionist feminists in the 1970s through the 1990s. While many sex workers and sex work activists have sought to centre sex workers' experiential knowledge and use this knowledge and expertise in the development of law and policy, policymakers instead opt to ignore the perspectives of sex workers and continue to form policy around the morality-laden assumption that all sex work is exploitation (Ham, 2020, p.954-956).

1.4.1: Critiques and Consequences of Law

As Link & Hatzenbuehler (2016) highlight, policy is intimately linked to moralistic discourse and the perpetuation of tropes for multiple marginalized groups in various ways, whether this is through policy that relays inaction toward a marginalized group, or maintaining the oppression faced by these groups (p.659-660). In the case of sex work, though regulatory revisions have been made to reflect both an increase of tolerance toward sex work within the last few decades and orders from the Supreme Court of Canada following the Bedford ruling, "regulating the exchange of sexual services for money remains a highly contentious policy field" (Karlsson, 2022, p.2288-2289). This policy field, including the developments legislated through *PCEPA* (2014), centres not those affected by this policy, but rather what is deemed to be "morally right" in the eyes of Conservative leadership. This move away from what sex workers have called for during policy development has led policymakers to focus on maintaining innocence, reduce exploitation, and frame sex work in context of, and in contrast to, the supposed risks they pose to the communities within which they work. As Bruckert & Hannem

(2013) note, by "encoding moral judgment as a discourse of risk in [policy and] law, those who supported the dominant…framing of immorality surrounding sex work effectively silence alternative understandings and obscure the complex realities of sex workers' everyday lives" (p.50). Sex work, through policy backed by moral judgement, is once again understood as a monolith with all forms of sex work understood to be operating in similar ways with risk levels the same across the board.

The persistence of moral ideology and its related discourse by policymakers has led to a fracturing in understanding the best method of regulating sex work. Because of this, the sex work policy field can be divided into three categories: repressive policy, aiming to abolish sex work through criminalization with harmful effects to sex workers; restrictive policy, aiming to control sex work through regulatory means to ensure traditional morals and a sense of community is upheld; and finally, integrative policy, aiming to decriminalize sex work, integrate said work into society, and treat sexual labour similarly to all other forms of non-sexual labour (Abel, 2019, p.1925-1926). Integrative policy, the form of policy that would most take into consideration the specific needs of sex workers, is rarely seen nor presented. Instead, repressive and restrictive policies are used to uphold moral ideology and moral regulation with the goal of eradicating sex work altogether, amplifying the voices of non-sex working policymakers over sex workers directly affected by these policies (Benoit, Jansson, Smith, & Flagg, 2017, p.64; Campbell, 2015, p.39).

Conservative moral ideology in a more contemporary context is used as a tool by policymakers to maintain the presence of their own voices at the forefront of all discussions of sex work as well as oppose social change in an official capacity (Blais, Mungall, & Prusyers, 2022, p.2; Gordon, 2021, p.55). This comes in the form of the use of language related to risk,

harm, and exploitation, as well as narrative framing relating to "saving" victims of exploitation, communities, and children from the dangers of buying and selling sexual services. In this way, the conservative moral ideology is hidden in plain sight – occasionally opting for explicit anti-sex work sentiment, but more often situating themselves as heroic actors with a "duty" to protect communities and individuals from sex work. What is framed as the "correct" action (i.e., saving victims) maintains the very incorrect assumption that all sex work is violent, and all sex workers have been coerced into performing sexual acts for material benefit. By presenting this ideology without a contrasting perspective, such as those from sex workers themselves, this moral ideology goes unchecked. As Campbell (2015) notes that:

> The invisibility—both real and symbolic—of sex workers is the direct result of efforts to deploy criminal law through a rationale grounded in moral notions of public nuisance. Forcing sex workers out of sight averts the social repugnance that observing a morally controversial and stigmatized practice like sex work can trigger. (p.39)

What becomes apparent through the invisibility of sex workers in the development of policy that will undoubtedly have drastic effects on their ability to work is the removal of agency from the conversation of sex work. In looking to the harmful effects this sort of erasure and lack of attention can place upon sex workers, Bruckert (2015) notes that "questions of consent and agency are rendered irrelevant, and we are left with incompetent subjects in need of rescue rather than rights" (p.2). Thus, in presenting legislation that claims to want to "save" the "victims" of exploitation, Conservatives centring a moral ideology have formulated an inescapable framing of victimization through removing the agency of those performing sexual labour.

As policy makers remove agency from sex workers and both directly and indirectly harm them and their ability to work, the carceral arm of the government – namely police – have perpetuated this harm through application. Historically, as Lyons et al. (2017) argue, police have maintained a fraught relationship with sex workers, highlighted by a reluctance to respond to

calls made by sex workers and an over-policing and intensive surveillance of street-based sex workers – foregrounding concerns of residents of neighbourhoods where sex work takes place, while largely ignoring the concerns and safety of sex workers in the process (p.186). This negative relationship, particularly as it has led to sex workers experiencing higher amounts of police attention and targeting, has created similarly negative working conditions including area restrictions, evictions, and decreased levels of safety (Krüsi, Belak, & Sex Workers United Against Violence, 2018, p.213) Because of this, Campbell (2015) finds that "rather than viewing police or other legal actors as offering protection against crime and violence, many sex workers understandably eye those who enforce state law suspiciously and antagonistically" (p.41).

In working in opposition to the interests of sex workers, police work on behalf of communities and their traditional moral value systems. Due to actions of moral crusaders such as police, "sex workers [have been] reclassified as trespassers with no legal, civic, or moral purchase on the definition of either 'standards' or 'community' reminiscent of restrictions that confined prostitutes to the margins of medieval European cities" (Ross, 2010, p.209). Mirroring these medieval processes in a more contemporary sense, *PCEPA* (2014) made the role of police and other services holding the goals of eradicating sex work quite clear, largely based in the punitive measures for purchasers of sex that go against the traditional and moral social order and the need to eliminate the sex industry altogether (Armstrong, 2019, p.1294; Blais, Mungall, & Prusyers, 2022, p.2; Gordon, 2021, p.55). This stands in contrast to calls from many sex workers for funding for the numerous services that makes sexual labour safer and easier to provide such as sexual health services, housing, police protection, among others (van der Meulen, 2011, p.353).

Bruckert (2015) notes that instead of providing the services that sex workers need, "the government pledged 20 million dollars to the issue, allocating just under half to law enforcement, with the remainder going to agencies providing services to 'those who want to leave this dangerous and harmful activity'" (p.2). As police presence and services meant to aid in "leaving prostitution" disguised as support services for sex workers have increased through this funding, it has had a negative effect on the continued and broad distrust toward these services – particularly the police. Illustrating this distrust alongside the process of removing sex workers from the areas within which they work, Krüsi et al. (2016) find that the "narratives of policing readily assisting residents in known sex work areas by removing sex workers stands in stark contrast to sex workers' narratives about the everyday violence they experience in seeking police protection" (p.1144). Similarly, Stardust, Treloar, Cama, & Kim (2021) highlight sex workers have often "anticipated proactive police action in charging, arresting, or reporting them. However, they expected police inaction in addressing their experiences of crime" (p.147).

The explicit actions of police in "protecting" communities through the physical expulsion of sex workers from the communities within which they work as well as the inaction of police when approached by sex workers, perpetuates a state-sanctioned harm that traverses both physical and symbolic aspects of sex work. While the physical comes in the increased opportunities for unsafe work environments and displacement, symbolic harm comes in the form of tropes about sex work. This is underscored by enforcement when police speak on the topic of sex work in relation to criminal code provisions, a frequent perspective used in policy debate and forms of media, as they often perpetuate myths and misconceptions about sex work and sex workers (Bruckert & Parent, 2013, p.70). These myths and misconceptions play into anti-sex work and moral discourse that focus on the dangers of sex work to both individuals and society

at large, while also leading to harm through social condemnation and exacerbating systems of oppression – discussed further in section 1.4.2.

While sex workers often speak to the positives of their work, negative experiences are still very much present. However, a benefit of including sex worker perspectives in discussions about sex work is the more nuanced understanding of safety and violence in this form of labour. This nuanced understanding differs greatly from popular conceptualizations that define sex work by an imagined "persistent violence." Interpersonal violence still occurs in sex work, however it is facilitated by the sociocultural context within which sex work takes place (Strega et al., 2014, p.19). In this way, as Armstrong (2019) notes, "sex work is not inherently violent, but that violence against sex workers is a consequence of the interplay between the spaces in which sex work takes place, the approach to sex-work governance, and the stigma associated with sex work" (p.1289). This violence, therefore, becomes structural as interpersonal violence and a lack of available safety provisions are determined by the ways in which sex work is governed and the associated restrictions caused by legislation backed by anti-sex work sentiments.

The persistence of structural violence is most noticeable, similar to the site of many other oppression maneuvers enacted against sex workers, in the development and implementation of sex work related policy. As previously mentioned, the views and voices of sex workers have largely been absent in these processes of sex work-related policy development, creating a knowledge gap that cannot be filled by policymakers with no sex working experience nor understanding of the nuances of sexual labour (Benoit et al., 2021, p.904). This gap in knowledge used in policy development has had an adverse effect on both the general understanding of sex work through questioning the morality of this form of labour, and the ability to perform sex work safely. Much of this misunderstanding regarding sex work and

discussions of how to regulate sex work have centred around who holds agency and who does not. These conversations, in turn, tend to lean in one of two directions: toward integrative policy (considering sex workers as agentic workers) or repressive/restrictive policy (framing sex workers as non-agentic nuisances and/or victims). In discussing the lack of attention to sex workers when attempting to regulate their work, Benoit et al. (2021) find that:

> the lack of attention to sex workers' views and the nullification of those voices when expressed can be situated in a larger discourse, where sex workers are seen as victims who lack agency or are unable or should not be permitted to make informed decisions on their own behalf. (p.904-905)

Not only are sex workers framed as helpless beings forced into sexual labour, but they are positioned as victims that require saving – which can only be done, in the eyes of policymakers and law enforcement officers, through exiting sex work and eventually through the abolition of the sex industry.

However, these efforts to "save" these purported victims has made sex workers more vulnerable within the social contexts that they must navigate. Similar to the pre-Bedford environment outlined by van der Meulen (2011), *PCEPA* (2014) contributed to a social context "in which sex workers are discouraged from seeking support from many common social services" (p.353). These services include health and safety protections that are commonly found in most other occupations such as unionization, supplemental health insurance, liability insurance, and so on. Without access to these worker protections while navigating a social context deeply entrenched in anti-sex work narratives, sex workers remain vulnerable under the guide of legislation that plays into these narratives. This was recognized by the Supreme Court following the Bedford decision, where it is asserted that interpersonal violence is not the sole issue faced by sex workers, as was argued by the state, but rather the state itself has a role in making sex workers more vulnerable to any violence that they may face (Bruckert, 2015, p.1).

1.4.2: Social Condemnation, Tropes, and Consequences

One of the more implicit ways in which harm has persisted against sex workers is through social condemnation based on the perpetuation of negative tropes about sex work. Through targeting specific aspects of the identities of sex workers, leaving many of the most marginalized particularly vulnerable to this type of harm, sex workers encounter countless tropes tied to systems of oppression. Beginning broadly, as Benoit, Jansson, Smith, & Flagg (2018) note:

> sex workers are commonly constructed as deviant "others" and routinely denied social rights enjoyed by other citizens. Derogatory labels—such as prostitute, whore, and hooker— are systematically used to describe them in laws, social policies, the media, everyday interactions, and even in the research literature, showing the common nature and prevalence of these marks of disgrace. (p.459).

This construction of sex workers as the deviant "others" comes with varying assumptions that perpetuates harm through narrative building. The status of the "other" in this case frames sex workers as individuals that "must be under the control of a pimp, drug addicted, mentally ill, psychologically damaged, deluded (suffering from false consciousness) or, at the very least, so disadvantaged that they are incapable of conceptualizing options" outside of sex work (Bruckert, 2015, p.2). While these experiences may be attributed to some who participate in sexual labour, it is certainly not the case for all sex workers as has been presented by policy and representations of sex work. However perpetuating a monolithic image of all sex workers, this presents not only an image of a downtrodden and deeply troubled victim that must be rescued from the clutches of sex work, but also frames sexual labour as the least desirable form of labour one could participate in – if recognized as a form of labour at all.

In contrast, instead of exploitative and unnecessary, sex work is framed by sex workers themselves as a form of skilled work with required expertise, encouraging the use of a range of "broad, adaptive, and entrepreneurial" skills (Trudeau, 2021, p.935). Sex work is also framed as

a form of work that: holds great job satisfaction for those participating; increasing self-worth and enjoyment of interpersonal relations with clients; and providing control and discretion over when to work, how frequently to work, and who to provide services for (Benoit et al., 2021, p.246-248). Alongside the positives of the work itself, as Vanwesenbeeck (2017) notes, rather than seeing sex workers as impoverished and helpless victims and working toward ending sex work all together, "it is poverty that needs to be fought, pulling the sex worker issue into the broader discussion on universal basic incomes" (p.1636).

The assumption of the inability to conceptualize non-normative options for work situates sex work as a "last resort" option solely for those in the most desperate financial need. Classist assumptions about sex workers having no options perpetuates the myths that not only is sex work a low-paying and undesirable form of labour, but it is largely participated by those engaging in survival sex – the exchange of "sexual services for sustenance needs, most often food, shelter, protection" (Antić, Krnić, & Štojs Brajković, 2023, p.139). The anti-sex work ideology that guides and perpetuates these classist tropes paint the choice to perform sexual labour, and survival sex, as inherently negative practices when in reality many sex workers seek out this form of labour for reasons similar to anyone seeking any kind of work. What has become apparent, however, is that through policy limitations and anti-sex work ideology in *PCEPA* sex work remains precarious work that at times is characterized by "poor working conditions, low pay…lack of security and of benefits" (Sanders & Hardy, 2013, p.16). Without protections and access to health and safety services that are awarded to other occupations, sex work is understood through the frame that the state is so determined to maintain: a dangerous and risky occupation.

Harm and condemnation further intersect with other social statuses that are seen as particularly ill-suited to this "unacceptable" work by perpetuating discourses of "acceptable labour" and classist tropes of sex work as a "last resort." Harm and condemnation spreads to those that both enjoy performing sexual labour as well as rely on the money that comes from this work. One such example is sex working mothers, who must traverse the tropes that come with being a sex worker, as well as the social condemnation of existing outside of what is considered a "good mother." This condemnation is exacerbated through the good mother narrative, as those considered to be "good mothers" and "good and tolerable workers" run parallel and cannot exist within the same person (Samtani & Trejos-Castillo, 2015, p.276-277). Dickson (2019) finds that the persecution against sex workers occurs because their labour is centralized to their social identities, an experience specific to sex work that is rarely seen in other professions (p.333). Because of this persecution focusing mainly on labour, sex working mothers are deemed to be "'violating' the norms of the 'good mother' narrative" (Basnyat, 2020, p.106) – attentive, present, and subservient – and instead are framed as inattentive and risky to their children (Ma, Chan, & Loke, 2019, p.549-550) rather than the attentive, present, and subservient figures that traditional narratives of motherhood promote. The reality of mothers who engage in sex work, however, is simply that of a working mother with the added pressures of navigating an ostracized and often criminalized form of labour. As noted by Dickson (2019), a sex working mother and scholar, "we are working mothers making the best choices we can in order to raise and support our children and we deserve so much more than this world is giving us" (p.334).

The persistence of condemnation through classism and the impacts of framing sex work as an unacceptable form of labour mirrors other anti-sex work condemnation with roots in other forms of social oppression and discrimination, such as racism. BIPOC sex workers must navigate

a field wherein they are marginalized by policies and discourse based in both racism and the (quasi-)criminalization and moral condemnation of sex work. As Canadian policy is intimately linked with, and governed by, an ongoing and developing legacy of colonialism and white supremacy, sex work-related policy reflects a centring of whiteness and a disregard for the further marginalization of BIPOC sex workers (Maynard, 2017, p.130; Price, 2013, p.628-630). As it has been built through conservative morality, a perspective that is immensely white in its conception and continuance, sex work policy presents particularly intense effects on BIPOC sex workers that lead to increased levels of surveillance, scrutiny, and difficulty providing sexual services in a safe way. The enforcement of this racist policy finds that under the guise of "rescuing" has led to policing patterns and paradigms that are shaped by tropes and controlling images that are rooted in stereotypes developed through colonialism and white supremacy (Raguparan, 2023, p.174). The narrative of rescuing itself in contemporary policy such as *PCEPA* (2014) and its enforcement replicates "broader white saviour perspectives…[relying] on the language of slavery and abolition" with no regard to the legacy of this language (Heynen & van der Meulen, 2022, p.305).

For BIPOC sex workers, however, racism and its related tropes come from both through policy and within the sex industry itself. There has been criticism posed against the Canadian sex industry by BIPOC sex workers that opportunities for acceptance in certain types of labour exists on a hierarchy governed by racism. Raguparan (2018) finds that when listening to the experiences of BIPOC sex workers, it becomes apparent that the Canadian sex industry has a habit of "excluding women of colour and Indigenous women from the 'upscale' parts of the industry by confining them to the street, where they are subjected to [potential] violence" (p.189). By relegating BIPOC sex workers to street-based sex work, BIPOC sex workers are

more vulnerable to interpersonal violence, and are subjected to more intense public scrutiny and surveillance. Specifically looking at the experiences of Black women engaging in sex work, Maynard (2017) notes that "Black women were always and already presumed to be sexually deviant [and] representations of Black women's sexual deviance have also been used to control Black women's movements in public space" (p.138). Due to these assumptions and representations, there is greater surveillance of, and police enforcement against, Black and other racialized sex workers, particularly when working in public spaces.

Like the ways in which Canadian policy and provisions within the Criminal Code of Canada regarding sex work have been developed by misogynistic assumptions about this work and are governed by a colonial state with laws rooted in white supremacy, cisheteropatriarchy forms the basis and backdrop of policy within Canada. This is particularly apparent in policy using a perspective backed by conservative moral ideology, one that praises tradition and questions the necessity of recognizing, or acknowledging the existence of, those that do not fit what is considered acceptable. This is perpetuated by upholding systems of tradition, as well as situating what is "morally right" against what conservatives have framed as "expressions of sinister 'gender ideology'" (House, 2023, p.16). Pairing the cisheteropatriarchal framing of what is morally correct with the misogynistic sex work policy presents an anti-sex work narrative that facilitates anti-queer sentiment through association. This occurs through policy development and implementation, but also through anti-queer demonstrations tying all queer people to sexual deviance and claims that queer sex is perverted deviant sex – a similar claim made about sex work (Frederick, 2014, p.143). Because of this, sex work is continuously subject to queerphobic tropes as many sex workers break heteronormative sexual scripts, as well as showcase a sexual freedom that is entirely foreign to those following a conservative moral ideology steeped in

tradition (Benoit, Janssen, Smith, & Flagg, 2018, p.459). Pervasive anti-sex work narratives in dominant (heterosexual) culture that used a "myopic focus on street-based prostitution" persisted alongside the persistence of hate against queer peoples (Morrison & Whitehead, 2007, p.213). In this way, anti-sex work narratives frame what is unacceptable, or immoral, to a cisheteropatriarchal state backed by a conservative moral ideology like Canada.

Similar to many queer sex workers, the specific experiences of trans sex workers vary and exist within a system of cisheteropatriarchy where transphobia remains rampant. This marginalization operates through various dimensions with a great focus on the connection between the participation in sexual labour in addition to one's gender identity (D'Ippoliti & Botti, 2017, p.79). Trans sex workers face a particular vulnerability for structural harm directed from policy and over-policing, but also have and overrepresentation as victims of violence (Lyons et al., 2017, p.182). When examining the experiences of structural and interpersonal violence faced by trans sex workers as told by trans sex workers, Lyons et al. (2017) find that:

> the social-structural contexts of transphobia and criminalization shaped trans sex workers' experiences of violence…gender was intimately intertwined with the remarkable violence trans sex workers experienced. This violence impacted working conditions and interactions with clients and police. In particular, transphobic violence and gender identity discovery tease out how transphobia, or cissexism, is at the core of the expectation that sex workers disclose their gender to every client…Lack of police response to violence against trans sex workers is [also] firmly rooted within the context of criminalization, where sex workers are considered criminals, and within the context of transphobia, where trans persons are framed as deviant. (p.186)

Violence and oppression are not guaranteed components of sex work, however it becomes apparent that due to the persistence of transphobia and other queerphobia, they are effects of oppressive and harmful articulations of power that work to maintain the marginalization of trans sex workers. However, when the particular experiences of trans sex workers have been highlighted by trans sex workers themselves, experiences are varied and are largely framed in a

diverse and positive way. Trans sex workers, as discussed by Adams (2020), frequently noted a particular enjoyment in performing sex work, as well as the prevalent community building amongst trans sex workers both in similar areas and within similar categories of sex work (p.273). Positivity of sex work experience, however, remains buried deep below the negative tropes around sex work and sex workers. This can be attributed to many factors, one of which is the sites that these tropes are perpetuated within – an no other site is as accessible as important to the perpetuating of tropes as media.

1.5: Media and its Effects

The ongoing contemporary crusades, both moral and legal, and representations of sex work have been mediated in a number of sites, however one of the most potent and accessible has been within media. Media, unlike other sites of condemnation and harm, presents harm in a vastly different way than the enforcement of policy, interpersonal interactions, or other avenues that have been paved through oppressive policy. Instead, media focuses on harm through representation – whether this is actively reproducing this harm through showcasing sex workers as the long-persisting tropes, or presenting representation that opposes the tropes that form the basis of negative understandings of sex work. These representations, however, are governed by sexual norms and moral rhetoric that shape what is acceptable within the social order (Martin, Schofield, & Butterworth, 2022, p.651). This social order is created and reified through stereotyping as a means of determining fixed boundaries and excluding any deviant depictions of sex, or in particular sexual labour, that works outside of what is considered normal (Hall, 2013, p.248). Stereotypes are then used to centre specific discourse over others to maintain both this social order as well as hierarchies of power and subordination. Power, thus, determines what is represented as “normal” and what is marked or classified as deviant (Hall, 2013, p.248-249).

Expanding on the effects of morally centred representations of sex work, Stegeman (2024) finds that “media present a common-sense discourse on sexuality, which provides knowledge about what sex is and how it can be spoken about…generally, mass media have reinforced the heteronormative normalisation of some sex over others” (p.333).

As media is understood as a site where we gather our understanding of the interplay between culture, politics, and society, media representations “comprise a key site for shaping popular discourse about” sex work and its related activities (Farvid & Glass, 2014, p.50; Lewis, 2009, p.91). Media has been identified “as central to the formation of perceptions of the sex industry,” while also key in both perpetuating and resisting tropes that lead to negative understandings of sex work and, at its most extreme, inflict harm on sex workers (Easterbrook-Smith, 2021, p.414). Narratives of sex work in media, as well as the representations commonly found within media texts of sex worker tropes and stereotypes showcase, as Hallgrímsdóttir et al. (2008):

> one arena in which social risk and dangers are reflected on and examined: here, people who work in the sex industry, and the places in which their activities occur, function as tropes for a range of purported social dangers (criminality, addiction, sexually transmitted infections, and moral malaise) and as vectors by which dangers are transmitted. The extent to which these media representations are constant…reveals that this symbolic function of sex work is far from new. (p.134)

By viewing use of harmful tropes in representations of sex work as a long-standing practice, it remains evident that there has been little pushback against this, or opportunities for alternative and more positive representations of sex work. Instead, sex work remains positioned as a deviant and sexually suspect behaviour that works in opposition to what is deemed morally correct and acceptable within a traditional moral backdrop that forms the basis of many forms of media (Hallgrímsdóttir et al., 2008, p.134; Phelan, 2022, p.750).

The moral backdrop and topes present in most sex work-related rhetoric also helps place workers within the gendered social order. Easterbrook-Smith (2022) finds that "within media representations the sex worker is almost always portrayed as a cisgender or [trans] woman" (p.1011). The gendered nature of sex work representation in media mirrors that of society at large – wherein women are connected to the act of selling sex with little-to-no variation. As sex work remains a highly gendered form of labour, representations of sex work in media are also both representative, and aid in influencing the social construction, of expected female sexual behaviour (Caldwell & de Wit, 2021, p.344). Expected female sexual behaviour, in this case, once again aligns with a conservative moral ideology, seeing sex as a private matter that occurs within a home, and most often, within a marriage as a means of procreation. This creates a dichotomous vision of sex work, based on assumptions of perversion and negative tropes about sex workers, to present an opposition to the sexual behaviour that supposedly works against conservative moral values. Here, sex workers are "depicted as women who operated from street corners in order to battle extreme poverty or to feed drug habits…[it is] performed by women, rather than men" (Ashford, 2008, p.37) while clients are men who are "suffering from relationship issues, sex addiction, sexual inadequacy, and sexual perversion" (DiTecco & Karaian, 2023, p.547). This crosses the boundaries of all forms of media, presenting tropes that traverse film, television, print media, literature, as well as online forms of media, among others.

One form of mass media that has been especially persistent with depicting sex work through stereotyping and the delineation between acceptable and deviant sexual behaviour has been news media. Ideally, news media presents a forum for political debate and presentation of information from an objective point of view, however in practice, news media becomes a central space of legitimizing and popularizing certain techniques of speaking about the sex industry

(Hallgrímsdóttir et al., 2008, p.120; Kleinen-von Konigslow, Post, & Schafer, 2019, p.520-521). This includes many of the negative tropes about sex work, but also aids in framing what exactly the "acceptable" perspective on sex work is in the eyes of the state and those following traditional moral value systems. As Reynolds (2021) notes:

> news media reinforce state-verified systems of knowledge and offer punitive and proactive strategies for addressing 'deviant' people and events…[therefore,] news media and other mass media produce an ideological regime as they define sexual deviance for popular audiences, effectively becoming moral authorities…news journalists rely on government, police, academic, and other institutional sources to produce moral leadership [that they, in turn, publish to the public] (p.682)

By presenting sex work through a perspective that once again frames it within a deviant sex narrative, and reifying the state-sanctioned victimization trope that has been attached to all sex workers as a method of maintaining marginalization, news media aids in perpetuating this by largely not including sex workers within these conversations and focusing attention elsewhere.

The sidelining of sex workers in news media and foregrounding of state-verified moral perspectives on sex work frequently hinders positive representations of sexual labour, if they are not removed entirely. In the rarity of positive representations of sex work, the all-too-familiar myths, tropes, and misconceptions of sex work can endure and thrive, overshadowing any attempts at resisting this representation. Similar to other forms of media, this endurance indicates a long-standing negativity bias towards sex work in news media specifically, a bias that traverses many contexts and occurs in outlets that are independently owned, part of a larger conglomerate network, as well as those that are state-funded. Expanding upon how this negativity bias materializes within news media, Weitzer (2018) states:

> The news media highlight worst cases of abuse, conflate prostitution with human trafficking, and rarely offer a positive (or even neutral) picture of sex workers and their clients. Television newscasts, newspapers, and online news reports often center on victimization, nuisances, street prostitution, trafficking, arrests, or raids on prostitution

> ‘‘rings’’ or businesses…News reports and magazine articles seldom offer a contrasting picture, although some prominent outlets have done so on occasion (p.721)

The negativity bias fuelling the reproduction of tropes in news media utilizes stereotypes and narratives of violence to maintain a specific social order that separates sex workers from all others. The negativity bias within news media also aids in perpetuating the gendered nature of sex work in the public consciousness, framing sex work consistently as a practice performed by women who are “morally and physically tarnished” (Emmanuel et al., 2023, p.94) and invoking the “innocent” women and children as a means of building media narratives in opposition to sex work.

Positioning sex workers in a subordinate position through negative depictions in news media mirrors broader subordination that has occurred through restrictive policy and anti-sex work sentiment spreading throughout public discourse on sexual labour. Through negativity bias and a reliance on both moral coding and perpetuating tropes about sex work, news media is a site of harm that lacks hesitation in the presentation of anti-sex work rhetoric, stories, and discourse. Because of this, mass media such as news media becomes central to the study of sex work and understanding the covert and explicit ways in which harm is inflicted on those subordinated by news discourse. This is particularly true when examining sex work-related stigma, as this thesis does, as there remains a great “distance between media stories and the reality in which sex workers live [which have] some profound implications” (Hallgrímsdóttir et al., 2008, p.134). By looking to the representation of sex work in news media in particular, this easily accessible form of media becomes a site of presenting moral and “acceptable” perspectives on sex work as the only perspective without leaving space for resistance to these narratives.

The lack of direct resistance that so often defines news reporting on sex work makes news media an interesting and rich medium to examine the ways in which sex work-related

tropes and representation lead to stigma development, and how this stigma is then reproduced and morphed into other stigmas. The throughlines of ideology that have occurred over time to develop these stigmas, and are maintained in a more contemporary sense, are most visible in news media. News reporting presents sex workers directly in relation to reports related to the law, continued crusades, questions of morality, and related narrative framings that are guided by ideology developed and cemented over time. With this in mind, this thesis aims to examine the intricacies of the anti-sex work stigma that develops out of the tropes about sex workers used in news media, including an analysis of who is asked to speak about sex work, what is being talked about, and how specific representations of sex work change the ways in which narratives about sexual labour are presented. As media presents a site for harm through stigma occurring both implicitly and explicitly, it is an interesting site for inquiry, particularly during the 2010s – a defining period for sex work in Canada that is defined by great change in terms of policy and public discourse. Though this thesis focuses on a single decade, it also aims to illustrate that while stigma is reproduced and changes over time, the ideological and moral backdrop has its origins in many ideological perspectives that have been observed through history in relation to sex work. The following chapter will outline the theoretical perspectives guiding this thesis' analysis of these phenomena.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: (RE)PRODUCING THE QUINTESSENTIAL WHORE

To capture the complexities of the reproduction of sex work stigma within news media, this thesis applies a feminist cultural studies lens to Goffman's work on stigma. Like many works on stigma, by grounding this thesis analytically in the work of Erving Goffman, stigma is understood as both a disgraced social identity and an ongoing social process of attaching disgrace to a social identity and managing this newly stigmatized identity. As the stigma attached to sex work is often gendered in nature, and the location of stigma examined in this thesis being in news media, feminist cultural studies is central to understanding the gendered power relations at play in relation to the cultural product(s) within which they take place. This is paired with a focus on rhetorical strategies utilized in media as a means of further marginalizing sex workers, particularly in using traditional and familiar narratives that include a hero, a victim, and a villain, are used in this context.

2.1: Stigma

Erving Goffman (1963) draws on the term 'stigma' used in ancient Greece through early Christianity that was used to describe bodily signs of otherness indicating an unusual or negative moral status (p.1). Using this term as a starting point, and focusing on interaction, Goffman moves stigma from these bodily markers to be understood as the social disgrace of otherness based on non-normative attributes. With this change, stigma comes to be defined by Goffman (1963) as a discrediting attribute that reduces an individual "from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one" that in turn showcases extensive and persistent effects on both identity and social relationships (p.3). Those that may have been perceived as accepted in certain social circumstance possess a particular trait that has been deemed to be outside of what is considered

"normal" in said circumstance, thus leading this individual to be associated with a stigma (Goffman, 1963, p.5). Goffman identified stigma as appearing as one of three distinct types: physical deformities, character defects, and tribal stigma specific to one's markers of identity and group membership. As he writes:

> first, there are abominations of the body – the various physical deformities. Next there are blemishes of individual character perceived as weak will, domineering or unnatural passions, treacherous and rigid beliefs, and dishonesty, these being inferred from a known record of, for example, mental disorder, imprisonment, addiction, alcoholism, homosexuality, unemployment, suicidal attempts, and radical political behaviour. Finally, there are the tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion, these being stigma that can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of a family. (Goffman, 1963, p.4)

In these distinct types of stigma, a consistent pattern emerges of otherness attached to the stigmatized, to highlight that the stigmatized individual has deviated from accepted social norms.

Though they deviate from accepted norms, stigmatized individuals share the same beliefs as those not stigmatized. Because of this, achieving acceptance becomes centralized to the stigmatized individual – shame, shortcomings, and failure become possibilities in the individual's attempt to achieve this acceptance while still possessing the discredited attribute that originated their stigma (Goffman, 1963, p.3; 7-8). Goffman (1963) notes that the shame, shortcomings, and failure become possible as the stigmatized individual is confronted with their own stigma upon interacting with those deemed "normal," an interaction that increases their uneasiness about how they are perceived (p.13-14). The interaction with 'normal' individuals leads stigmatized individuals to experience complications in everyday micro-level social situations and, in turn, lead the stigmatized individual to recognize and internalize their own stigma. This also aids in the development of a lower level of engagement with those that do not showcase the same spoiled identity.

Important to Goffman's notion of stigma specifically is the rejection of the idea that the stigmatized individual and normal individual are static categories in a two-role social process. Instead, Goffman notes that the stigmatized and the normal "are not persons but rather perspectives" (1963, p.138). Stigma is specific to the social situations that an individual finds themselves in, in relation to the norms in the context that said situations are occurring that are not realized by the stigmatized individual. The discussion of social situations leads Goffman to his extensive analysis of identity and impression management – a key factor in the stigmatized, or discredited, individual's search for acceptance. It is also in the discussion of stigma management that Goffman (1963) divides the self into the social identity and the personal identity: wherein the social identity exists at the level of social membership, and the personal identity emphasizes an individual's unique qualities that blend both biological facts and expressions of social identity (p.2; 57). The social identity, for Goffman, is where the stigmatization of an individual occurs and is analyzed, while the personal identity allows for the management of an individual's stigmatized identity and qualities that reinforce said stigma.

As a process connected to the personal identity, stigma management, as per Goffman (1963) is:

> an offshoot of something basic in society, the stereotyping or 'profiling' of our normative expectations regarding conduct and character; stereotyping is classically reserved for [those] who fall into very broad categories and who may be passing strangers to us…the area of stigma management, then, might be seen as something that pertains mainly to public life, to contact between strangers or mere acquaintances, to one end of a continuum whose other pole is intimacy. (p.51)

In placing stigma management in the context of strangers and public life, stigmatized individuals work to conceal, or manage, the noticeable attributes or differences of their personal identity that are stigmatized. This concealment acts as a means of appearing acceptable or "normal" and achieving social acceptance in situations where the dimensions of their identities are not known.

This understanding of stigma management leads Goffman to offering three techniques used by stigmatized individuals to conceal their differences, one such management strategy: passing, wherein attributes are able to be hidden in social scenarios and the stigmatized individual pretends to be "normal"; information control, or the process of the control of the release of information about certain attributes and the concealment of others on the part of the stigmatized individual, eliminating certain stigmatizing traits in social scenarios; and covering, the process of emphasizing or downplaying certain stigmatized attributes dependent on the social situation an individual finds themselves in (Goffman, 1963, p.73;91-95;102-103). It is through the management of stigmatized attributes within social situations that Goffman's understanding of the intricacies of stigma can be moved beyond discredited attributes that are reproduced through interaction, instead also recognized as a phenomenon and occurrence within larger social processes.

2.1.1: Stigma Power

Though Goffman never explicitly explored social structure and more conventional understandings of culture, opting to avoid engaging with large-scale issues in favour of more interaction-based analyses, many of his ideas have since been used to guide analyses into structural phenomenon. Goffman's writings, however, are not devoid of influence, control, and/or power. While subtle, these concepts begin to take shape within Goffman's discussions of the capacity for intentionality, such as the intention asserted within identity management, and the status of these structural concepts as a matter of, and impact on, everyday life (Jenkins, 2008, p.159; Smith & Jacobsen, 2019, p.20). In this way, Goffman's theorising of power, as Smith & Jacobsen (2019) note, is present but "is largely implicit, centring upon 'instrumental resources' such as social position and interpersonal skills (character, composure and the like) and also

‘infra-resources’ concerned with perceptions, information and access” (p.20). These resources lay the groundwork for understanding the influence of structural phenomenon and culture on the self, and thus, the positioning of the self within this structure and culture.

Stigma becomes a concept that easily transfers from Goffman’s implicit understanding of power to an understanding that places power and structural forces at the foreground, particularly as it relates to the self and identity. Building on Goffman’s understanding of stigma and bringing it into structural analysis, Link & Phelan (2001) see stigma as “entirely contingent on access to social, economic, and political power” (p.367). They argue that stigma occurs not only at the level of the individual but can also occur at group and structural levels. Whereas individuals are stigmatized through interactions with others, stigma can be attached to marginalized groups as a whole through both stereotyping and the maintenance of systems of oppression – leading to structural discrimination (p.372;379). They note that stigma, while affecting the person, will also affect the structure that this individual must navigate – exposing the discredited attributes of the stigmatized individual while simultaneously connoting a separation between the “us” (non-stigmatized) and “them” (stigmatized; discriminated) (Link & Phelan, 2001, p.370; 373). Thus, members of the stigmatized group experience discrimination on an individual basis based on group-level stigmas reproduced by large-scale institutions, such as the media. In this way, members of the stigmatized group must contend with, and experience, discrimination on an individual basis based on group-level stigmas that are reproduced by large-scale institutions.

The experiences of discrimination and group stigma, as well as the institutional reproduction of this, lead Link & Phelan (2014) to outline stigma power, defined as “the instances in which stigma processes achieve the aims of stigmatizers with respect to the exploitation, management, control or exclusion of others” (p.24). The introduction of power

directly to the concept of stigma allows for the influence on structure, and structural influence on an individual's experiences with stigma, to become apparent. The process and effects of stigma power are expanded upon by highlighting:

> Structural discrimination disadvantages stigmatized groups cumulatively over time via social policy, laws, institutional practices, or negative attitudinal social contexts…Such structural-level factors can serve to keep people down, in, or away, and while they are often extremely explicit and directly discriminatory, they nevertheless exempt individual stigmatizers from the burden or embarrassment of directly exercising discrimination. From a stigma-power perspective an individual stigmatizer's interests need not be expressed or even acknowledged as his/her aims are effectively achieved at the macro-level. (Link & Phelan, 2014, p.25)

Stigma power positions discrimination as a structural inevitability, a tool used by stigmatizers on a large scale to ensure that those considered to be normal, and those considered to be marginalized, maintain this positioning. Discredited identities are cemented within structural factors such as policy, relieving non-stigmatized individuals from the duty of discrediting at a micro level, instead allowing for the deferral to the stigmatization enacted within the cultural system.

2.1.2: Gender and Stigma

Stigma power, and the use of Goffman's work at a structural level more generally, allows for easier access to analyses of particular stigmas and discrimination. One example of this has been gender-based discrimination, highlighting both the explicit and implicit use of the theoretical foundations developed by Goffman in a number of feminist works, similar to the ways in which his work has been used in analyzing structural phenomenon. Explained concisely by West (1996):

> Goffman's legacy to this field is twofold: an appreciation of how power works [broadly and] in spoken interaction between women and men, and an appreciation of mundane conversation as the means of discovering this… [alongside this,] Goffman's greatest gift to feminist theory is baldly apparent: opening up the possibility of studying the "personal" –

> even as we find it on the streets, in talk, in public and private places – as a sociological topic. (p.362)

In using Goffman in a feminist perspective, interaction and larger-scale structural uses of power are intertwined when considering issues relating to gender. By pairing micro analysis while examining gender from a macro lens, (inter)personal experiences of the effects of enduring gendered subordination present more meaningful and detailed sociological critique of the ways in which power is enacted to maintain the gendered order. This injection of (inter)personal experience showcases the effects of gendered structural phenomenon in everyday life, and the ways in which this phenomenon, and at times discrimination, must be navigated.

One such feminist topic of study that has been greatly impacted by Goffman, and the introduction of micro-sociological analysis into feminist theorizing, is stigma and the dimensions of the discredited identity within the gendered order. This focus begins with Goffman (1977), uncharacteristically moving beyond simple interaction and into analysis of the public order, discussing the various justifications given for women's oppression. He finds that structural forces use supposed physical differences between genders as a source of social difference, creating a division that sees men as dominant and women and other genders as subordinate (p.301-302). This justification of oppression highlights that the gendered division aligns with stigma division at a structural level. In this way, 'man' is equated with the stigmatizer who holds the authority to discriminate and determine what is deemed to be acceptable, while 'woman' and other genders are equated with the stigmatized, leading to their exploitation and exclusion due to their discredited gender (Kleinman & Cabaniss, 2019, p.128). This discrediting along gendered lines indicates that men hold the stigma power when looking at this on a large-scale, leading all others who do not identify as male to contend with this and manage their spoiled identities both interpersonally and in facing social contexts developed through policy and discrimination.

2.1.3: Sex Work, Stigma, and the "Whore"

The processes of stigma and identity management outlined by Goffman (1963), as well as Link & Phelan's developments of stigma power (2014), are helpful for understanding stigma in the context of feminist analysis, and the stigmatization of sex work in particular. Sex workers occupy an interesting position in the categorization of stigmatized and discredited identities, as they fall under more than one of Goffman's stigma types. For sex workers, not only are their bodies conceptualized as abominations based on their labour, but the decision to perform this labour is considered to be a blemish on the workers' individual character. This is further complicated when recognizing the effects of structural discrimination on much of the policy that determines the level of tolerance given to sex work. Given that group-based stigma may be pushing members of some social groups out of the labour market, those who engage in sex work as an alternative, a potentially lucrative form of labour, must now interact with policies that aim to criminalize sex work or related activities - thereby exacerbating the experiences of structural oppression that make sex work a viable form of labour in the first place.

Thus, stigma for sex workers is all-encompassing and pervasive both individually and on a larger scale, making it "one of the most important problems in sex work" (Weitzer, 2018, p.717) to date. Speaking specifically to stigma in the context of sexual labour, Bruckert (2012) notes:

> not only is sex work on the margins of legality, and subject to a specifically moral stigma, but the occupational stigma [of sex work] is constructed as a personal attribute so that the implications extend beyond the sphere of work and the label…[permeating] across social space. (p.58)

However, one specific stigma experienced by sex workers has been supersedes many others: the "whore" stigma (Bruckert, 2012, p.58). Whore stigma frames sex workers as immoral, hypersexual, dirty, and criminal as both victim and victimizer (Benoit et al., 2020, p.82;

Bruckert, 2012, p.58). Derived from the sexist perception of the public threat of the sexually liberated woman, whore stigma has become attached directly to sex work and is pervasive not only in the lives and labour of sex workers, but is a driving force behind much of the policy and enforcement that governs sex work in Canada (Benoit et al, 2020, p.82; Stardust et al, 2021, p.143). Therefore, this all-permeating stigma, operating at the interpersonal and structural levels, presents challenges across time and contexts to the sex worker, the job itself, and perceptions of sex work from non-sex-working individuals who in social space are recognized as reflecting what is 'normal'. To fully understand whore stigma, however, also requires an understanding of its misogynistic bases in culture and cultural production more generally, a task taken up by combining this understanding of stigma with a lens of feminist cultural studies.

2.2: Culture and Feminist Cultural Studies

To introduce feminist cultural studies in proper and detailed way, it is important to begin by outlining cultural studies generally, as well as how those that use this perspective conceptualize culture and its many features. Cultural studies is a theoretical framework that focuses on power relations in the context of cultural products, cultural production, and the meanings behind everything that is produced. All meaning-making and cultural product is intertwined with the structures of power within which they are defined and produced. In this way, as Winter (2013) points out, "cultural studies is characterized by focusing its analysis on tensions, contradictions and conflicts that arise in the process of production and analysis of data and by generating at times surprising insights on the connection between different perspectives" (p.248). This focused-yet-flexible theoretical framework presents researchers using this perspective with the interdisciplinary "opportunity to approach whatever social or institutional process one studies…with long-established questions aimed at understanding power as relations of attention

[and production]" (Murray, 2020, p.448). When examining cultural products, production, and meanings however, it is important to determine what is considered 'culture'.

Conceptually, culture can be difficult to define - often requiring a delineation between what is a cultural object, popular culture, high culture, etc. In this way, culture is all-encompassing of everything from the concept of an idea to an object to the impact of a person. Stuart Hall (2013) puts forth a definition that takes this delineation away and attempts to formulate an overall concept of culture, defining it as:

> not so much a set of things - novels and paintings or tv programmes and comics - as a process, a set of practices. Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings - the 'giving and taking of meaning' - between the members of a society or group. To say that two people belong to the same culture is to say that they interpret the world in roughly the same ways and can express themselves, their thoughts and feelings about the world, in ways which will be understood by each other. Thus, culture depends on its participants interpreting meaningfully what is happening around them, and 'making sense' of the world, in broadly similar ways…above all, cultural meanings…organize and regulate social practices, influence our conduct and consequently have real, practical effects. (p.xix)

This definition showcases the complexities of culture, being both created by and informing the social context in which it operates. Contextualized meaning becomes the defining feature of culture – this meaning changing depending on who creates, and who consumes, the cultural product while also indicating who holds power in a particular context. Because this change in meaning depends on context, it is often those with power that determines the meaning that is acceptable, achieved through centring their own ideologies and formulating the proper site to disseminate these ideologies. It is here that media becomes central to culture and its (re)production, as it is an easily accessible and digestible space for ideology to be reified.

Hall (1981) finds that "the media's main sphere of operations is the production and transformation of ideologies" (p.31), and it is through this production and transformation that ideology becomes articulated in culture, moving beyond an individual's perspective and toward

an understanding taken up on a large scale. To inject these ideologies into the collective understanding of a topic, power in media texts acts in both explicit and implicit ways: working hegemonically to signify what is acceptable and what is not through the inclusion of particular language intentionally, and the unconscious development of knowledge and meaning through this language (Hall, 1981, p.32; McRobbie, 2005, p.14). Media, therefore, becomes a site of the production of culture that is tasked with defining, both consciously and unconsciously, meaning while disseminating this throughout the general public in a way that offers little room for questioning and critiquing this ideology.

As culture is meaning defined within a given social context, and meaning is determined by ideology put forth by those holding power in this context and its dissemination through media texts, this notion of culture and its production then becomes the central tenet and defining feature of cultural studies. Cultural studies identifies the relationship "between cultural practice (both ordinary and exceptional) and the structures of influence and control in any given historical conjuncture" (Murray, 2020, p.442), looking to both the cause and the effect of culture and its meanings. It is with this cause and effect that a focus on representation becomes important to foundational questions within cultural studies, outlined by Barker (2001) stating:

> a good deal of cultural studies is centred on questions of representation; that is, on how the world is socially constructed and represented to and by us in meaningful ways. Indeed, the central strand of cultural studies can be understood as the study of culture as the signifying practices of representation. This requires us to explore the textual generation of meaning. It also demands investigation of the modes by which meaning is produced in a variety of contexts. Further, cultural representations and meanings have a certain materiality. That is, they are embedded in [all media texts]. (p.8)

Representation allows for the development of a bridge between cultural production and consumption, as well as a more explicit view of the structures of power behind ideologies and meaning within this culture.

It is with this pairing of representation and cultural production/dissemination that ideas of resistance are introduced to the cultural studies landscape. Winter (2013) outlines the place of resistance in cultural studies as:

> [occupying] a very important role in the analysis of lived experiences and practices. That it is still of such significance demonstrates that cultural studies considers cultural and media processes in the context of social and cultural inequality as well as considering it part of the structures of power. Also, its perspective is always that of the underclass, subjugated or marginalized, which registers and analyses suffering from society and grief in the world but at the same time would also like to reveal the possibility of utopia and social transformation. (p.250)

The centering of resistance in discussions of representation and cultural production more broadly presents an opportunity to focus cultural studies to a variety of perspectives based in experiences of marginalization and relationships to power. This can include resistance to negative representations, the perpetuation of stereotypes, and the reproduction of stigma, among others. Important to this thesis is the focus on gender and its intersections in cultural production and dissemination, the basis for feminist cultural studies.

The persistence of the presence of power and its related ideologies, and the attention that must be given to questions of representation and resistance against these marginalizing ideologies, has been used as a jumping-off point for additional perspectives to be added to this theoretical framework. One of which is the addition of a feminist perspective to examinations of cultural production, dissemination, and consumption. Famously, Stuart Hall referred to the introduction of feminism to cultural studies as “the thief in the night, it broke in; interrupted, made an unseemly noise, seized the time, crapped on the table of cultural studies” (Brunsdon, 1996, p.278). Moving beyond a supposedly interruptive sensibility that was noted initially by Hall, Steiner (2014) presents a more celebratory and nuanced understanding of the disruption of

feminism to the male-dominated space of cultural studies, defining a feminist cultural studies perspective as one that:

> applies philosophies, concepts, and logics articulating feminist principles and concepts to media processes such as hiring, production, and distribution; to patterns of representation in news and entertainment across platforms; and to reception…[recognizing that] feminist theorizing is explicitly political. It addresses power…Moreover, [feminist cultural studies] takes gender seriously – as a factor that structures identity and experiences – without assuming permanent or static gender differences. Instead gender intersects with other dimensions of identity such as race, class, ability, nationhood, and sexual orientation, as well as with the relations of subordination or domination that these categories carry along. (p.359)

Here, gender is placed directly onto cultural analysis. Whereas a traditional cultural studies perspective focuses mainly on the presence and intricacies of power within culture and cultural production generally, feminist cultural studies identifies the particular ways in which power, and its ideologies, is gendered. In this way, also central to this perspective is to recognize the importance, and gendered nature, of cultural production itself as well as the cultural products being produced (Click & Press, 2015, p.2).

A feminist cultural studies perspective "is more attentive to communication and culture as material practices and to the conditions of textual production…[focusing on] the ways in which texts, audiences, and industries are enmeshed with one another" through gender and gendered relations (McLaughlin, 2009, p.110). This is central to using this perspective to interrogate and critique the gendered nature of cultural products, and the ways in which these products, particularly media texts, uphold hegemonic understandings of what is being represented. Thus, as per Bachmann, Harp, & Loke (2018), using a feminist cultural studies perspective:

> [addresses] the multiple dichotomies and dualisms that have served to justify women's taken-for-granted lesser status, including the public/private divide, and the concepts of reason/emotion, mind/body, and subject/object. While these notions are more interrelated than what a dichotomous categorization might suggest, they have proven to be persistent in media discourses, and are often presented as common-sense differences that serve to dominate and relegate women to inferior status…expos[ing] patriarchal notions that set up

> the male (or masculine) as the norm, and the female (or feminine) as 'the other' and underscores the roles of media as contemporary mediators of hegemony, what is socially acceptable, and what should be accepted as reality. (p.4)

It is this dichotomous understanding of the world within media texts that aids in upholding hegemonic relations under patriarchy of the subordination of anyone that is outside of the norm. Importantly, though these dichotomies remain plentiful in cultural production, feminist cultural studies has also maintained the inclusion of analyses of patriarchal hegemony outside of the rigid binaries of male/female and masculine/feminine. Recognizing in addition the "fragmented, fluid identities" and the vast range of subordinated peoples as they are represented in, and produced through, media texts (Balsamo, 1991, p.64).

A key point of cultural production and product that aids in the upholding of gendered relations outlined under patriarchal hegemony is language. An important question when using a feminist cultural studies perspective is asking not only what is said, but also interrogating who is talking to whom, and for what purpose is specific language chosen (McRobbie, 1993, p.137). In this way, when looking to media texts as cultural products representative of hegemonic gendered relations, the language used and included in media texts becomes a place to "explore how subjectivity and identification are constituted through language, and how language operates as a key site for the exercise of power…language [also acting as] a vehicle for the exercise of power" (King, 2018, p.382). It is the use of specific language where meaning is most-explicitly outlined, and ideologies and discourse(s) are used to perpetuate certain hegemonic and gendered ideals. This is particularly true of language used to organize statuses within society, often to reinforce gendered hierarchies of men holding dominance and power, while and legitimizing the subordination and oppression of women and those existing outside of the "ideal" hegemonic male identity (Bachmann, Harp, & Loke, 2018, p.3-4). Language is also where particular

discourse and ideology determine the representation of particular subjects, and subsequently resistance to these representations when necessary, in media. In this way, "the manner of [gendered] representation reflects the biases and assumptions of those who define the public—and therefore the media—agenda" (Gallagher, 2013, p.23). Because of this, unequal and gendered power relations persist through their representation in media, and thus, in culture.

2.3: Narrative Frames, Rhetorical Strategies, and Reproduction

Important within any media discourse, but particularly in the production and dissemination of specific narratives and reproduction of stigma in news media, is rhetoric and the strategies used to develop and legitimize said rhetoric. This is especially true when reporting on a highly contentious topic such as sex work, a topic where (often gendered) discourse, representation, and marginalizing ideologies flourish and the rhetorical strategies dictating word choice and language used have immense impact on the lives of sex workers. In this way, "political discourse is not merely a transparent medium of communication or simply an epiphenomenal by-product of other factors. Language – and particularly political language – is itself an important tool of politics…[one that is] likely badly underestimate[d in] its persuasive force" (Saurette & Gordon, 2018, p.19-21). As this political language is included in the process of cultural production, it moves from the voices given authority on the subject such as policymakers and police, and through news media as a means of reaching the general public. This, in turn, providing guidance of the culturally acceptable narratives on a given topic – in this case, the tolerance of sex work.

The role of the narrative within political rhetoric and cultural production utilizing this rhetoric, is to formulate an understanding of reality that follows what is deemed tolerable and acceptable on the part of those with authority – whether that be those represented positively

within cultural product or those in charge of producing said products. Narrative, therefore, can be defined in this context as "the accentuation and emplotment of particular problems or turning points in a way that indicates both causation and a normatively desirable resolution" (Szostek, 2018, p.72). Here, the development of a narrative plays the part of legitimizing what is representative of what one considers to be normal and what is cast aside as deviant. Also, importantly, narrative determines who is given the power and authority to speak and further develop these narratives. Noting the power of narrative within a political context, such as the one that reporting on sex work exists within, Patterson & Monroe (1998) find that:

> Insofar as narratives affect our perceptions of political reality, which in turn affect our actions in response to or in anticipation of political events, narrative plays a critical role in the construction of political behavior. In this sense, we create and use narratives to interpret and understand the political realities around us. We do this as individuals and we do it as collective units, as nations or groups. (p.315-316)

This creation and interpretation is done at times as a collective, however when introducing the gendered cultural production of mass media, and more specifically news media, to this idea, interpretation of these narratives is completed before reaching the general public. This interpretation through reporting, in turn, will often reinforce the narratives put forth by those with authority and present stories that ensure political behaviour falls in line with said narratives.

The idea of narrative and the development of stories has long-been connected to the cultural production and consumption of fictional works and other literature that employs this structure of storytelling. However, by applying this to the production and consumption of non-fictional cultural products that include political rhetoric of contentious topics such as sex work and the stigma related to it can highlight the immense impact this has had on the political understanding of the topic. Similar to Saurette & Gordon's (2018) findings regarding the use of rhetoric in the anti-abortion movement, rhetoric in news reporting about sex work relies on easily

recognizable narrative frames that indicate the heroes, victims, and villains within a particular story. This process of using recognizable narrative frames functions to ensure the success of discourse through reinforcing explicit and politicized arguments in subtle ways (Saurette & Gordon, 2018, p.21). These implicit arguments in explicit stories are determined by the roles given to specific actors (or characters) within the story. This process of discourse as it is connected to narrative and role is outlined by Saurette & Gordon (2018) as follows:

> These stories generally revolve around three main characters: the victim who needs to be rescued, the hero who rescues the victim, and the villain who harms the victim and stands in the way of the hero…the villain represents what the discourse cannot accept; the victim represents the honourable principles that must be protected/rescued from an injustice; and the hero is the device that gives nobility, honour, emotional resonance or motivation, and moral worth to the political quest. (p.278)

What is most noticeable in these roles as described by Saurette & Gordon is the inclusion of both acceptability (tolerance) and morality – two central concepts to familiar narratives of storytelling, but also two central concepts in the rhetoric surrounding, and reproduction of stigma related to, sex work within cultural production.

2.3.1: Rhetoric and Sex Work

As sex work is so intertwined with rhetorical strategies focused on tolerance and morality discourse within the gendered cultural production of news media, the body becomes a site for this discourse, and the narrative frames that accompany it, to be projected upon. Within cultural production that is as rapid and readily available as news media, the sex working body becomes, as Werner (2020) notes, a politicized cultural symbol (p.99). News media emphasizes the rhetorical strategy of familiar narratives by moving beyond strictly reporting on sex work as a form of labour and events related to this, instead opting to also include instances of showcasing sex working bodies in both the written form and photographs. This representation is frequently negative, reporting police intervention, poor living conditions, and the supposed negative

impacts that performing sexual labour has on the body. This negative focus has been critiqued by scholars such as Werner (2020):

> The bodies of sex workers – and those profiled as sex workers – are seen by many to exemplify victimhood and criminality, characterizations that sex-work activism both seeks and struggles to counteract by shifting focus away from sexual acts of bodies and to the material conditions under which those bodies labour. (p.99-100)

This proliferation of the sex working body's connection to victimhood and criminality, playing the roles of the victim and the villain respectively, further emphasizes the role of stigma in news reporting. These stigmatized assumptions of sex workers maintains the movement of stigma from the practice to the body, making not framing sexual labour as intolerable, but also sex workers themselves. Rarely is the sex working body cast in a positive light in news media, as most of the infrequent positive (or heroic) stories about sex work focus on general discussions of changing legislation and activist efforts, rather than focusing on sex workers themselves.

What becomes vital in the use rhetorical strategies when discussing sex work is the placement of the sex worker and sex working body in each of the familiar roles within the determined narrative. At any given time, sex workers are framed as the heroes, the victims, the villains, or on occasion some combination of the three. The non-exclusive paradigms of heroes, victims, and villains as they apply to sex work in news media become explicitly clear when looking at how sexual labour is framed, and the policy that accompanies said frame, within news reports. For the purposes of this thesis, the orientation of sex workers as the heroes, victims, and villains are clearly defined by their representation within the gendered cultural product of news reports and their connection to particular policy perspectives. Sex workers as heroes are agentic workers operating within an oppressive system. Policies that integrate and decriminalize recognize this narrative, as do news reports that follow this perspective and include the perspectives of sex workers when discussing sex work. Sex workers as victims follow a saviour

narrative born out of human trafficking discourse. Here, sex workers are framed as helpless bodies without agency being forced to engage in exploitative sexual practices. Policy that is restrictive of consensual sex work or connects consensual sex work to trafficking, as well as news reports conflating sex work and trafficking, perpetuate the sex worker as victim narrative. Finally, the sex worker as villain is a stigmatized nuisance that must be eradicated from the communities within which they work. In this way, sex workers are seen as dangerous and intolerable immoral beings. Repressive policy and much of the news coverage that frames sex work as a criminal act and/or posing a threat follows this narrative.

This orientation of hero-victim-villain in the context of sex work will guide this thesis' exploration of stigma found in news media discourse when reporting on sex work. Alongside this orientation, stigma and feminist cultural studies are used, working in tandem to develop a nuanced and well-rounded understanding of the ways in which sex work stigma operates within news media. On their own, these theories provide only partial perspectives when examining sex work, and in particular sex work stigma in the context of news media. However, when applying a feminist cultural studies lens to stigma, particularly when looking to the deployment of familiar narrative frames when discussing sex work, the far reach and persistence of whore stigma and its reproduction through news reporting becomes apparent. With this theoretical foundation in mind, the following chapter presents the methodologies used in the analysis portion of this project.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY: AN UNDERSTANDING FROM ALL ANGLES

To examine both broad general patterns and deeper contextually specific dimensions of how sex work is discussed in written news reports, I conducted a directed content analysis and a critical discourse analysis, both informed by a critical intersectional feminist lens. These methods in tandem work to "yield a comprehensive understanding within and across the data set…and to allow for the multifaceted and historically contingent character of the phenomenon under study to be revealed" (Feltham-King & Macleod, 2016, p. 2). By using a content analysis, we get an idea of "the big picture" – introducing analysis of larger-scale patterns within the sample. By pairing this with a critical discourse analysis, we can locate more nuances, working together to help us understand both the breadth and the complexity of the subject of sex work amidst a period of great change that occurred in Canada between 2010 and 2019.

The critical intersectional feminist epistemology guiding these analyses recognizes that "subjectivity is constituted by mutually reinforcing vectors of race, gender, glass, and sexuality," among others (Nash, 2008, p.2). Moving beyond analyses that look at experiences of oppression as inherently separate, or use addition when examining multiple forms of oppression, intersectionality looks to the interaction between power and social difference within a multidimensional understanding of this oppression (Crenshaw, 1989, p.140; Ham, 2020, p.552; Nash, 2008, p.2). Looking at systems of power and lived experiences of oppression, intersectionality provides critical insight into the operation of systems of oppression and their effects on the lives of those marginalized by these systems, as well as better insight into the complexities of the social world and the identities that make said world up (Hill Collins, 2015, p.2; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016, p.1). For studies of sex work, intersectionality provides a particularly critical lens for examining marginalization through the perspectives of the

marginalized and those wielding power to further marginalize. This is especially helpful when focusing on how discussions of the topic in an easily accessible format such as news reporting, and the discourse that backs these discussions, shape how sex work is perceived and placed within familiar narrative frames to either further, or manage, sex work-related stigma.

3.1: Data Collection and Sampling

The data used for these analyses came from a random sample of 100 online news reports about sex work from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) published between 2010-2019. This range of dates (one decade) was chosen to represent a period of change to Canadian sex work, coinciding with the Bedford v Canada charter challenge (2009-2013), the introduction and ascension of *Bill C-36 [PCEPA]* (2014), as well as the years that followed the changes to the criminal code of Canada introduced in *Bill C-36*. These dates also cover the navigation of a new legal context for performing sex work and purchasing sex in Canada, as well as the rise of new forms of sex work. These new forms of sex work include self-managed and self-produced labour and content, exemplified by the rapid rise of more readily available and easily accessible online sex work platforms (Rouse & Salter, 2021).

The sample was drawn from text-only reports published by the CBC, a national public broadcaster with a vast digital publication record (Decillia & McCurdy, 2016, p.548). Text-only reports from the CBC include those that are written by staff reporters, freelance reporters, as well as those developed from other news organizations (such as the Associated Press). Output from the CBC showcases several differing political perspectives, reporters, and perspectives on the subject of sex work at a national level. The CBC was used specifically to ensure that the reports selected for the sample were focused on a singular publication. This was to limit the sample for this thesis so it did not become too broad, while still including a range of perspectives on a

politicized and at times controversial topic such as sex work. The national scale of the CBC was also beneficial to the development of the sample – while many articles examined are specific to provinces and/or territories, it was important that they either refer back to, or showcase results of, changes to sex work policy and conceptualizations that have occurred nationally.

A sampling frame was first developed by searching the CBC news website using the keywords “sex work” and “prostitution” to locate all reports that refer to sex work. Criteria for inclusion were reports being longer than a single paragraph, published between 2010 and 2019, and reference sex work in a Canadian context in some way. This initial search returned 4278 text-only reports, as well as 212 reports that included audio, video, or other multimedia features, that were ultimately excluded. The 4278 reports that fit the inclusion criteria were then randomly numbered from 1 to 4278. Using a random number generator, 100 reports were then chosen at random to make up the final sample for the content analysis portion of this thesis. A sample of 100 reports was chosen to have an even number that is large enough to contain a great deal of content to analyze while still remaining focused enough to warrant a more qualitative form of content analysis rather than another method. As shown in Table 1, the frequency of news reports from this random sample of 100 news reports peaked in 2014 with 20 reports in that year. The years following also saw a higher frequency of reports when compared to years 2010-2013.

Table 1
Distribution of News Reports by Year of Publication Included in Sample

Date	Number of Reports
2010	8
2011	3
2012	7
2013	7
2014	20
2015	10
2016	14
2017	10
2018	12
2019	9
N=	100

The sample of 100 reports made up the basis for the directed content analysis portion of this thesis. A complete list of the reports included can be found in Appendix III. Once the content analysis was complete, ten news reports[1] were purposefully selected from the random sample of 100 to perform the critical discourse analysis portion of this thesis. Articles were selected if they were at least 250 words to ensure adequate content for analysis and best reflected results of the

[1] The reports included in the purposive sample for the critical discourse analysis are as follows:
Bell, R. & McConnell, R. (2016, July 27). Edmonton kids sold as sex workers, as teen prostitution becomes more common.
CBC News. (2012, July 13). Police open office in popular prostitution area.
CBC News. (2012, November 13). Ad campaign takes aim at prostitution.
CBC News. (2014, June 5). Calgary police chief praises ottawa's prostitution bill.
Dubinski, K. (2019, January 9). Don't mix up sex work and sex trafficking, advocates for workers say.
Dubinski, K. (2019, June 13). Selling sex is 'a societal blight,' crown argues in prostitution charter challenge.
Estabrooks, T. (2015, August 4). 'Girls' keep working streets despite serial predator warning.
McCue, D. (2015, December 9). Sex workers come out of the shadows to perform the hooker monologues.
O'Malley, K. (2014, September 11). Sex workers speak out as senate hearings wrap up.
Soloducha, A. (2017, October 15). 'The biggest injustice in the world': Regina marches for local human trafficking victims.

content analysis. This includes reports that had an overwhelming number of terms that were included in the coding frame of the content analysis (outlined in the next section), spoke directly to sex work stigma, and/or made use of one or more of the familiar narrative frames (hero-victim-villain) in its language.

3.2: Broadly Speaking – Directed Content Analysis

Content analysis provides a mixed quantitative and qualitative method that can help identify broad patterns in written, visual, or other media. (Deacon et al., 2007, p.119; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1277). Content analyses studying media first began with Max Weber's (1910) study of trends of social change, examining changes to newspaper content and advertisements crossing generations. The method was further advanced as a systematic method by Harold Lasswell (1927) in his study of propaganda as a mode of communication that uses specific and intentional language (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p.10; Macnamara, 2018, p.192). The goal of such analyses is to make visible elements of culture, politics, representation, power, or any other dimensions of the social world that may be taken for granted or otherwise unseen.

Emerging from a more positivist epistemological tradition, the aim of content analysis is to "validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework… [providing] predictions about variables of interest or about the relationships among variables" within the confines of the subject being examined (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1281). A directed content analysis in particular takes a structured approach beginning with a review of previous literature, working to assess the degree of support for the initial theory and to offer descriptive evidence to answer and illustrate the research question (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1281-1282). However, contemporary content analyses employ not only principles of deduction, but also tend to incorporate more inductive qualitative methods in order to allow for novel insights not yet found in the literature.

The quantitative component of content analysis typically counts the frequency of use of particular keywords using coding sheets of terms deduced from the previous literature. As this form of coding simply counts key words, largely ignoring the context or discursive meaning of each term (Coe & Seacco, 2017; Deacon et al., 2007), most content analyses are coupled with a qualitative analysis to inductively explore the context of the counted words during the same coding process. Mayring (2000) sees this as "an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models, without rash quantification."

Given its epistemological foundation, content analyses are often assessed for their attention to issues of generalizability, internal validity and reliability, and transparency (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p.6). Generalizability of findings (i.e. external validity) is accomplished through random sampling; internal validity (accurate measurement) and reliability (consistent measurement) is achieved by carefully developing codes in a standardized coding sheet that have been validated in the literature and through researcher testing; and transparency is achieved through detailed reporting of the methods and results obtained in the research process. By engaging in these practices, successful content analyses should be both representative of the sample and easily replicable (Coe & Scacco, 2017, p.3-5).

3.2.1: Coding

The coding scheme for the directed content analysis is comprised of fifty primary codes, representing both manifest and latent content; details for which can be found in a codebook in Appendix IV. The development of the coding scheme began with a thorough review of the literature in order to identify and define the concepts needed to test the theory that sex workers are stigmatized within narrative framing that makes use of familiar roles of the hero, the victim,

and the villain, as well as any additional themes or terms that came up frequently in past research. This was followed up by an exploratory analysis of ten news reports (ultimately excluded from the final 100 reports) from the same date range of 2010-2019 published by the CBC. As shown in Table 2, these codes were categorized as: hero – "sex work is work," victim "they must be saved," villain "the quintessential whore," and the social and political environment. These categories included pro- and anti-sex work language, varying conceptualizations of sex work that signalled the use of specific narrative frames, as well as sociopolitical factors that help contextualize what has been observed in the sample and the environment that surrounds sex work.

Table 2

Categorization of Codes Sorted into the Hero, Victim, Villain Narrative Frames and the Social and Political Environment that Surrounds Sex Work

Narrative Frames				**Social & Political Environment**
Hero **"Sex Work is Work"**	***Victim*** **"They Must be Saved"**	***Villain*** **"The Quintessential Whore"**		
Activism	Abuse	Community safety		Bill C-36
Decriminalization	At risk	Criminal		Enforcement
Activist demonstrations or events	Danger	Criminalization		Harper government
Labour	Exploitation/ Exploitative	Dangerous		Legalization vs decriminalization debates
Types of sex work other than street-based sex work	Forced	Derogatory terms		Non-sex worker perspective(s) included in reports
Organization	"Modern day slavery"	Dirty		PCEPA
Sex Work	"Must be saved"	Epidemic		Policing
"Sex work is work"	Prostituted	Morality		Policy
	Prostitution	Morally wrong/ Immoral		Quotes from non-sex workers
	Protection	Nuisance		Regulation
	Sex trade	Perpetrator		Sex worker (and/or activist) perspective(s) and/or direct quotes included in reports
	Shame	Risky		
	Slavery	Target		
	Trafficking	Vermin		
	Victim			
	Violence			
	Vulnerable			

The role of the villain, labelled here as the quintessential whore as a means of recognizing the intentional and pervasive whore stigma attached to this role, presents stigma in an explicit and more overt way. The sex worker as villain within news reports included in the sample for this thesis plays into the trope of sex workers as risky criminals that pose an immediate threat to the communities within which they work. In turn, this trope expels them from community membership and makes necessary harm reduction strategies less readily available. This reinforces the role of the villain itself, framing sex workers as corrupting and immoral forces targeting the "innocent" communities that police and government officials (framed in this narrative as the hero) must protect.

The familiar narrative role of the victim plays into the assumption that all sex workers have participated in sexual labour by force rather than by choice. The negative perspective that drives the continuation of this role in news reporting has intertwined sex work with coerced acts such as non-consensual sexual acts and human trafficking. Underscored by the introduction of *PCEPA* in 2014, referring to sex workers as "exploited persons" throughout the legislation and its title, the victim role became the foremost role throughout the 2010s. The sex worker as victim removes all agency from sex workers themselves, painting them instead as helpless individuals forced into a violent and abusive practice that must be rescued. Police and government officials are once again positioned as the heroes in this context, while the labour itself, third parties, and purchasers of sex are all positioned as the villain aiming to further victimize sex workers.

A lack of agency typically defines the role of the victim attached to sex workers; however, to allow for the possibility of sex workers to be described as holding agency, the hero is also included in the coding schema. The sex worker as hero role centres around a recognition of sex work as a legitimized and acceptable form of labour, and sex workers as agentic workers

simply doing a job in exchange for payment – much like any other form of work. The hero role also recognizes the immense sex work activism that has taken place in the 2010s in Canada, and efforts to decriminalize sex work. With sex workers occupying the hero role, the role of the villain is represented by both policy that aims to eradicate sex work, and those that produce and enforce this policy. The explicit role of the victim is noticeably absent, however, presenting a more positive representation overall of sex work and sex workers.

As this thesis also takes a critical intersectional feminist lens, specific mentions of demographic information and/or recognition of any matrices of identity were noted. The following list were chosen as identity variables to observe within the sample: age, ability, class/socioeconomic status, gender, Indigeneity, racialization, and sexuality (expanded upon in Appendix IV). Each mention of one of these variables was tallied to allow for a deeper examination into how discussions of sex work are guided by the power allocated to various matrices of identity status.

Using the categorized coding schema, each news report included in the sample of 100 was read using a checklist of said schema. Each code that was present in each report was noted, as well as the number of times each code appeared in the reports being examined. This data was then compiled into a single data file in Excel. Any seemingly relevant data that cannot be coded using the coding schema are included in the data file and inspected to determine if these data are truly relevant and should represent a new code or if they can be discarded as irrelevant. Once data were collected, broad patterns that emerged in support of, or extending, initial relevant literature or theories or answer the research question directly were noted in the same data file. Broad patterns were also used in comparison to the number of occurrences that other codes in the

schema appeared in the reports examined, particularly as they corresponded to the existing categories of the hero, the victim, the villain, and the social and political environment.

3.3: With Added Context – Critical Discourse Analysis

Broad overviews in media analysis can solely yield broad discussion, however as noted by van den Hoonaard (2019), meaning within cultural products, particularly easily accessible products such as news reports, occurs on two levels: the obvious and explicit, as well as the subtle and implicit (p.146). Once to directed content analysis – focusing on the explicit – was completed, the categorized codes (hero, victim, villain, and social & political environment) helped guide the critical discourse analysis to look deeper at the more implicit and contextually-specific phenomena present within the sample. In looking to more detail, each of the ten texts chosen were analysed to locate patterns that coincided with the quantitative content analysis in order to tease out (a) what discursive practices are employed in reporting on sex work, (b) how these discursive practices map onto to the narrative frames about sex work known from the review of the literature, in order to (c) explain why certain framings are observed more frequently than others. In so doing, this analysis identifies both broad patterns and theoretically explain the multitude of ways in which sex work stigma is reproduced, explicitly and implicitly, in relation to power, gender, and its many intersections.

Critical discourse analysis focuses the discursive purpose of the language used in media with particular attention to the ways in which cultural products influence and are influenced by existing relations of power (Deacon et al., 2007, p.151;154). In this way, critical discourse analysis provides recognition that “hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different contexts and communities” (Lazer, 2007, p.142). This includes a recognition that power is emphasized both in the discourse itself and the

perspective behind it – allowing critique not only of what is said, but also why it was said, by whom, and what was excluded (Fairclough, 2018, p.14).

For the purposes of this thesis, a three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis outlined by Norman Fairclough has been employed, acting as an inductive method. This form of analysis aims to fluctuate between a focus on the specific text that is being analyzed and what Fairclough (2003) defines as "the 'order of discourse', the relatively durable social structuring of language which is itself one element of the relatively durable structuring and networking of social practices" (p.3). Fairclough sees every communicative practice, including those in cultural products, to have three dimensions: the text itself, discourse practice, and social practice (Fairclough, 1993, p.136). This three-dimensional model, therefore, examines texts in relation to their significance both discursively and structurally, following a clear analytical path through its three dimensions that mediates the text and social practice with discourse practice (Fairclough, 1993, p.136).

The first dimension of this model is *textual analysis*. For Fairclough (1993), any text "can be regarded as interweaving 'ideational', 'interpersonal' and 'textual' meanings" (p.136). By beginning with the texts themselves, language and grammar is examined, enriched by noting "the ideological role of language as a social product" (Kelsey, 2018, p.513). This is done by describing the type of text being analyzed, what is on the page including the specific language that is used, the order within which information is presented, as well as the ideas that are conveyed directly through the text. A majority of the analysis for this thesis has examined texts in relation to this dimension, particularly when paired with the results from the content analysis. Word choice and the ways in which information is presented and by whom dictate two aspects to

the extent to which stigma is present: tone and the narrative frame attached to sex workers, whether that be the hero, the victim, or the villain.

Discourse practice is the second dimension within this model. Discourse practice is the production, distribution, consumption, and subsequent interpretation of a text (Fairclough, 1993, p.138). This is analyzed by focusing on how authors utilize existing discourses and genres in the creation of a text, and how readers utilize available discourses in their consumption of these texts (Kelsey, 2018, p.513). Discourse practice is first examined by looking at the instance of specific language used (a discursive event), the deployment of this language that signifies a particular perspective, and finally how this language can be interpreted – and often used to reinforce and replicate the perspective used in the text (Fairclough, 1993, p.136-138). Discourse practice, for sex work in news reporting, looks to the ideological background of the word choice and perspective(s) included in said reports as examined in the first dimension of this model. With this in mind, through discourse practice, reports take on predominantly pro-sex work or anti-sex work perspectives.

The third and final dimension of Fairclough's model is *social practice*. This dimension is explicitly concerned with context. Expanding beyond the text itself, analysis of social practice focuses on the "context of the situation, the institutional context, and the wider societal [or cultural] context" (Fairclough, 1993, p.137). The examination into this dimension is used to contextualize what has already been analyzed. As all discourse is propelled by power, and power drives each level of context, the social conditions of a text are taken into account as a means of explaining the discourse used, and why a text appears as it does. This dimension of critical discourse analysis, for this thesis, comes into play most explicitly when discussing which perspectives are favoured over others and who's knowledge is deemed to be more acceptable.

The social context dimension in relation to sex work indicates which ideology has been used as the basis for a given news report and how perspectives aid in changing the narrative frame used to discuss sex work/ers.

These three dimensions have been interrogated using a critical intersectional epistemology to acknowledge the specific ways in which discourse surrounding sex work is gendered in relation to a number of other matrices of identity. Intersectionality provides an opportunity to examine the large-scale effects of both discourse- and social-practice while recognizing the effects that these processes have on the everyday lives of sex workers, particularly when presented through word choice and presenting information through text. This is useful as gender is often invoked when discussing sex work, especially when paired with the use of ideology that places sex workers in a villain or victim narrative frame. However, gender very rarely acts alone when considering marginalization and the reproduction of stigma, and thus if power and its discourses are gendered, it must also be put into conversation with race, with class, with ability, with sexuality, and so on.

The critical discourse analysis includes a deeper discussion of patterns present within the purposive ten-article sample, as well as contextualized discussion of terms/phrases included in each of the articles. In looking to more detail, each of the ten texts chosen will be examined on two fronts: first, the textual analysis locating similar patterns to the overall results for the content analysis aiming to find an explanation as to why certain results were more frequently observed than others; and second, locating the discursive and social practices that lay the groundwork for the presentation of information when discussing sex work. These practices and cemented patterns both on a broad and more focused scale have been used to find the ways in which stigma is

reproduced, and how this stigma is perpetuated both explicitly and implicitly in relation to power, gender, and its intersections.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS: REPORTING THE BIG PICTURE

Results of the content analysis have illustrated the importance of gender, environmental and contextual factors of this period, and the reliance on familiar narrative frames of the villain, the victim, and the hero – three roles that sex workers are placed in at any given time depending on what best serves the discursive and social practices that provide the basis of any news report. It also exposes the presence of stigma in not only its reproduction, but also the ways in which the presentation of sex work-related stigma has changed. A large portion of the news reports showcased who is given the opportunity to be the authoritative voice on sex work as well as describing, both explicitly and implicitly, the working environment and conditions that sex workers must navigate. The findings for the directed content analysis also show the continued use of three familiar roles in reporting on sex work in the news: sex workers as the villain, sex workers as the victim, and sex workers as the hero. These three roles are not mutually exclusive, but often intersect depending on what is being reported and by whom, as well as through word choice, discourse, and ideology.

4.1: Setting the Scene – The Social and Political Environment

The results of this grouping of codes represent the environment within which sex workers much navigate to perform their work, however, sex workers themselves were largely absent in the instances that these codes appeared within the sample. As shown in Table 3, within the social and political environment, reports focused primarily on the development and dissemination of federal government policy aimed at regulating sex work, and the subsequent enforcement of this policy through policing. The focus on policy and enforcement that ignored those that were most affected by the environment created by these processes were also devoid of critique, instead taking a more supportive stance toward those wielding power and their actions.

Table 3
Results for Codes Measuring the Social and Political Environment

Social and Political Environment	*f*	*%*
Policing	304	33.93%
Policy	211	23.55%
Harper Government	140	15.63%
Enforcement	114	12.72%
PCEPA	44	4.91%
Bill C-36	41	4.58%
Regulation	35	3.90%
Legalization vs decriminalization debates	7	0.78%
Total	896	100%

Policing was the most frequent result (33.93%), pulling focus frequently to arrests and police operations as they relate to "rescuing" sex workers from assumed exploitation. Discussions of policy (23.55%), particularly *PCEPA/Bill C-36* (4.91% and 4.58%, respectively) were also present throughout the sample, as was a focus on the Conservative-led federal government headed by Stephen Harper at the time of this policy's development and ascension (15.63%). Similarly to the focus on police, the inclusion of the government and policy in these news reports frequently reinforced the notion that all sex workers are victims of exploitation. However, both the police and government played crucial parts in developing the sex worker as villain role throughout this sample, particularly as it pertains to the communities that the police and federal government claimed to have aimed to protect.

4.2: Dramatis Personae – Who is Talked About

Sex workers' ability to navigate the social and political environment that has been created is impacted by the ways in which the various matrices of their identities change their experiences with said environment. Results include a total of 467 mentions (Table 4) that focused overwhelmingly on gender and age. Gender was mentioned 274 times across the 100 reports, while age was mentioned 143 times. Though gender and age were by far the most prevalent results, women and children (individuals under 18) made up the majority of those codes – 47.12% and 27.2% of the category of gender and its intersections, respectively. Upon removing results for women and children, the presence of gender and its intersections dropped significantly. Some noticeable results included men (11.13%), individuals aged 18-29 (2.78%), ability (5.35%), discussions of class (2.57%), and Indigeneity (2.35%). There were, however, a number of categories with very few observed results. Many of the discussions surrounding gender within the sample remained on the binary of man/woman, as only 2 mentions of gender outside of this dichotomy were observed (totalling 0.42%). Similarly, mentions of ages 30 and above were only observed 3 times throughout the sample of 100 news reports (totalling 0.63%).

Table 4
Results Table for Codes Correlating to Gender and its Intersections

Gender and its Intersections	*f*	*%*
Gender		
Female	220	47.12%
Male	52	11.13%
Non-Binary	1	0.21%
Other	1	0.21%
Age		
Under 18	127	27.20%
18-29	13	2.78%
30-39	1	0.21%
40-49	1	0.21%
50 and above	1	0.21%
Ability	25	5.35%
Class and Socioeconomic Status	12	2.57%
Indigeneity	11	2.35%
Sexual Orientation	2	0.43%
Racialization	0	0%
Total	467	100%

Sexual orientation and racialization were both underrepresented within the sample. Mentions of sexual orientation were observed twice across the 100 news reports, making up just 0.43% of results in this section. This maintained a sense of heteronormativity amongst many of the discussions of sex work included in these news reports - including rarely touching on identities that are not heterosexual nor sex acts in relation to queer identities. Racialization, however, was the only code to not be observed whatsoever in the entire coding schema. The omission of race from news reporting on sex work maintains a focus on whiteness when discussing sexual labour, with no recognition of identities outside of this whiteness. This harkens back to late-19th century policy put in place to criminalize sex work to maintain the safety of

white women specifically, and quell the panic and fear of the trafficking of white women that swept early Canadian law.

The reliance on discussing women and children in relation to sex work, particularly when presenting anti-sex work discourse, indicates a lack of attention toward the experiences of the diverse population that makes up those that engage in sex work. This is made worse by the minimally mentioned or all-together-absent matrices of identity such as class, sexuality, and racialization, leaving little room for critical insight into the variations of sex work and sex working identities when publishing news reports. Sex workers are continually presented as a monolith, whether in fulfilling the role of the hero, the victim, or the villain, with little to no indication of difference of experience.

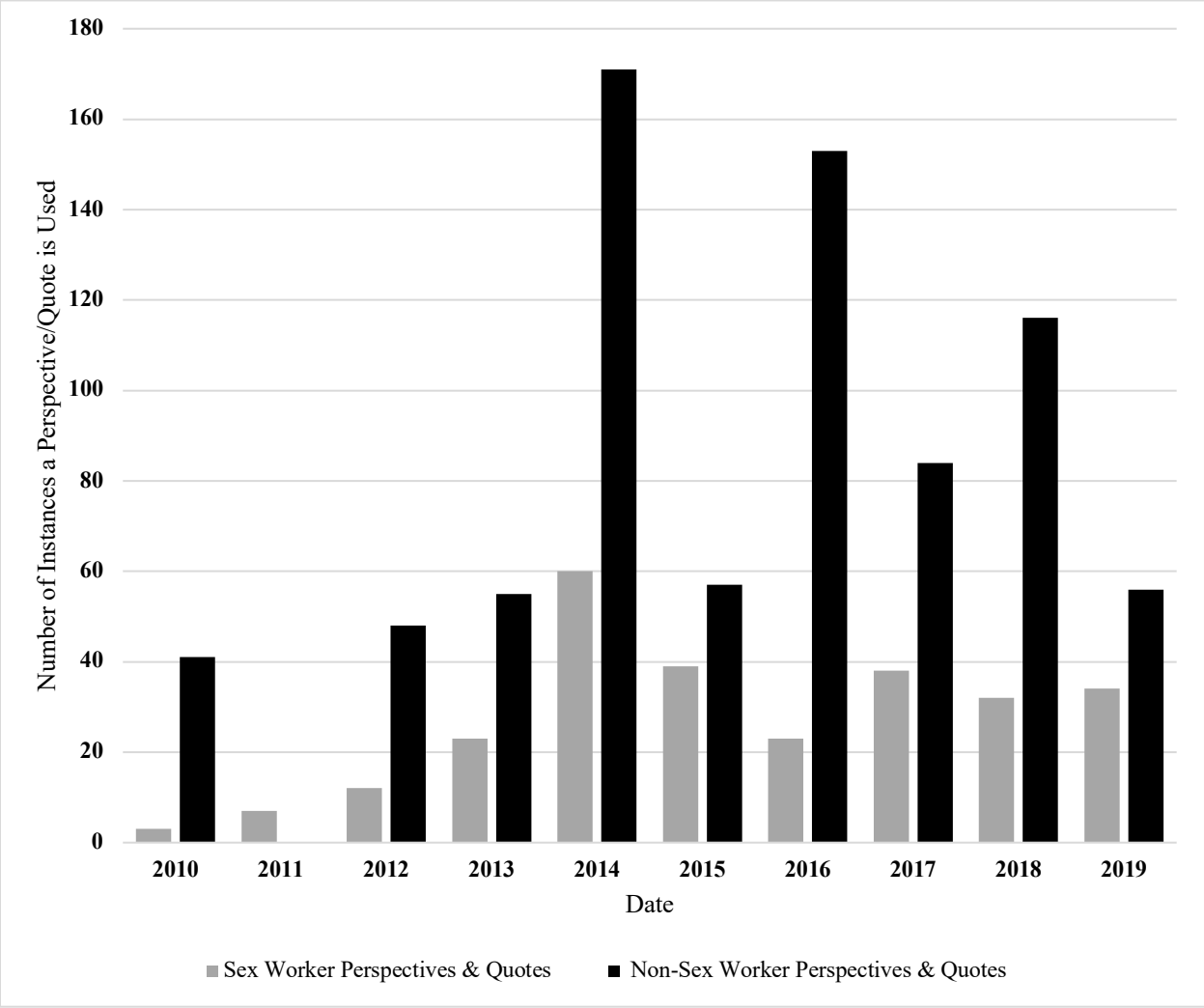
4.3: Accompanying Narration – Who Gets to Speak

Discussions of the experiences of sex workers are not only dictated by who is being talked about, but also who is given the opportunity to speak. An indicator of how sex work is framed, particularly when considering narrative framing that names a hero, a victim, and a villain, is the inclusion of specific perspectives and quotations that present a deeper connection to the world that news reports are reporting on. Non-sex workers significantly outnumber sex workers in both perspectives and quotes included within the news reports. When focusing on who was given an opportunity to speak over time (see Figure 1), non-sex workers perspectives and quotes outnumber those from sex workers in every year besides 2011. Particularly high in the years post-2013, the overrepresentation of non-sex workers when discussing sex work positions their perspectives as the most desirable, and their ideology as more acceptable. Three years in particular present a pattern of discursive changes present in both content and discourse analyses, corresponding with broader social and political shifts: 2014, the year following the

Bedford decision that saw debates about sex work as well as the development and ascension of *PCEPA*; 2016, a new rise of conservativism coinciding with the election of Donald Trump in the United States and its ramifications worldwide; and 2018, a rise of a more widespread and robust feminist movement following the popularization of the women's march in response to the 2016 American election and #metoo in late-2017.

Figure 1

Graph of Perspectives and Quotes Used in News Reports When Discussing Sex Work by Year (2010-2019)



As is highlighted in Figure 1, reports relied on perspectives and quotes from those that do not engage in sex work (such as specific members of the police, government, and anti-sex work activists) 781 times, making up 74.24% of the perspectives/quotes used. The number of non-sex

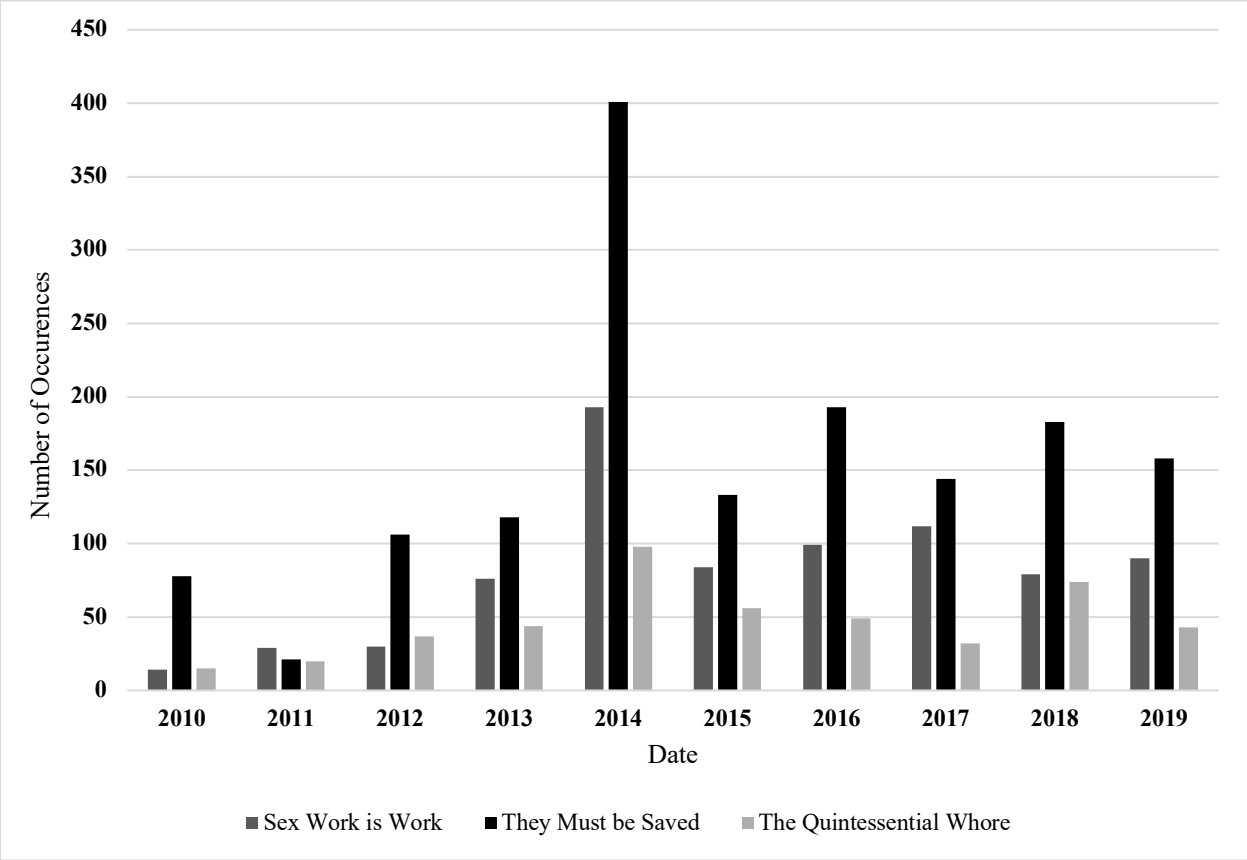
workers were observed nearly three times greater than sex worker perspectives and quotes, occurring 271 times (25.76%) within the sample. The overrepresentation of non-sex working voices lead, and the prioritizing of their perspectives over those of sex workers, to the majority of the reports examined taking an approach to sex work that positions those with power as the hero of most narratives. As the hero's voice narrates the story of sex work, the hero role remains unquestioned and maintains their status as the central figure in the narrative – deciding what or who is criminal, which acts are evil and immoral, and who is considered innocent that must be protected from these evil and immoral practices.

4.4: Narrative Framing – Villains, Victims, and the Hero

The hero (sex work is work), victim (they must be saved), and villain (the quintessential whore) roles are ever-present in the results. When looking at the use of narrative framing over time, each frame is present in each year to differing degrees (Figure 2). Each of the narrative frames peaked in 2014, aligning with both the most news reports within the sample being published in this year, as well as an overhaul of sex work policy on a national scale. In every year but 2011, the victim was by far the most popular narrative frame used, particularly noticeable as reports are supportive of legislation that posits all sex workers are victimized in some way and stigma becomes more prevalent within this narrative frame.

Figure 2

Number of Occurrences of the Hero, Victim, Villain Narrative Frames by Year (2010-2019)



Coinciding with a massive increase in the use of the sex-workers-as-victims narrative frame (they must be saved) in 2014, a particular shift in the narrative frame of the victim was first observed in this year that continued in the years following – highlighting not only the persistence of, but also changes to, sex work-related stigma over time. In 2014 and beyond, or post-Bedford, sex work stigma was more frequently connected to the overrepresented narrative frame of the sex worker as victim and discussions of saving sex workers from the industry that victimizes them. This replaces patterns observed previously that tied the discrediting of sex workers to narratives that frame sex workers as the villain or "the whore." This is not to say the victim is the only narrative role that requires interrogation in the context of the 2010s. In their persistence, all three familiar narratives play into the reproduction of sex work-related stigma in

some way, whether that be through discrediting explicitly, implicitly, or presenting a model for stigma management.

When examining results within each frame, the narrative frame of sex-workers-as-victims had the most terms associated with it and was the most frequently observed narrative frame, comprising 56.17% of the collected narrative frame codes (see Table 5). The two codes with the largest portions of the results in this category were prostitution (or prostituted) (17.01% of all frames, 30.3% within frame) and sex trade (7.87% of all, 14% within), terms that are used in various ways, however in this sample, showcased a majority of use in a way that aided in the framing of sex workers as victims. These terms were often used as a blanket term that reduces all forms of sexual labour to their most stigmatized state, namely street-based sex work. Similarly, trafficking (7.68% of all, 13.7% within), exploitation (5.31% of all, 9.4% within), and the word victim (4.5% of all, 8% within) were observed frequently throughout the sample. These five terms reflect the most prevalent ideological perspective observed throughout the sample, one that aims to eradicate sexual labour all-together under the guise of rescuing those engaging this work. Words related to coercion were also observed a great deal throughout the sample, including protection (1.5% of all, 2.7% within), violence (3.07% of all, 5.5% within), force (2.56% of all, 4.6% within), abuse (1.1% of all, 2% within), and slavery (0.4% of all, 0.8% within). Saviour narratives were further pushed by the inclusion of referring to sex workers as at risk (1.72% of all, 3.1% within), vulnerable (1.39% of all, 2.5% within), and engaging in a shameful activity (0.29% of all, 0.5% within), positioning them once again as victims without agency and without other options coerced into performing sex acts.

Table 5
Results Table for Narrative Frame Codes

Hero Frame: *Sex Work is Work*				**Victim Frame: *They Must be Saved***				**Villain Frame: *The Quintessential Whore***			
	f	*% within frame*	*% all frames*		*f*	*% within frame*	*% all frames*		*f*	*% within frame*	*% all frames*
Sex work	505	63%	18.48%	Prostitution* or prostituted	465	30.3%	17.01%	Community safety	168	42.9%	6.1%
Organization	91	11%	3.33%	Sex trade*	215	14.0%	7.87%	Criminal	83	21.2%	3.0%
Activism	71	9%	2.60%	Trafficking	210	13.7%	7.68%	Target	34	8.7%	1.2%
Labour	52	6%	1.90%	Exploitation	145	9.4%	5.31%	Criminalization	34	8.7%	1.2%
Sex work other than street-based sex work	39	5%	1.43%	Victim	123	8.0%	4.50%	Derogatory terms*	22	5.6%	0.8%
Decriminalization	35	4%	1.28%	Violence	84	5.5%	3.07%	Epidemic	17	4.3%	0.6%
Activist demonstrations or events	11	1%	0.40%	Forced	70	4.6%	2.56%	Perpetrator	9	2.3%	0.3%
Phrase: “Sex work is work”	2	0%	0.07%	At risk	47	3.1%	1.72%	Nuisance	9	2.3%	0.3%
				Protection	41	2.7%	1.50%	Morality	5	1.3%	0.2%
				Vulnerable	38	2.5%	1.39%	Immoral	4	1.0%	0.1%
				Abuse	30	2.0%	1.10%	Risky	3	0.8%	0.1%
				Phrase: "Must be saved"	24	1.6%	0.88%	Dirty	3	0.8%	0.1%
				Danger	23	1.5%	0.84%	Vermin	1	0.3%	0.0%
				Slavery including “Modern day slavery”	12	0.8%	0.44%				
				Shame	8	0.5%	0.29%				
Total	806	100.0%	29.5%	Total	1535	100.0%	56.17%	Total	392	100.0%	14.3%

Results for the hero category, making up 29.5% of narrative frame codes collected, are led by use of the term sex work (18.48% of all frames, 63% within frame), used as a more acceptable umbrella term than terms like prostitution and/or sex trade that acknowledges the range of sexual labour included under this umbrella. This term also emphasizes the work aspect of sexual labour, removing much of the stigma associated with other previously mentioned umbrella terms. The term sex work was used in particular when presenting news reports with a pro-sex work angle, or when news reports attempted to take a more objective angle after the introduction of *PCEPA*. Other notable results in this category include nods to activism in support of sex work (3.33% of all, 11% within; 2.6% of all, 9% within; 0.4% of all, 1% within) and discussions of sex work specifically focusing on labour and explicit references to non-street-based forms of sex work (1.9% of all, 6% within; 1.43% of all, 5% within). These results, and the hero role more generally, indicate resistance present in the cultural products of news reporting, directly opposing many other stigmatized assumptions about sex work. The sex worker as hero presents an alternative to the persistent popular ideology that frames sex workers as either corrupted or exploited, instead focusing more on empowerment and the mundane nature of the work.

The category of the villain was the least present within the sample, making up only 14.3% of the total observed results of codes related to narrative framing. This indicates a movement away from explicit expressions of stigma targeted at sex workers over time, opting instead for more covert methods of stigma reproductions. The most frequently observed result in this category was community safety (6.1% of all frames, 42.9% within frame), followed by criminal (3% of all, 21.2% within), target (1.2% of all, 8.7% within), and criminalization (1.2% of all, 8.7% within). These four codes, for the most part, worked together within the reports

included in the sample. This was particularly the case in 2014 and beyond, maintaining a central notion put forth within *PCEPA* – protecting communities from the dangers of sex work and its associated "criminal" activities. Other interesting results included the continued use of the terms epidemic (0.6% of all, 4.3% within) and nuisance (0.3% of all, 2.3% within) when discussing sex workers, acting as a call-back to understandings and conceptualizations of sex work that were frequently used pre-2010. Finally, there was a presence of derogatory terms when discussing sex workers (0.8% of all frames, 5.6% within frame) throughout reports using the villain frame. This is the only code in this category that fits into more than one category (also present in some pro-sex work reporting making use of a hero narrative frame), however the majority of uses (totalling 16) occurred when presenting an anti-sex work perspective.

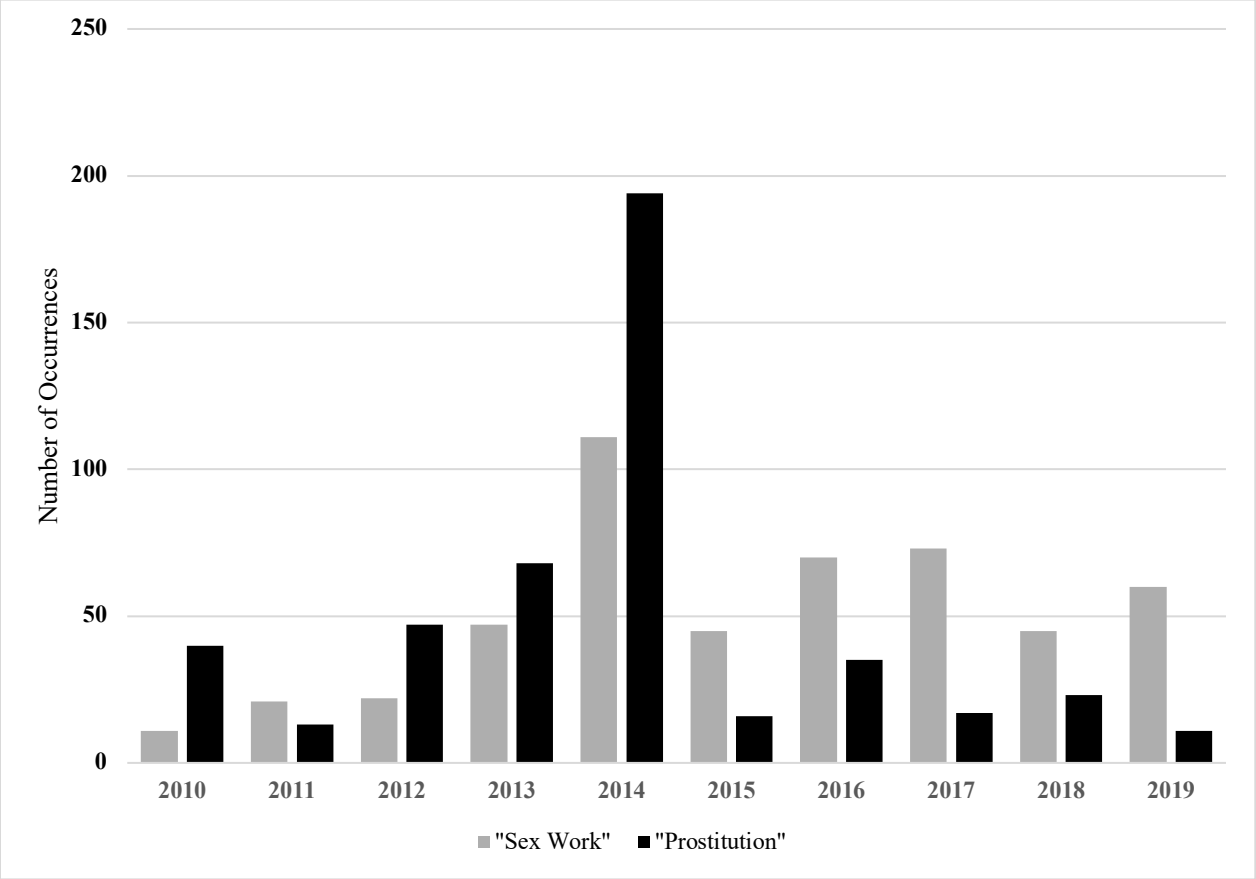
4.5: Making Use of a Narrative Frame - How the Work is Framed

One of the more interesting and subtle changes observed within the results, laying groundwork for the management of sex work-related stigma was the use of umbrella terminology in reporting on sex work, particularly moving away from referring to all sex work as "prostitution" (Figure 3). As Canadian policymakers use "prostitution" as an umbrella term in all sex work-related legislation, it is unsurprising that news reporting, particularly in a period of great change in terms of sex work-related policy, used the same term. The issue with using "prostitution," however, is that when looking outside of the language in Canadian policy, it is a frequent descriptor of outdoor sex work being applied to all sexual labour, playing into the assumption that outdoor sex work – and thus, all sex work – is a dirty corrupt practice and a form of exploitation, as is so often signalled by those that oppose sex work. As Werner (2020) notes, "because anti-trafficking rhetoric makes [consensual] sex work impossible, thereby making the

sex worker a fiction, all who perform any job in the sex trades are prostitutes, and all prostitutes are those who are acted upon, not those who act" (p.123).

Figure 3

Graph of Number of Instances "Prostitution" and "Sex Work" Were Used by Year (2010-2019)



As is shown in Figure 3, the years following 2014 saw "sex work" replace "prostitution" as the most frequently used catch-all when reporting on sexual labour consistently. Though the use of the victim role, and more specifically the discredited victim, was by far the most popular narrative frame, the language that was used to communicate this role had its own shift. This change in language caused at once a greater tie between consensual sex work and exploitation when using discussing sex workers as victims, and a more explicit recognition that sexual labour should be understood as a type of work when discussing sex workers as agentic workers. By replacing "prostitution" with "sex work" in particular as the more popular umbrella term for

sexual labour, the acknowledgement of sexual labour as a form of "work" makes stigma management and opposing long-discredited aspects of the sex working identity easier. This change was a notable standard for reports employing the sex-worker-as-hero frame, however as Figure 3 shows, extended beyond this subsection of reports as a standard after 2014.

When focusing particularly on a post-2014 context that exchanged "prostitution" for "sex work" as the more frequently used term in reporting, this language change indicates a move toward a more respectful tone, particularly when the hero narrative frame is used. This switch also ties into the development of stigma management through the hero narrative frame, combatting the stigma now more often attached to the victim narrative frame in 2014 and beyond. The hero narrative frame is paired with previously underutilized representations of sex workers to resist previous and ongoing uses of stigma to discredit, and attempt to eradicate, sex work. Using language that respects both the work and the workers, and including sex workers as experts on their own labour, representations of sex work in news reports employing a hero narrative frame are noticeably more positive both in what is included in reports, but also in the tone of the reports. These reports achieve this representation by taking a pro-sex work stance and ensuring sex workers maintain their agency both in how sex work is presented and in presenting their perspectives when discussing their own labour. Positive representations of sex work(ers) are used to combat the anti-sex work rhetoric running through many other reports, both directly and indirectly. Positive representation, and thus resistance, is especially important when combatting reports that use stigma covertly – such as those following the discredited victim narrative frame.

CHAPTER 5. RESULTS: CONTEXTUALIZING NARRATIVES

The results for the critical discourse analysis presented each narrative frame – the villain, the victim, and the hero – through the use of specific ideology and interactions with sex work-related stigma. In most of the news reports within the sample, the "acceptable" ideology, often presented through vehement anti-sex work discourse, aligned directly with the goals and language of *PCEPA* (2014). This included maintaining the assumption that all sex work is dangerous, all sex workers must exit "prostitution" to protect themselves from this supposed danger, and sex work must be eradicated to save all Canadians from sexual labour itself and third parties involved, both in terms of selling and purchasing sex. A large portion of this was dedicated to speaking to police about their efforts to minimalize, or all-together eliminate, sex work, particularly after 2013. Once authority moves away from solely being given to those hoping to eliminate sex work that perpetuate anti-sex work ideology, such as police, and sex workers are heard from, the discourse in news reporting moves in a more pro-sex work direction.

5.1: The Quintessential Whore at Work – Maintaining the Villain Role and Classic Stigma

Throughout the reports, the role of the villain was used less frequently than the other familiar narrative roles. This narrative was filled with anti-sex work discourse that sees all sex work as dangerous and a potential threat to society at large. The news reporting that employed this discourse focused little on sex workers themselves and more on the nature of sex work and the threats the work poses to those who live where the work might take place. These claims tended to rely on the authority of powerful political leaders and police officers rather than engaging in actual evidence for their claims. By focusing on sex work through the perspectives of those framing this labour as dangerous to communities, the villain narrative frame purports to care about sex workers, but such an approach presents little difference to those that suggest

participants of sexual labour are immoral, dirty, and criminal – attributes of the stigmatized quintessential whore.

Unlike other narrative frames that present sex workers themselves in a particular way, when this approach is used, sex work itself, and those purchasing sex, are positioned in the role of the villain. The blame for the plights of society and potential threats to the status quo are moved from an individual to the action of performing sex work overall. In this way, when the labour itself is seen as evil, and anyone consenting to this labour is classified as evil as well. The "evil" participant in sexual labour that is presented in the villain narrative reiterate existing hierarchical understandings of power, with heroes maintaining their power while those without access to large amounts of social, economic, and political power remain villainized.

With sex work itself placed in the role of the villain, and this narrative frame's basis in moral discourse and the focus on the "threat" to communities, reports place said communities and community members – particularly women and children – in the role of the victim. Similarly, as government officials and police officers are given the authority to speak on, and perpetuate the villainous narrative toward, sex work, they are positioned as the heroes. This can be exemplified quite clearly in the framing of a report on increased community-based police presence in a neighbourhood in Sudbury, ON: presented as a way to combat the "prostitution issues" as a means of "improving [police] effectiveness at addressing community safety concerns" (CBC News, 13 July 2012). The police as heroes and community members as victims, in this statement, are clearly defined, as is the "issue" that defines the villain narrative frame – the assumed disruption neighbourhoods face and increase concerns over community safety when sex work is present.

Safety, particularly for those under 18, was a primary concern in many of the reports discussing sex work in relation to *PCEPA* (2014) and outside of this context. Many of the reports employing the villain narrative frame when discussing sex work return to this debate of whether or not allowing sex work to exist poses direct dangers to community members and, in particular, young community members – signalling an aspect of discrediting that has long been associated with sex work, namely the role of the willing victimizer. This aspect of the villain narrative builds upon the ongoing rise in conservative ideology that were observed all over the results of this analysis. Built mainly on the fear of the degradation of the "traditional" white family unit that follows moral guidelines directly correlating with conservative values, sex workers become the target to be framed as the threat to these ideals. It is through this threat that many reports, particularly those that rely on the perspectives of non-sex workers, discuss "the problem" of sex work (CBC News, 27 July 2016; CBC News, 15 October 2017).

Also present in the villain narrative frame is the positioning of those that wield power in direct opposition to those that lack access to power. To push the focus on community safety and "the problem" of sex work, the imagined dangers of allowing this labour to exist in proximity to the victim (communities and their residents) are framed in extreme ways. For example, using comparison when discussing the effects of criminal action against advertising the sale of sex on sex workers themselves, an attorney quoted by Dubinski (13 June 2019) ponders "would we allow traffickers of Schedule 1 substances [illicit substances such as opium and cocaine] to advertise, because drug traffickers need to be safe, and not allowing them to advertise online infringes on their safety?" Here, not only are sex workers connected to an entirely unrelated criminal act, but this connection aids in pushing sex workers further into the categorization of "dangers" both morally and legally, while underscoring the need for the hero (government

officials/police) to end this danger. What becomes increasingly evident is that the goal of removing sex workers from the vicinity of communities to maintain community safety ignores the safety of sex workers.

One such "hero" in reports following a villain narrative frame making their presence known, but in particular in those published between 2013-2015, was then-minister of justice and attorney general Peter Mackay. Acting frequently as a mouthpiece for the Conservative party responsible for the development and ascension of *PCEPA* (2014), MacKay used his participation in news reporting through quotations and interviews to maintain a negative view of sex work. These views are exemplified in his framing of restrictive sex work policy as addressing the "significant harms that flow from prostitution," particularly from the "perverts" that purchase sex (Paris, 17 June 2014). As this view was presented with little criticism, and backed by a narrative frame that emphasizes the need for the hero and their anti-sex work policies, anti-sex work language employed be MacKay is framed as normal, acceptable, and at times encouraged. Through this framing, the acceptable anti-sex work ideology that permeated many non-sex working perspectives throughout the sample was developed and determined.

As the heroes within the villain narrative frame (government officials and police) continue their claims of caring about the safety of communities, their morality-drenched discourse continuously touches on old tropes and stereotypical assumptions about sex work. This work is considered to be a threat to the accepted social order, directly targeting the victims (community members) that are considered to be vulnerable and innocent. Sex workers, thus, were discredited in relation to their proximity to communities, their proximity to children, and more often than not, their proximity to third parties assumed to be violent that they "willingly" attract to the communities within which they work. This becomes the basis of discourse situating

this familiar narrative frame to define a sex worker's villainy and disparage sex work. Simply by selling sex, the quintessential whore that is produced through the villain narrative frame takes the place of the willing participant in this evil labour – having stigma attached to both their work, and considered a personal discredited attribute.

One clear example of this was in an interview given by Calgary police chief Rick Hanson after the introduction of *PCEPA* in 2014. Stating "I've never talked to a boy or a girl who said, 'Yeah, when I grow up I want to be a hooker'" (CBC News, 2014). Here, the explicit stigma of sex work is used by someone that is given the opportunity to be the authority on sex work without ever engaging in sexual labour, instead presenting a negative idea of this work, and villainizing the workers themselves by framing them as the antithesis of what is morally acceptable or aspirational. As is illustrated here, the roles of the villain, victim, and hero are continuously defined in relation to one-another, often using the narrative frame of the quintessential whore to underscore the imagined dangers of sex work in order to advocate for more restrictive policy and the use of police to eliminate this danger. By problematizing this imaginary threat of consensual sex work to communities, youth, and families, the quintessential whore is indicative of the villain framing that sees sex workers as immoral criminals that are defined by nothing but their sexual activity – reiterating and reproducing longstanding stigmatized assumptions about sex workers that frame them as the "whore."

The monotony of criminal and villainous identities that sex workers are given in a portion of the news reports examined aid in the large-scale acceptance of, and lack of action against, their continued marginalization from those with no experience in sexual labour. The ongoing marginalization of sex work through both moral and legal frameworks that are included in news reporting also perpetuate specific points of sex worker identities that have long been discredited.

The immoral and overtly sexual being that targets the innocent was observed in a direct and explicit way when reports either employed a sex-worker-as-villain narrative frame, or perspectives from non-sex workers that perpetuated this frame. In this way, the quintessential whore in the sample showcases whore stigma in a more traditional sense – attaching the occupational stigma of sexual labour that has been, and continues to be, perpetuated by conservative moral ideology to personal attribute of sex workers themselves. The calls to this stigma ensure specific images are conjured of the dangers that come with sex work while pointing to different aspects of, and tropes about, the work that have long upheld sex work-related stigma. This narrative framing exemplifies the stigma-ridden trope that frames sex workers as sexually liberated public threats. This threat, in the context of the reports examined, was underscored by phrasing related to criminality and epidemic to ensure that discredited aspects of sex work and sex workers were presented negatively without question. This trope discredits sex workers explicitly by presenting a frame that, when paired with the "goal" of true community safety, attaches a negative label to their identity based on their labour – both individually and as a group.

5.2: They (Still) Must be Saved – The Victim at the Forefront

As the narrative frame of the villain and the stigmatized role of the quintessential whore have presented the "problem" of sex work, this "problem" forms the basis of a different narrative frame – the victim, by far the most frequently observed narrative frame. Here, the labour itself is still framed as an immoral and dirty practice, however sex workers begin to be framed as victims coerced into performing sexual labour rather than willingly participating. This was caused in part by the language included in *PCEPA* (2014), as well as a return to discussions of sexual exploitation and human trafficking invading discourse surrounding consensual sex work. This

marked a shift wherein the "problem" of sex work became the "prostitution problem" which, in turn, became the "trafficking problem." By intertwining sex work, or more specifically prostitution – confusingly, frequently used as an umbrella term for all sex work rather than used as a term to describe outdoor sex work – with the "trafficking problem," the villain and victim roles become inextricably linked. However, when employing discourse surrounding an overexaggerated "trafficking problem" that is further tainted by the inclusion of consensual sex work within this discourse, sex workers are more often framed as victims, rather than the willing participants in the "threat" to community safety. Instead, sex workers are placed in the narrative frame of the victim and third parties and purchasers of sex are framed as the new villains.

A reliance on familiar stereotypes relating to sex workers and exploitation were present throughout reports employing the victim role when discussing sex work. For example, in discussing the supposed dangers of outdoor sex work, sex workers are framed as vulnerable young women who "are doing everything they can at that point to stay alive and to be able to survive and to feed their children…sometimes it's to feed an addiction" (CBC News, 13 November 2012). As is indicative in a focus on vulnerable women and the removal of agency as a means of framing sex workers as without choice, gender remains a strong force in this specific victim frame attached to sex workers. The shift in gendered discourse, however, moves women from sexually liberated threats complicit in the "dangerous" act of sex work to passive objects that are used and abused, requiring a saviour to aid them in escaping from the dangers of sexual labour. The gendering of the victim role plays into the trope that all sex workers are women, and third parties and buyers of sex (johns) are all men preying upon these women. Though this is not the case, as many sex workers identify as male or elsewhere on the gender spectrum and clients

identify as female or elsewhere on the gender spectrum, the sex-worker-as-victim role assumes all sex workers are women coerced by dangerous men.

When sex workers are placed in the victim role, sex work becomes a practice performed under desperation or by coercion, never as a practice that an individual with agency would willingly participate in. The labour itself is deemed undesirable, and those that participate in this labour are framed as either left with no other (more desirable) options or being coerced into performing sexual acts. By indicating a lack of option or coercion, news reporting making use of the sex-worker-as-victim narrative frame removes all agency from sex workers and makes them objects rather than agentic and conscious subjects. Here, the victim role is used to discuss consensual sex work is connected to narratives of exploitation, particularly narratives of human trafficking. The removal of agency shifts assumed victimization in consensual sex work to narratives that make a direct connection between consensual sex work and human trafficking as a means of presenting news reporting that works to perpetuate an anti-sex work – and moral conservative – ideology that sees no difference between the two. Once again referring back to sexual panics of the late 20th century, the more contemporary sexual panic that white women are being coerced into performing sexual labour is paired with perceived passivity and a lack of agency to underscore the victimization narrative that does not differentiate between consensual sex work and human trafficking.

A lack of agency and focus on assumed vulnerability through gendered discourse also led to discussion of more intense and extreme assumptions about the nature of sex work. For example, a social worker is quoted stating “sadly, we (may be) the last ones to see them alive before they go missing or murdered” (Estabrooks, 4 August 2015). Similarly, consent in sexual labour is assumed to be absent. Claims are made throughout reports employing a sex-worker-as-

victim narrative frame that “massage parlours [are] known as fronts for prostitution rings” (Soloducha, 15 October 2017), and “women standing on street corners” are “claimed” by men (Estabrooks, 4 August 2015). In this agency-free framing, whether consent is present or not, sex work is presented as a form of exploitation that must end. In this way, reporting on sex work by the CBC in the 2010s did little to challenge the endurance of sex work stigma presented in restrictive policy and a rise in both conservativism and feminist movements that boast anti-sex working messaging. Instead, at times, reporting regurgitates these perspectives.

Whereas prior to 2013, sex workers were rarely included in reporting, instead simply discussing the work itself and framing it negatively, with the Bedford ruling in 2013 and subsequent *PCEPA* (2014) we begin to see a shift towards using anti-sex work messaging to specifically frame sex workers as victims. Here, a push for necessary action to “save” sex workers from the presumed danger of their work. Although this appears to be less stigmatizing, by developing and cementing the sex-worker-as-victim role, discussions of the labour itself become inherently negative and stigmatized – often tainted by ideology that makes no differentiation between services performed by agentic workers and human trafficking. Frequently invoking women and children when describing the supposed vulnerability of sex workers and the evils of the sex industry, continued connections between trafficking and sex work, and the imposition that sex work causes on the communities within which it occurs were frequently observed throughout the sample and play into this trope.

It is important to note that the women and children invoked in news reports using victim narratives largely focus on white women and children only. With the omission of racialization altogether in the sample taken for this thesis, and Indigeneity only discussed when Indigenous women are missing and/or murdered (Dubinski, 13 June 2019; Estabrooks, 4 August 2015), the

deeply gendered and familiar narrative frame of the victim is not representative of all women, but rather, only white women. As the gendered nature of the use of the victim role signals back to sexual panics that were developed in the late 20th century in opposition to sex work, birthed out of a moral conservative ideology that feared the breakdown of the "traditional" family unit. Contemporary anti-sex work sexual panics that are perpetuated through news reporting using victim narrative frames indicate that the traditional family unit is a white family, and the only necessary "victims" to report on are white women that have fallen out of alignment with this conservative ideology. Sex work saviours, as they are presented in news media, are acutely focused on saving vulnerable white women from the clutches of sex work while all other sex workers remain invisible.

With the victim clearly defined (sex workers), the villain in this narrative frame moves beyond simply sex work itself to include third parties involved with selling sex (i.e., management and advertisers) and purchasers of sex (i.e., johns) – both framed as "traffickers." As is evident with the terms "trafficking" and "exploitation" being overrepresented throughout the sample, sex work and trafficking are often paired together – or, at times, used interchangeably to discuss consensual sex work, with little differentiation between the two. Sex work is presented as a practice not defined by consent, but rather one that "recruits" white women and innocent children to perform "insidious" acts to benefit "recruiters," used here as a more palatable synonym for both third parties involved in consensual sex work and human traffickers (Bell & McConnell, 27 July 2016). Similarly, human trafficking itself is framed as "the fastest growing criminal industry in the world – often show[ing] up in the form of sexual exploitation and unpaid labour" (Soloducha, 15 October 2017).

By defining the terms “trafficking” and “sex work” so similarly throughout the reports examined, there is an indistinguishable quality to both terms that becomes apparent when focusing on reporting of sex work. Sex workers, by being paired with trafficking victims, are repeatedly placed in the victim role without having their perspectives in these reports, instead opting to define their supposed victimhood through buzzwords and the actions of those deemed to be villains. To focusing on trafficking, reports framed human traffickers as cunning criminals, heeding warnings that “they know where [potential victims] are, and they know how to locate them” (CBC News, 13 November 2012). The evils of traffickers were most often presented by invoking the figure of the innocent child, for example, Bell & McConnell include a quote from a support worker stating, “there’s people looking to make money…it’s turning our kids into their little cash cows” (27 July 2016). The focus on children being preyed upon by the evil figure of the trafficker calls back to the focus on traditional morals where it was necessary, and morally correct, to always protect the vulnerable (women) and the innocent (children).

The issue with much of the reporting on trafficking, and Bell & McConnell’s discussion in particular, is not the reporting on the reality of human trafficking, but rather the inclusion of terms such as prostitution, sex work, and others that are related to consensual sex work. By presenting the evils of trafficking and the experiences of trafficking victims alongside both the experiences of, and terminology that correlates to, consensual sex work, the severity of the narratives of trafficking are watered down and consensual sex work is further intertwined with non-consensual sexual activity. It is also within this connection that the villain role becomes clear within the sex-worker-as-victim narrative frame, and this villain is subsequently stigmatized. With repetition of discussions surrounding assumed predatory behaviour if one is purchasing consensual sex, and statements such as “real men don’t buy girls” (CBC News, 13

November 2012) running throughout the reporting on sex work, the identity of the john or third party involved in selling sex becomes prone to being defined by tropes and discredited through these tropes. With no distinction made between those participating in trafficking and buyers of consensual sexual labour (johns), any third party or john involved in consensual sex work is framed as inherently evil, dangerous, and criminal.

The discredited figure of the villain when sex workers are placed in the victim role, the dangerous evil john or third party that is at risk of being subjected to legal penalties, helps to reiterate the importance of having a hero to save the victim from the supposedly exploitative practices of consensual sex work. The hero, in this narrative framing of sex work, is represented by three key groups: government officials, police, and anti-trafficking activists (inclusive of those attending anti-trafficking demonstrations, as well as social and support workers who specifically discuss working in opposition to human trafficking). The hero role in this narrative frame acts as the saviour, the morally good individual/group set out to save the victim. These groups, within the news reports examined, fall into what Kate Lister (2017) refers to as the "sex work saviour complex," defined as:

> The term 'sex-work saviour complex' is used…to identify those media narratives that seek to 'save' the sex worker by constructing her as a social victim in need of rescue. This narrative operates within similar dynamics to the so-called 'white saviour complex' – a term widely used in cultural and colonial/post-colonial studies to recognise the often well-meaning, but ultimately damaging and egotistical, narrative of the white, privileged westerner rescuing the uneducated, grateful non-whites from their primitive ways…while those works are concerned with race and nationality, a similar process of cultural othering, insistence on rescue and narratives of 'privilege' which assume the voice of those they wish to save is at work within modern media constructs of the sex worker. (p.371-372)

These saviour figures take up the "duty" of saving sex workers from sexual labour, assumed exploitation, and are supportive of efforts in ending both human trafficking and consensual sex work altogether – both in the development of legislation and in action.

Development and enforcement of legislation was a particularly strong focus in reports that made use of the victim narrative frame when discussing sex work and the necessity for actions on the part of "the saviours." This was amplified beginning in 2014 with reporting post-Bedford that included responses to this court ruling, as well as the development of policy (that would eventually become *PCEPA*) as a result of this ruling that was taken up by the then-in-power Conservative party led by Stephen Harper, with a particular focus on then-justice minister and attorney general Peter Mackay. As *PCEPA* (2014) began to be reported on, its inclusion of framing sex workers as "exploited persons" was front-and-centre in this reporting, as was the narrative framing of these reports that place sex workers in the victim role. Similar to findings from Sibley (2020) focusing on the ways in which "the government [in *PCEPA*] reframed the issues and debates regarding prostitution as a problem inextricably and indistinguishably linked to saving victims of trafficking" (p.701), news reporting on this legislation did the same. *PCEPA* (2014) is praised as finding "the balance" in its "tough stance on prostitution" (CBC News, 5 June 2014) that would work to "crack down on human trafficking" (Soloducha, 15 October 2017) – used here, like many instances of reports using the sex-worker-as-victim frame, interchangeably with consensual sex work.

PCEPA (2014) is also praised through the use of common tropes that appear frequently when sex workers are framed as victims. For example, *PCEPA* (2014) is celebrated for acknowledging "that most people who enter the sex trade do so because they have been abused, suffer from addictions or are victims of human trafficking" (CBC News, 5 June 2014). What is clear from this praise is a lack of acknowledgement of consent, the recognition of sex workers having any agency whatsoever, and any of the many differences between consensual sex work and human trafficking. Importantly, the reporting on this legislation focused on the goal of

PCEPA (2014) to help sex workers exit sex work and end sexual labour altogether (CBC News, 5 June 2014; CBC News, 15 October 2017; O'Malley, 11 September 2014). This immense praise and little pushback to *PCEPA* (2014) comes from this legislation's alignment with the goals of those deemed to be the hero within this narrative frame, as well as the goals of those that follow a moral conservative ideology that directly opposes sex work. Thus, this pattern in reporting showcases and celebrates the sex work saviour complex in government officials, enforcement officers, and those that agree with the legislative orders presented in *PCEPA* (2014).

The sex work saviour complex is not a phenomenon reserved solely for those following a moral conservative ideology, Conservative politicians, or anti-trafficking activists, but extends beyond to new collaborative adversarial movements with groups who traditionally do not align with many of the causes fought by these groups. Like the reaction to the sexual panic in the late 20th century, the gendered nature of discussions about sex work and trafficking, as well as the ties to trafficking steeped in moral conservative ideology as a means of opposing sex work and the need for a "saviour," have re-situated neo-abolitionist feminists to align with conservatives on this topic. Vanwesenbeeck (2017) has observed the rise of neo-abolitionist feminism in opposition to sex work, stating:

> (Neo)abolitionism flourishes, and the feminist controversy over sex work flares. Sex work morality politics are notably evidence-resistant and pre-scientific…Abolitionist sex work policies are still mostly and incessantly rooted in a sex and gender morality that is heteronormative, traditionalist, and, not least for women, markedly sex negative. Abolitionists lament sex workers' sexualization and objectification and disregard their agency and subjectivity. According to abolitionist morality, the commodification of sex is, almost by definition, unworthy and unacceptable. Abolitionists are preoccupied with the reputation of women and femininity, with the so-called horror of women being seen as sluts…Women engaging in commercial sex are considered either as villains or victims, in all cases as improper, unfeminine. The commercial sexual interaction is seen as a violation of human dignity and integrity. It is supposed to degrade women and to strengthen gender inequality. (p.1636)

While Vanwesenbeeck located neo-abolitionist feminist discourse in narrative framings of sex workers as both villain and victim, the sample for this thesis employed this perspective almost exclusively when placing sex workers in the role of the victim.

Neo-abolitionist feminists in the news reports examined have been intertwined, both intentionally and unintentionally, with anti-trafficking activists that align with this conservative perspective on sex work. Their anti-sex work rhetoric works alongside the crusade to end human trafficking with no regard for the possibility that consensual sex work may exist. The addition that the neo-abolitionist feminist perspective brings to these discussions has been the reliance on gendered language and the necessity of saving women seduced by the supposedly exploitative practices of sexual labour. Like the abolitionist feminists of the late 20th century, neo-abolitionist feminists and anti-trafficking activists work to end all sexual labour under the guise of aiming to end violence against (white) women and children – framed here not as "innocent" but rather more "vulnerable" to oppressive forces. The neo-abolitionist feminist perspective within the news reports examined also makes no effort to differentiate the range of experiences of sex workers, or women generally, imagining all victims as facing the same amount of danger and exploitation with no acknowledgement that other matrices of identity that are not gender or age may impact one's experiences in sex work. However, by focusing so intently on women and children, defined by the perceived experiences of white women who are not given a voice in these movements, this rhetoric perpetuates the trope that all sex workers are women and all johns are dangerous men with malicious intent. Within this push, again repeating the tactics employed in the late-20th century, these movements employ outlandish imagined statistics with no validity and stories of the most violent and horrific trafficking experiences.

The use of statistics and horror stories when discussing sex work is not new. As Weitzer (2007) observed, morally focused crusades, or in this case narrative framing steeped in conservative moral ideology, "typically offer anecdotal horror stories in addition to numbers of victims to demonstrate the gravity of the targeted evil" (p.463). This is evident in Soloducha's report on an anti-trafficking demonstration where claims were made that there are "more slaves on earth than ever before…there are millions of slaves in the world…every 30 seconds, someone becomes a slave and only about 1 percent are ever rescued" (15 October 2017). When seemingly discussing consensual sex work and trafficking simultaneously, the same news report by Soloducha (15 October 2017) states that trafficking takes place:

> mostly at unregulated massage parlours, which are known as fronts for prostitution rings and that 90-95 percent of the people who work in the sex industry are not choosing to, but are coerced into it behind the scenes…[and] at least 85 percent of workers have been assaulted in some way.

The blatant connection in both of these quotations between consensual indoor sex work and human trafficking, immense statistical claims with no indication of where these numbers come from, and a reliance on fear-laden warnings about the horrors of trafficking (framed here as slavery) is meant to present a compelling narrative of the sex-worker-as victim. Alongside this, this quote illustrates how the role of the hero, and the necessity of a saviour is reified through illustrating how dangerous the villain, and the villain's actions, can be.

The defining of each role when sex workers are placed in the victim role are reflexive, with qualities of one role dependant on the qualities of another. The hero, or "saviour" in this case is nothing without defining the actions that this role opposes, while the villain is defined through its opposition to what the saviour sees as correct. The victim, however, is defined by both roles and is recognized more often as an object to illustrate either the evils of the villain or the necessity of the saviours rather than a subject that is able to speak on their experience(s).

When sex workers are placed within a narrative frame that presents them as the victims of exploitation and human trafficking with no attempt to recognize that consensual sex work exists, their perspectives are not included to ensure this narrative frame is maintained – and actions of the saviours are never critiqued. It is also through the omission of sex workers in news reporting that a number of changes occur to the framing of sex work when sex workers are placed in the victim role. The major change being the addition of stigma attached to the role of the sex-worker-as-victim.

This turn toward the stigmatization of the victim role begins with reporting on, or directly supporting, *PCEPA* (2014) and adopting the language used within this legislation itself and in debates leading up to the implementation of this legislation. Debates centred around saving the vulnerable and innocent from the evils of, as Davies (2015) notes, "perpetrators, perverts, and pimps" (p.82). While documentation sought to bring forth the specific framing the then-in-power Conservatives used when looking at sex work, outlined in the Department of Justice of Canada's Fact Sheet for *PCEPA* (2014) as follows:

> *Bill C-36 [PCEPA]* treats prostitution as a form of sexual exploitation that disproportionately impacts on women and girls…the new criminal law regime seeks to protect the dignity and equality of all Canadians by denouncing and prohibiting the purchase of sexual services, the exploitation of the prostitution of others, the development of economic interests in the sexual exploitation of others and the institutionalization of prostitution through commercial enterprises, such as strip clubs, massage parlours and escort agencies that offer sexual services for sale. It also seeks to encourage victims to report incidents of violence to the police and to leave prostitution… research shows that increased demand for sexual services leads to higher rates of human trafficking for sexual exploitation to meet the demand. Research also shows that the decriminalization of prostitution leads to increased demand for sexual services.

This section of the fact sheet not only signals to features of sex-workers-as-victims rhetoric such as the reliance on uncited research as "proof" of exploitative practices, a focus on the moral obligation to save those considered vulnerable (women) and innocent (children), as well as the

villainizing of any third party or buyer of sexual services. This language is also dependent on the assumption that there is no difference between human trafficking and consensual sex work, and all sex workers are victims of, and enable an industry that is defined by, exploitation.

This specific focus on exploitation, as promoted within legislation, spread to news reporting during this period and lead to not only a change in narrative framing overall, but also an increase in use, and a change to the understanding, of the sex-worker-as-victim narrative frame. Reporting during and after the implementation of *PCEPA* (2014) that uses both the language of this legislation and the assumption that all sex work is a form of exploitation shifted to signalling the "helpless sex worker" trope as a means of upholding the narrative frame of the sex-worker-as-victim. Maintaining their tertiary positioning in reporting about their own labour, sex workers are discussed as if they are without agency and without choice, and can only be helped by outside forces (such as law enforcement) that would aid in their exiting sex work, in the hopes of eventually eliminating sexual labour altogether.

The use of the trope of the "helpless sex worker" when paired with direct language from *PCEPA* (2014) beckons in a new understanding of the villain as well. This role is seen not solely as filled a single individual such as johns or management, but rather includes the industry and labour as a whole as well, similar to the villain narrative frame that also centred the perspectives of similar "saviours" as the hero. For example, as per a quote included in a report from Soloducha (15 October 2017):

> the side of [sex work] we are really concerned about of course is the exploitative nature of the whole industry, but also how dangerous it is…so because of the nature of the work, we know there's a high likelihood of women, girls, and others who are being exploited and don't have support of the public.

The use of feigning concern over assumed exploitation strengthens the arguments used by "saviours" that frame their actions as a necessity. News reporting inclusive of, and after, 2014 is

littered with stories that centre sex work saviours and their experiences in trying to "rescue" sex workers from performing sexual labour and eradicating sex work both municipally and nationally. Reports framing sex work as exploitation and focusing on the saviours consistently discuss the dangers of performing sex work as a means of underscoring the importance of their rescue efforts (Bell & McConnell, 27 July 2016; Dubinski, 13 June 2019; Estabrooks, 4 August 2015; Soloducha, 15 October 2017). The role of the hero, as filled by the saviour, is also used to provide further support of the legislative changes outlined in *PCEPA* (2014) and understanding through its reliance on narratives of rescuing vulnerable women from exploitation – the central tactic in *PCEPA* (2014) to inject moral conservative ideology into more contemporary understandings of sex work.

Reports centring the saviours use this morality to frame their actions as the morally correct thing to do, discussing their actions and opposition to allowing sex work (framed as exploitation) as what is "right" regardless of the perspectives of sex workers on these actions. In a report written by Estabrooks (4 August 2015), sex workers are described as "street women" among other derogatory labels. In the same section of the news report, the saviour of the story (a social worker) is discussed as living her life's passion by delivering aid to the "street women" and encouraging them to exit sex work, whether is "passion" is welcomed or not. Boasting that "they'd rather see a cop than me," the saviour of this report maintains the trope that sex workers are vulnerable and helpless, discussing them as:

> women who live trick to trick [and] know they're a possible target…eking out a precarious existence where addiction and abuse are constant threats…fear is a constant for many sex trade workers. For most they're scared, most of them have fear of the unknown [and] what might happen if I get into that guy's vehicle? Still, they keep climbing in – the rush of adrenaline or the next crack hit pushing them on. (Estabrooks, 4 August 2015)

Here, by disparagingly playing into anti-sex work tropes steeped in stigma, sex workers are further cast into the shadows of needing rescue, while the actions of the saviour are framed as not only necessary, but the only option in the face of witnessing supposed exploitation. In this narrative shift, sex workers are downtrodden and exploited objects, and are only given narratives of humanity once they exit, or agree to exit, sex work.

5.3: Sex Work is Work – Rise of the Hero

Through the villain and victim narrative frames, sex workers were kept in a tertiary position in reporting on their own labour. However, once they become the primary subjects with their perspectives heard, rather than supportive silent objects meant to fit a specific narrative, a new narrative frame emerges centring the sex-worker-as-hero – referred to here as "sex work is work" to recognize the acknowledgement of the legitimacy of sexual labour in reports using this frame. The discursive relationship when sex workers are placed in the hero role is different than the others that have been presented thus far. The hero role itself was simplified here, discussing sex workers as agentic workers that either experience their labour in similar ways to other forms of labour, or are under threat of having policies developed that makes their labour more difficult to perform. The villain, in this narrative frame, is more abstract taking the form of policy, with a secondary focus on those that develop, implement, and enforce policy that actively works to make sex work difficult or eradicate it altogether – however reports rarely speak on individuals developing/enforcing this policy. Finally, the victim role was noticeably absent within this configuration with no discussion occurring about the exploitation that is ever-present in reports that do not acknowledge the legitimacy of sexual labour or the agency that sex workers have. Alongside this, unlike the consistent reliance on reporting about the victimization of the "vulnerable" and "innocent" that defined other narrative frames, reports making use of the "sex

work is work" paradigm makes no push to locate a victim nor place an individual or group in the victim role when these experiences are not there. Alongside this, stigma was not found in news reports using this narrative frame; opposition to discredited assumptions about sex work was found throughout, however the stigmatization of a role, or whomever is represented in that role, was not present.

An immense benefit of this reorientation toward a focus on the sex-worker-as-hero frame in news reports as it relates to the lack of discussion on victimization is the delineation between consensual sex work and human trafficking. Trafficking, interestingly, only appearing in reports using this narrative frame as a means of illustrating why sex work should not be confused nor conflated with human trafficking. For example, Dubinski (19 January 2019) includes a succinct description of this using the perspective of a sex work support worker, stating:

> Sex work is consensual. Human trafficking is not. When you conflate the two, and you label all sex workers as victims of human trafficking, it totally takes away from the folks who are being trafficked…Sex workers are women, men, and non-binary folks who are engaging in consensual acts, whether it's porn or cam work, dancing or massage or escorting. Human trafficking is people being forced into doing things non-consensually…Police investigations that focus on sex workers as a way to find victims of human trafficking force the two issues to mix in people's minds, and lead to the sex industry going further underground.

The separation of discussions of consensual sex work and human trafficking, exemplified in this quote, note the violent experiences of trafficking victims while simultaneously ensuring that sex work is put in opposition to this violence. Similarly, the idea of action and intervention is encouraged toward human trafficking in the hopes of providing aid to victims, put in contrast to the ways in which the same type of aid that has long been put into "saving" sex workers actually causes harm. This illustrates that placing sex workers within the hero role in this narrative frame does not replicate the saviour complex that defines many of the other heroes that have been

discussed throughout this thesis, but rather, works to protect sex workers from discourse and practices born out of this discourse that cause them harm.

In this way, sex workers are finally centred in news reports about their own labour when a "sex work is work" paradigm is used. This goes beyond simply the framing of sex work and sex workers in news reports, as reports employing a hero narrative frame also included the perspectives of, and quotes from, sex workers throughout the reports to help cement their own agency and oppose anti-sex work perspectives. For example, O'Malley (11 September 2014) includes the experiences of one of the few male sex workers found in the sample for this thesis, writing "I like my job…our clients, men and women, are not perverts or criminals, and we are not victims…we don't need saving, what we need is to be part of society like everyone else." When sex workers are given the opportunity to discuss their own work, rather than having assumptions placed on them when they are not centred in news reporting, this work is described not as exploitative, but rather in a positive light that includes intimacy, consent, an agentic choice, an in-demand practice, and triumph (Dubinski, 19 January 2019; McCrue, 9 December 2015; O'Malley, 11 September 2014). By putting sex workers in reports discussing their labour, a more pro-sex work tone is palpable and discussions of positive aspects of sex work are paired with criticisms of some of the difficulty that has come with restrictive and repressive policy, two patterns noticeably absent when using other narrative frames.

The centring of the perspectives of active and past sex workers when a "sex work is work" narrative frame is used also includes a centring of discussions about sex work activism and advocacy. The inclusion of pro-sex work activism presents an alternative perspective to the large amount of anti-sex work and anti-trafficking activists that appeared throughout the sample. Like sex workers, sex work activists and advocates were used in news reporting as experts on

both the work itself and navigating performing this work amidst changing government regulation(s), a similar perspective that was once solely reserved for government officials and enforcement officers. They are given the opportunity to be critical of other 'expert' perspectives that are used when sex workers are framed as victims or villains, discussing a lack of police action or attention when violence against sex workers occurs, the dangers and a lack of safety that restrictive policy puts on sex workers when working, and the reassurance that sex work will never be eradicated (Dubinski, 19 January, 2019; O'Malley, 11 September 2014). Though discussions of specific activist actions and demonstrations, outside of standing in opposition to restrictive policy or standing in support of sex workers' right to continue working in sexual labour, are far fewer than discussions of anti-sex work actions/demonstrations, post-2014, reports came somewhat closer to a balance between the two.

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION: THE DISCREDITED VICTIM

What became clear with the deep focus throughout news reporting on sex work was the absence of positive representations of sex work when a report leaned even slightly toward the use of the narrative frames of the villain or the victim, only combatted when employing a hero narrative frame. Alongside this was a shift in ways in which stigma was attached to these narrative frames – though consistently used in the villain narrative frame, after the Bedford decision and the introduction of *PCEPA* (2014), stigma was often attached to reports following a victim narrative frame. Not only does this indicate the use of anti-sex work language and discursive practice within this frame, but also the discrediting of those labelled "victims." The stigmatizing of the victim in the victim narrative frame introduced a new configuration of this frame, aptly referred to here as "the discredited victim." The discredited victim narrative frame centres the need for the actions of the "sex work saviours" that tie discourse of "rescuing" from "exploitation and trafficking" to the eradication of sex work to ensure "community safety," goals outlined in restrictive sex work-related policy such as *PCEPA*.

Coinciding with this narrative shift toward the discredited victim, however, was also an increase in more positive representations once sex workers were actually included in the reporting on their own labour. When placing sex workers in the hero role, many of the tropes defining the other roles are absent, as is a reliance on state-sanctioned language that puts exploitation into focus, and defining characteristics of these roles including stigma and the assumption that sex workers lack agency. It is only in the inclusion of pro-sex work discourse and the positioning of the sex worker as hero, that this work is recognized as a legitimate form of labour performed by agentic subjects, and the idea of inherent danger is taken out of news

reporting. Most importantly, however, reports using this narrative frame produce a method of news reporting that formulates discourse that both manages stigma and actively resists it.

6.1: Making and Managing the Discredited Victim

The stigma attached to the villain narrative frame was observed explicitly in anti-sex work discourse that, throughout the reports examined, focused on the eradication of sex work as a means of "saving" the public from possibly witnessing sexual labour. Group stigma has been particularly invasive in this narrative frame, imagining the villain of these narratives as a group with no consideration of individual identity – in the eyes of those employing stigma falling under the quintessential whore, all sex workers are the same, and all sex workers are dangerous. By presenting this discourse in a way that villainizes the group that is inclusive of all sex workers, opposing sexual liberation by framing it as borderline predatory, anti-sex work stigma within the results for this thesis has led to a deeper discursive focus on "the prostitution issue" (CBC News, 13 July 2012; Dubinski, 19 January 2019). By presenting sex work as "the prostitution issue" alongside stigmatizing discourse that frames sex workers as intentional villains, the heroes' goals of removing sex work altogether go unchallenged. Instead, with the positive framing of eliminating sex work as a means of ensuring the safety of communities throughout the reports examined, there is little room for interpretation on behalf of the reader that does not strictly support the hero's efforts.

The narrative frame of the villain was important to positive representations of anti-sex work ideology, and the positioning of the hero as central to this narrative, that was observed in the reporting on *PCEPA* in 2014. This was also the case when discussing the effects and enforcement of this legislation beyond that year. As is the case with reporting on sex work overall, the year that *PCEPA* was developed (2014), showed the highest number of occurrences

of the quintessential whore being used. The reporting on the development of *PCEPA* (2014) made frequent use of this narrative framework to present support for the newly developed federal legislation that perpetuates numerous sex work-related stigmas, most blatantly the stigmatized assumption that sex work is a danger to community members. The cementing of the sex-worker-as-villain in reporting on the development and enforcement of *PCEPA* (2014) used perspectives that underscored the necessity for this legislation and, ultimately, the necessity for an end to the villain's behaviour.

The morality-based origins of *PCEPA*'s (2014) efforts to eliminate sex work, as well as the reproduction of stigma in relation to the hero and victim roles when employing the quintessential whore in this discussion, is most noticeable when employing perspectives from the "heroes" themselves. The efforts of *PCEPA* (2014) are framed within reports as, for example, "crack[ing] down on street-level prostitution where children could be present" and are concluded to be important by asking, "what community wants to send the message to young people that prostitution is ok?" (CBC News, 5 June 2014). The attachment of a moral question to the anti-sex work crusade in *PCEPA* (2014) and reporting that refuses to challenge this restrictive policy further pushes detractors into the villain role by moving them further from what is framed as morally good, or more dastardly, morally correct. The quintessential whore (villain), therefore, is an unsafe figure in opposition to good morals, and consistent use of this frame lays the groundwork for discrediting sex workers on these assumptions.

A reliance on non-sex working voices pushing explicit anti-sex work ideology, particularly after the landmark decision in Bedford and the implementation of the continually oppressive *PCEPA* (2014), showcases an indication that sex working knowledge remains undesirable. Another commonality amongst the non-sex working perspectives included in these

reports is the overreliance on perspectives specifically from white heterosexual men. Rarely deviating, their power in relation to traditionally "acceptable" and "knowledgeable" matrices of identity, for the most part, was underscored by many of these individuals also held positions of power in government and emergency services such as the police. This complex intermingling of various forms of power, both in terms of identity and position, leads little space for those that do not fit this predetermined notion of who or what is acceptable in terms of ideology regarding sex work.

Instead, similarly to how legislation focusing on sex work is developed, those wielding such forms of power determine the "first-hand" knowledge presented in news reporting, and the discursive turn these reports take – including both the ideology that is presented and the role that sex workers are placed in. By framing knowledge from those without experience performing sex work as more acceptable, especially in their reliance on following closely, largely never straying, from the acceptable ideology presented by government officials in *PCEPA* (2014), they are made the authority on a subject with which they have no experience. In this way, these voices determine what sex work is, how sex work operates, and are given the opportunity to push the call for action to end all sexual labour. As this is occurring in the context of the easily accessible forum of online news reporting with little pushback, this authority goes largely unchallenged, providing more discursive power to those that are already presented as definitive voices. And importantly, the lack of challenge toward these "definitive voices" has allowed stigma to persist outside of the villain narrative frame – becoming attached to the frame of the victim.

6.1.1: The Discredited Victim

What became of the focus on the supposedly "definitive voices" of non-sex workers was a narrative shift toward sexual labour that pushed conversations of exploitation into a more

stigmatizing direction. As this shift toward a focus on framing sex work as an inherently exploitative practice intertwined with human trafficking occurred, the victim role began to be re-worked to include many of the negative attributes previously reserved for discussing sex work within a narrative frame of the villain, particularly stigma. This was first observed when the trope that all sex workers perform outdoor sex work as a means of feeding their drug addictions was used multiple times throughout reports employing a sex-worker-as-victim narrative frame. For example, in the same report by Estabrooks (4 August 2015) highlighted in the previous section that illustrated quite explicitly the sex work saviour complex, a social worker patrols outdoor sex workers with a "deal on the table [of] six cigarettes and a ride in exchange for keeping in touch and trying to leave life as a sex trade worker." In the same section of this report, sex workers as a collective are described as "fuelled by crack…the rush of adrenaline or the next crack hit pushing them on," while individuals are discussed as having a "crack addiction" and looking to obtain "some crack" from the aforementioned social worker (Estabrooks, 4 August 2015). Within a single news report, not only is the trope of the sex-worker-as-drug-addict repeatedly used, but a specific focus on crack (a stimulant and popular street drug used in media representations of those that are "down-and-out") paints a particularly detrimental picture of what sex work "is like." While there are certainly instances where this may be true, these reports make no effort to highlight that the vast majority of sex workers not only do not have this experience, but do not see sex work as an act of desperation or a "last resort" option.

The presence of the trope of drug addiction is not an outlier, as countless other negative tropes and stereotypes are utilized in news reporting when employing a victim narrative frame to discuss sex work. These tropes include desperation, the "unfit mother," the vulnerable woman, lacking self-respect, extreme poverty, alcoholism, coercion, and slavery, among others. What

these tropes have in common is a return to the assumption that all sex workers lack agency, an attribute long associated with the sex-worker-as-victim narrative and aids in necessitating the actions of "the saviours" to end sex work altogether. The adverse effects of the reliance on these tropes used to uplift "the saviours" is the further marginalization, and to some extent endangerment, of sex workers – the people they claim need saving. For example, john stings and vice probes, two actions by "the saviours" framed as a means of rescuing trafficking victims have real-world negative effects on sex workers performing consensual sex work. Dubinski (19 January 2019) outlines the dangers of these actions, stating:

> Two of the most common tools used by human trafficking officers are john stings and vice probes. When doing a john sting, officers pose as a sex worker and charge those who attempt to buy sexual services. When conducting vice probes, officers answer sex workers' ads and ask if the worker needs help or is being trafficked…both put sex workers in jeopardy…If you're trying to find someone being trafficked, posing as a sex worker is only criminalizing the people who are trying to find sexual services for sale…and when you're talking to a sex worker, that's time that they could be working and making money.

While this quote is taken from a news report following a sex-worker-as-hero narrative frame (explaining the critique on state-sanctioned anti-sex work actions), reports focusing on victimizing sex workers aid in encouraging support of actions such as john stings and vice probes.

Sex workers being cemented to the victim role, and the celebratory tone taken to the actions of "the saviours," indicated far more than an attachment of tropes to sex workers as a means of underscoring their victimhood. If sex workers are vulnerable, impoverished, coerced, and enslaved, their labour is exploitative, coercive, and boldly defined as human trafficking disguising itself as consensual labour. As these tropes develop into discrediting attributes of labour, they also present movement in the configuration of the discursive relationship when sex workers are considered victims. The continued inclusion of both villain and victim narratives has

showcased an ongoing reliance on whore stigma – particularly in the framing of sex workers as both victim and willing victimizer – when presenting rhetoric that is not supportive of sex work as a legitimate form of labour. The victim role has been consistently used to discuss in tandem both the "prostitution problem" and the "trafficking problem" that ran throughout the reports examined. These supposed issues ignore consensual sex work altogether, instead repeatedly conflating consensual sex work with exploitative practices and human trafficking. The increase in inclusion of victim rhetoric is also indicative of a return to the moral crusades against sex work, particularly in its similarities to crusades observed in the late twentieth century that focused so heavily on exploitation. The narrative role of the victim and "the saviours" that must rescue them is used frequently to further frame sex workers as helpless and lacking agency in their performance of sexual labour.

The discursive configuration of the discredited victim leaves the hero role (filled by "the saviours") as the only role that is not stigmatized. Similarly, their actions in both attempting to end irradiation and rescue sex workers, are the only actions that go unstigmatized. The role of the villain largely remains the same, though the discredited victim narrative frame sees this role as more abstract – focusing specifically on the labour itself, with individuals considered actors that perpetuate these evil practices. The stigma that has been attached to sexual labour in framing it as a form of exploitation remains the same. What becomes apparent in the configuration of the discredited victim, however, is that sex workers are now defined by their participation in their own labour, and as this labour has now been discredited and intertwined with exploitation, so are sex workers. Stigma attachment occurs by discussing them as willing participants in their own supposed exploitation, highlighting a weakness and practices of coercion, ultimately blaming

them for their own victimhood and upholding discredited attributes of sex workers to underscore this blame.

Unlike other discourse surrounding victimhood, or discourse following the more traditional "they must be saved" frame of discussing the sex-worker-as-victim, the discredited victim is deemed responsible for their own victimhood. This blame occurs out of their supposed misalignment with what is seen as "morally correct." Victim blaming more generally seeks to locate those that do not fit the idea of an "ideal victim," outlined by Meyer (2016) as:

> Those regarded as weak, shy and vulnerable and those who suffer victimization at the hands of a stranger are more likely to be seen as the ideal victim, worthy of empathy and support… the ideal victim must [also] not behave provocatively towards the offender and cooperate perfectly with the police and the courts. (p.76-77)

For sex workers, however, the archetype of the ideal victim does not apply. They are, as Sprankle et.al (2018) notes, too far deviated from what is deemed normal, and "those who deviate from that control (such as sex workers) are likely to be blamed for any negative experiences which are viewed as a result or as expected consequences of said deviation" (p.245-246). This deviation, paired with the attachment of discredited attributes to the victim, allows stigma to thrive as it goes largely unchallenged, as sex workers are assumed to be defined by, and deserving of, their own – what this narrative considers – exploitation.

The use of "accepted" tropes about sex workers that have been highlighted in this section to warrant victim blaming makes the discredited victim a role that is stigmatized more covertly than has been observed when stigma is attached to the villain role. When framing sex workers as victims, placing explicit stigma onto this role would draw negative attention toward this narrative frame and ultimately shift the news report into the sex-worker-as-villain frame, while subtle and implied stigma that gestures toward discredited attributes maintains the victimization rhetoric while injecting anti-sex work stereotypes and stigma. This mainly plays out through a series of

contradictions that underscore the "dangers" of sex work while slipping in stigmatized assumptions about, and discredited attributes attached to, sex workers. The discredited victim is one that is at once without agency while "scavenging" for materials to build shelter and observing cars approaching for a "date" (Estabrooks, 4 August 2015). The discredited victim is also responsible for both their own exploitation and their signalling that they need help, at once "paralyzed with fear" (Estabrooks, 4 August 2015) while having to find "the courage to talk about things that don't feel right" (Bell & McConnell, 27 July 2016) and "speak out to police, to speak out to their friends, their family" (Soloducha, 15 October 2017).

The contradictory nature to much of this covert stigma presentation to develop the discredited victim narrative frame further pushes sex workers into a monolithic mould that recognises no diversity amongst the incredibly diverse population of those participating in sex work. As has been noted, there has been little-to-no recognition of sex workers that are not cisgender, heterosexual white women throughout the 100 news reports examined. With the lack of attention paid to the ways in which the interaction between multiple matrices of identity affect the lives of sex workers indicates that news reporting on sex work sees all experiences of sex workers as the same, and without variation. Once operating with this understanding within the narrative frame of the discredited victim, the singular understanding of the sex worker is reified as both the stigmatized and the victimized sex worker. No variation in experiences performing sex work means, within the discredited victim frame, that all sex workers are being exploited and are to blame for this exploitation. However, looking outside of this assumption, it could not be further from the truth. When attempting to change this narrative that is so deeply entrenched in so much of the news reporting that occurred in the 2010s, it is not enough to simply detach stigma from this narrative frame. A shift in both the perspective on sex work and a move away

from anti-sex work rhetoric is necessary to "save" the discredited victim from this narrative frame and its related stigma, which is largely taken up when sex workers are placed in the role of the hero.

6.1.2: Managing the Discredited Victim

The explicit opposition to negative tropes and discrediting that are employed so often by those working to end sex work altogether to frame consensual sex work as exploitation, indicates a more active turn toward managing this stigmatization. While concealment and downplaying are often associated with stigma management, for sex workers placed on the hero role in news reporting, management more often comes from opposing the negative attributes placed on sex workers and presenting more truthful ideas of what sex work is. The management of this stigma enacted by sex workers is more assertive, aligning closest with Goffman's idea of covering (1963, p.102-103). This covering management, however, does not downplaying discredited attributes whatsoever, but rather sex workers emphasize their identities as sex workers to combat the discredited attributes that have been exacerbated by non-sex workers consistently included in news reporting, and the narrative frames of the reports themselves. By pairing the emphasis of long-discredited attributes of being a sex worker with direct combatting of the negative tropes and stereotypes that have laid the groundwork for this stigmatization, all within a narrative frame that posits sex workers as the heroes of their own stories, two processes become clear. First, sex workers both manage their identities that have been defined by their participation in sexual labour. Second, sex workers, and journalists writing reports about sex work, present more positive alternatives for understanding that sex work is simply a normal form of work that has been negatively framed and negatively affected by those holding and wielding power to uphold a "moral" opposition to sex work.

A clear example of this method of stigma management is in the explicit use, and reclamation, of the term "hooker." Throughout the majority of the sample when it appeared, this term was used in a negative and derogatory way (see the Rick Hansen quote that opened the introduction to this thesis). However, when employed in a "sex work is work" narrative frame and used largely by sex workers themselves, "hooker" is transformed into an acceptable, and at times humorous, term. Because of this, the long-stigmatized hooker framed as an overly-sexualized and desperate woman is transformed into the free "hooker" who celebrates their work and sees it simply as a form of labour. A news report written by McCrue (9 December 2015) illustrates this perfectly, covering the stage show entitled *The Hooker Monologues*. Sex workers are described as coming "out of the shadows" to tell candid stories of their work in the hopes that "by hearing stories from actual sex workers, people will have a reference point…they'll get that we have communities and families and hopes and dreams and we're complex people…we're not just 'whores'" (McCrue, 9 December 2015).

This report was also the only instance in the 100 reports included in the sample for this thesis to discuss experiences of sex work-related stigma directly, as well as the stereotypes and tropes that are often paired with this stigma, and potential dangers that come from disclosing this discredited identity. In talking to sex workers about the goals of "The Hooker Monologues" in relation to stigma, McCrue writes:

> Society needs to change…I don't like living in closets. They're good for clothes and that's about it…stigma is something that stays with people their entire lifetime, whether you're in or out… we just want people to be compassionate, to understand there are different things going on out there…we're not trying to candy coat things. We want to change thought perception, try to remove stigma, and make [sex workers] feel empowered. (9 December 2015)

The "hooker," therefore, stands in opposition to the (quintessential) "whore" and the discredited victim, actively working to position this term as a clear way to manage stigma. In doing so, it

signals an openness about the work that highlights many of the positives of sexual labour, while also dispelling stereotypical and stigmatized assumptions about sex work. The figure of the stigma managing "hooker" is also, unlike many other labels placed on sex workers, presented by sex workers themselves in opposition to the other more negative labels.

Conclusion

Carmen Shakti, a sex worker and participant in the Vancouver staging of *The Hooker Monologues* in 2015, proclaims “He’s floppy as a flounder, so I have to increase the suction…when I’m done, I lie in bed with my stack of cash, arranging it in stacks of 100. Yeah, baby, that’s my rent for the month, right there!” (McCrue, 2015). This quote presents two interesting and under-utilized themes throughout news reporting on sex work. The first, is an inherently celebratory and pro-sex work perspective. Framing sexual labour not as evil, exploitation, nor coercion, this quote illustrates sex work as simply a type of work that, at times, can be quite lucrative. The second, is a tongue-in-cheek tone that is largely absent from much of the narrative formation around, and discussions about, sex work. In removing the narrative framing that borders on tragic or downtrodden, Shakti instead uses levity and humour to discuss a job – similar to the ways in which many people discuss the more absurd day-to-day aspects of their jobs in countless other fields. In doing so, the hero role, like many reports framing sex workers as heroes, is de-mystified, particularly in comparison to other narratives surrounding sex work that may frame heroes as saviours. Instead, the hero exists in the context of the mundane and the everyday realities, with the added responsibility of actively managing stigma. In comparing this quote and its implications to those that opened this thesis from Oscar Wilde, the film *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, and Calgary police chief Rick Hanson, publishing thoughts on sex work that come directly from sex workers in an easily accessible medium such

as news media re-situates and re-centres the sex-worker-as-hero role and the positives that may come with performing sexual labour.

The positive representation of sex work is a defining feature of stigma management enacted by the use of the hero narrative frame, standing in stark contrast to the discredited victim that not only makes stigmatized assumptions about a victim largely created through rhetoric used in news reporting, but actively works to blame this "victim" for their own "victimhood." As this thesis has outlined, when focusing on the 2010s, the familiar narrative frames of the hero, victim, and villain are ever-present in news reporting on sex work. Though the ways in which, and how frequently, these frames are used has changed over time. The villain has been used the least, with many reports opting to present their anti-sex work rhetoric through the narrative frame of the victim. Stigma is more often attached to the victim than the villain, presenting countless instances of, as mentioned above, a discrediting of those deemed to be the "victim" of consensual sex work, which remains intertwined in these reports with human trafficking. With these changes to the role of the victim, the narrative frame of the hero has also gone through its own transformation, emerging not only as a more positive way of representing sex work, but also a method of managing – and ultimately resisting – longstanding sex work-related stigma.

However, what remained largely absent from the news reports examined, and representation of sex work overall in these reports, was a sense of diversity amongst sex workers. The reports examined leaned heavily into, as has been discussed, the concern over white women and children's safety as a priority with little-to-no attention to anyone not fitting this description. Because of this, news reports aligned, with moral conservative ideology that works to uphold the white family unit, particularly when following a sex-worker-as-villain or one of the two sex-worker-as-victim narrative frames. News reports in the 2010s did little to recognize the various

intersectional identities of Canadian sex workers, nor how their experiences may differ when interacting with restrictive policy, efforts to eradicate sex work, and anti-sex work rhetoric that permeates this news discourse. This plays directly into the longstanding, and incorrect, assumption that sex workers exist as a monolith and must be treated as such – only to be opposed by the continuation, and increase in the use, of the "sex work is work" narrative frame that eventually should include more intersectional experiences in the 2020s.

Looking to the reproduction, and the changes to, stigma in news reporting about sex work has provided valuable insight not only into the how the presence of stigma aids in maintaining the marginalization of sex workers, but also how narrative framings that align with the familiar roles of the hero, the victim, and the villain give space for upholding and managing this stigma. This project has laid the groundwork for future research focusing on the presence of sex work-related stigma in news reporting. Particularly how this stigma is continually reproduced in the context of the hero, victim, and villain roles. As a jumping off point, future research should also examine the presence of stigma in other news publications, the lasting effects of *PCEPA* (2014) and its language on news reporting on sex work beyond the 2010s, the persistence of stigma attachment to victim narratives in reporting on sex work, and the continuation of more positive changes that appeared at the end of this thesis.

What is most important moving forward, however, is supporting the inclusion of sex workers in reports about their own labour to further dispel the assumption that they all have the same experiences, and that these experiences are exploitative. Because, as has been outlined here, the narrative frame of the hero brings forth representation as a means of combatting stigma and anti-sex work rhetoric, with levity as an exciting side effect of this representation. The best

way to present this representation, this stigma management and resistance, and this levity is simple: recognizing that sex work is work.

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Appendix I: Sex Work Regulatory Provisions – Criminal Code, 1985

S.210: Keeping common bawdy-house

(210.1) Every one who keeps a common bawdy-house is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.

Marginal note: Landlord, inmate, etc.

(210.2) Every one who

- **(a)** is an inmate of a common bawdy-house,
- **(b)** is found, without lawful excuse, in a common bawdy-house, or
- **(c)** as owner, landlord, lessor, tenant, occupier, agent or otherwise having charge or control of any place, knowingly permits the place or any part thereof to be let or used for the purposes of a common bawdy-house, is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

Notice of conviction to be served on owner

(210.3) Where a person is convicted of an offence under subsection (1), the court shall cause a notice of the conviction to be served on the owner, landlord or lessor of the place in respect of which the person is convicted or his agent, and the notice shall contain a statement to the effect that it is being served pursuant to this section.

Duty of landlord on notice

(210.4) Where a person on whom a notice is served under subsection (3) fails forthwith to exercise any right he may have to determine the tenancy or right of occupation of the person so convicted, and thereafter any person is convicted of an offence under subsection (1) in respect of the same premises, the person on whom the notice was served shall be deemed to have committed an offence under subsection (1) unless he proves that he has taken all reasonable steps to prevent the recurrence of the offence.

S.211: Transporting person to bawdy-house

Every one who knowingly takes, transports, directs, or offers to take, transport or direct, any other person to a common bawdy-house is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

S.212: Procuring

(212.1) Every one who:

- **(a)** procures, attempts to procure or solicits a person to have illicit sexual intercourse with another person, whether in or out of Canada,
- **(b)** inveigles or entices a person who is not a prostitute to a common bawdy-house for the purpose of illicit sexual intercourse or prostitution,
- **(c)** knowingly conceals a person in a common bawdy-house,
- **(d)** procures or attempts to procure a person to become, whether in or out of Canada, a prostitute,
- **(e)** procures or attempts to procure a person to leave the usual place of abode of that person in Canada, if that place is not a common bawdy-house, with intent that the person may become an inmate or frequenter of a common bawdy-house, whether in or out of Canada,
- **(f)** on the arrival of a person in Canada, directs or causes that person to be directed or takes or causes that person to be taken, to a common bawdy-house,
- **(g)** procures a person to enter or leave Canada, for the purpose of prostitution,
- **(h)** for the purposes of gain, exercises control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in such manner as to show that he is aiding, abetting or compelling that person to engage in or carry on prostitution with any person or generally,
- **(i)** applies or administers to a person or causes that person to take any drug, intoxicating liquor, matter or thing with intent to stupefy or overpower that person in order thereby to enable any person to have illicit sexual intercourse with that person, or
- **(j)** lives wholly or in part on the avails of prostitution of another person, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years.

Living on the avails of prostitution of person under eighteen

(212.2) Despite paragraph (1)(j), every person who lives wholly or in part on the avails of prostitution of another person who is under the age of eighteen years is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen years and to a minimum punishment of imprisonment for a term of two years.

Aggravated offence in relation to living on the avails of prostitution of a person under the age of eighteen years

(212.2.1) Notwithstanding paragraph (1)(j) and subsection (2), every person who lives wholly or in part on the avails of prostitution of another person under the age of eighteen years, and who

- **(a)** for the purposes of profit, aids, abets, counsels or compels the person under that age to engage in or carry on prostitution with any person or generally, and
- **(b)** uses, threatens to use or attempts to use violence, intimidation or coercion in relation to the person under that age, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen years but not less than five years.

Presumption

(212.3) Evidence that a person lives with or is habitually in the company of a prostitute or lives in a common bawdy-house is, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, proof that the person lives on the avails of prostitution, for the purposes of paragraph (1)(j) and subsections (2) and (212.2.1).

Offence — prostitution of person under eighteen

(212.4) Every person who, in any place, obtains for consideration, or communicates with anyone for the purpose of obtaining for consideration, the sexual services of a person who is under the age of eighteen years is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years and to a minimum punishment of imprisonment for a term of six months.

Offence in relation to prostitution

(213.1) Every person who in a public place or in any place open to public view

- **(a)** stops or attempts to stop any motor vehicle,
- **(b)** impedes the free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic or ingress to or egress from premises adjacent to that place, or
- **(c)** stops or attempts to stop any person or in any manner communicates or attempts to communicate with any person for the purpose of engaging in prostitution or of obtaining the sexual services of a prostitute is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

Definition of "public place"

(213.2) In this section, ***public place*** includes any place to which the public have access as of right or by invitation, express or implied, and any motor vehicle located in a public place or in any place open to public view.

Criminal Code, RSC 1985, c C-46. Retrieved from: https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-46/

Appendix II: Sex Work Regulatory Provisions – Criminal Code, Post-2014

S.213: Offences in Relation to Offering, Providing or Obtaining Sexual Services for Consideration

Stopping or impeding traffic

(213.1) Everyone is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction who, in a public place or in any place open to public view, for the purpose of offering, providing or obtaining sexual services for consideration,

- **(a)** stops or attempts to stop any motor vehicle; or
- **(b)** impedes the free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic or ingress to or egress from premises adjacent to that place.
- **(c)** [Repealed, 2014, c. 25, s. 15]

Communicating to provide sexual services for consideration

(213.1.1) Everyone is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction who communicates with any person — for the purpose of offering or providing sexual services for consideration — in a public place, or in any place open to public view, that is or is next to a school ground, playground or daycare centre.

Definition of public place

(213.2) In this section, *public place* includes any place to which the public have access as of right or by invitation, express or implied, and any motor vehicle located in a public place or in any place open to public view.

S. 286: Commodification of Sexual Activity

Obtaining sexual services for consideration

(286.1.1) Everyone who, in any place, obtains for consideration, or communicates with anyone for the purpose of obtaining for consideration, the sexual services of a person is guilty of

- **(a)** an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than five years and a minimum punishment of,
    - **(i)** in the case where the offence is committed in a public place, or in any place open to public view, that is or is next to a park or the grounds of a school or

religious institution or that is or is next to any other place where persons under the age of 18 can reasonably be expected to be present,

- **(A)** for a first offence, a fine of $2,000, and
- **(B)** for each subsequent offence, a fine of $4,000, or

- **(ii)** in any other case,
  - **(A)** for a first offence, a fine of $1,000, and
  - **(B)** for each subsequent offence, a fine of $2,000; or

- **(b)** an offence punishable on summary conviction and liable to a fine of not more than $5,000 or to imprisonment for a term of not more than two years less a day, or to both, and to a minimum punishment of,
  - **(i)** in the case referred to in subparagraph (a)(i),
    - **(A)** for a first offence, a fine of $1,000, and
    - **(B)** for each subsequent offence, a fine of $2,000, or
  - **(ii)** in any other case,
    - **(A)** for a first offence, a fine of $500, and
    - **(B)** for each subsequent offence, a fine of $1,000.

Obtaining sexual services for consideration from person under 18 years

(286.1.2) Everyone who, in any place, obtains for consideration, or communicates with anyone for the purpose of obtaining for consideration, the sexual services of a person under the age of 18 years is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than 10 years and to a minimum punishment of imprisonment for a term of

- **(a)** for a first offence, six months; and
- **(b)** for each subsequent offence, one year.

Subsequent offences

(286.1.3) In determining, for the purpose of subsection (2), whether a convicted person has committed a subsequent offence, if the person was earlier convicted of any of the following offences, that offence is to be considered as an earlier offence:

- **(a)** an offence under that subsection; or

- **(b)** an offence under subsection 212(4) of this Act, as it read from time to time before the day on which this subsection comes into force.

Sequence of convictions only

(286.1.4) In determining, for the purposes of this section, whether a convicted person has committed a subsequent offence, the only question to be considered is the sequence of convictions and no consideration shall be given to the sequence of commission of offences, whether any offence occurred before or after any conviction or whether offences were prosecuted by indictment or by way of summary conviction proceedings.

Definitions of place and public place

(286.1.5) For the purposes of this section, *place* and *public place* have the same meaning as in subsection 197(1).

Material benefit from sexual services

(286.2.1) Every person who receives a financial or other material benefit, knowing that it is obtained by or derived directly or indirectly from the commission of an offence under subsection 286.1(1), is guilty of

- **(a)** an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than 10 years; or
- **(b)** an offence punishable on summary conviction.

Material benefit from sexual services provided by person under 18 years

(286.2.2) Everyone who receives a financial or other material benefit, knowing that it is obtained by or derived directly or indirectly from the commission of an offence under subsection 286.1(2), is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than 14 years and to a minimum punishment of imprisonment for a term of two years.

Presumption

(286.2.3) For the purposes of subsections (1) and (2), evidence that a person lives with or is habitually in the company of a person who offers or provides sexual services for consideration is,

in the absence of evidence to the contrary, proof that the person received a financial or other material benefit from those services.

Exception

(286.2.4) Subject to subsection (5), subsections (1) and (2) do not apply to a person who receives the benefit

- **(a)** in the context of a legitimate living arrangement with the person from whose sexual services the benefit is derived;
- **(b)** as a result of a legal or moral obligation of the person from whose sexual services the benefit is derived;
- **(c)** in consideration for a service or good that they offer, on the same terms and conditions, to the general public; or
- **(d)** in consideration for a service or good that they do not offer to the general public but that they offered or provided to the person from whose sexual services the benefit is derived, if they did not counsel or encourage that person to provide sexual services and the benefit is proportionate to the value of the service or good.

No exception

(286.2.5) Subsection (4) does not apply to a person who commits an offence under subsection (1) or (2) if that person

- **(a)** used, threatened to use or attempted to use violence, intimidation or coercion in relation to the person from whose sexual services the benefit is derived;
- **(b)** abused a position of trust, power or authority in relation to the person from whose sexual services the benefit is derived;
- **(c)** provided a drug, alcohol or any other intoxicating substance to the person from whose sexual services the benefit is derived for the purpose of aiding or abetting that person to offer or provide sexual services for consideration;
- **(d)** engaged in conduct, in relation to any person, that would constitute an offence under section 286.3; or
- **e)** received the benefit in the context of a commercial enterprise that offers sexual services for consideration.

Aggravating factor

(286.2.6) If a person is convicted of an offence under this section, the court that imposes the sentence shall consider as an aggravating factor the fact that that person received the benefit in the context of a commercial enterprise that offers sexual services for consideration.

Procuring

(286.3.1) Everyone who procures a person to offer or provide sexual services for consideration or, for the purpose of facilitating an offence under subsection 286.1(1), recruits, holds, conceals or harbours a person who offers or provides sexual services for consideration, or exercises control, direction or influence over the movements of that person, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than 14 years.

Person under 18 years

(286.3.2) Everyone who procures a person under the age of 18 years to offer or provide sexual services for consideration or, for the purpose of facilitating an offence under subsection 286.1(2), recruits, holds, conceals or harbours a person under the age of 18 who offers or provides sexual services for consideration, or exercises control, direction or influence over the movements of that person, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than 14 years and to a minimum punishment of imprisonment for a term of five years.

Advertising sexual services

(286.4) Everyone who knowingly advertises an offer to provide sexual services for consideration is guilty of

- **(a)** an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than five years; or
- **(b)** an offence punishable on summary conviction.

Immunity — material benefit and advertising

(286.5.1) No person shall be prosecuted for

- **(a)** an offence under section 286.2 if the benefit is derived from the provision of their own sexual services; or

- **(b)** an offence under section 286.4 in relation to the advertisement of their own sexual services.

Immunity — aiding, abetting, etc.

(286.5.2) No person shall be prosecuted for aiding, abetting, conspiring or attempting to commit an offence under any of sections 286.1 to 286.4 or being an accessory after the fact or counselling a person to be a party to such an offence, if the offence relates to the offering or provision of their own sexual services.

Criminal Code, RSC 2014, c. 25. Retrieved from: https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-46/

Appendix III: List of News Reports Included in Sample

News reports included in critical discourse analysis are marked with a triple asterisk (***)

Barghout, C. (2016, December 6). Winnipeg woman says she'd never sell sex on streets but online she has 'urge to get money'. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-woman-says-she-d-never-sell-sex-on-streets-but-online-she-has-urge-to-get-money-1.3882368

Barghout, C. (2019, June 5). 'Hard to believe the level of sadism here': Winnipeg man who forced ontario woman into sex trade pleads guilty. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-sex-trafficking-guilty-plea-1.5163451

***Bell, R. & McConnell, R. (2016, July 27). Edmonton kids sold as sex workers, as teen prostitution becomes more common. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-kids-sold-as-sex-workers-as-teen-prostitution-becomes-more-common-1.3698129

Blanch, V. (2018, December 19). Sex trafficking 'definitely happening' and 'definitely on the rise'. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/jenn-fredericks-ywca-moncton-sex-human-trafficking-steve-trueman-1.4940858

Burke, A. (2016, June 4). Police push forward on 4 unsolved killings of sex workers. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ottawapolice-murder-unsolved-1.3615647

Carreiro, D. (2016, May 2). Veteran winnipeg police officer researches child sex trade for solutions. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/veteran-winnipeg-police-officer-researches-child-sex-trade-for-solutions-1.3559949

Carter, A. (2012, July 27). Danger rising for sex trade workers in hamilton. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/headlines/danger-rising-for-sex-trade-workers-in-hamilton-1.1195218

CBC News. (2010, March 26). 4 charged in bawdy house raid. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/4-charged-in-bawdy-house-raid-1.970914

CBC News. (2010, May 17). Sex worker's Facebook page marks evolving industry. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/sex-worker-s-facebook-page-marks-evolving-industry-1.955568

CBC News. (2010, September 24). Pimps exploiting homeless, shelter resident says. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/pimps-exploiting-homeless-shelter-resident-says-1.891384

CBC News. (2010, September 29a). Ottawa to appeal prostitution ruling. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa-to-appeal-prostitution-ruling-1.877357

CBC News. (2010, September 29b). Sex work: how it's controlled around the world. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/sex-work-how-it-s-controlled-around-the-world-1.899168

CBC News. (2010, October 13). Sex slaves staffed brothel, police say. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/sex-slaves-staffed-brothels-police-say-1.887617

CBC News. (2010, October 20). Craigslist 'hot spot' for prostitution: professor. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/craigslist-hot-spot-for-prostitution-professor-1.899102

CBC News. (2011, July 11). Halifax ‘tramp’ posters mock sex-worker labels. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/halifax-tramp-posters-mock-sex-worker-labels-1.1067126

CBC News. (2012, March 14). Professor who used to be escort supports sex-trade licencing. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/professor-who-used-to-be-escort-supports-sex-trade-licencing-1.1299001

***CBC News. (2012, July 13). Police open office in popular prostitution area. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/police-open-office-in-popular-prostitution-area-1.1218259

CBC News. (2012, September 21). Sex-trade workers group wins bid for court challenge. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/sex-trade-workers-group-wins-bid-for-court-challenge-1.1294706

***CBC News. (2012, November 13). Ad campaign takes aim at prostitution. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/ad-campaign-takes-aim-at-prostitution-1.1222643

CBC News. (2013, February 8). Sex-trade outreach workers say streets remain dangerous. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/sex-trade-outreach-workers-say-streets-remain-dangerous-1.1354931

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CBC News. (2013, December 20a). Prostitution law change won't make sex work safer, say calgary police. *CBC News*. Retrieved from:

https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/prostitution-law-change-won-t-make-sex-work-safer-say-calgary-police-1.2472688

CBC News. (2013, December 20b). Supreme court prostitution decision: 5 questions. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/supreme-court-prostitution-decision-5-questions-1.2471934

CBC News. (2014, February 6). Windsor professor applauds ontario's stance on prostitution. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/windsor-professor-applauds-ontario-s-stance-on-prostitution-1.2526101

CBC News. (2014, March 26). Ottawa escorts say ban on buying sex would be counterproductive. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ottawa-escorts-say-ban-on-buying-sex-would-be-counterproductive-1.2585940

CBC News. (2014, May 15). Saskatoon police say licensing sex trade is working. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/saskatoon-police-say-licensing-sex-trade-is-working-1.2643829

CBC News. (2014, May 23). Woman forced into prostitution relieved by sentences. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/woman-forced-into-prostitution-relieved-by-sentences-1.2653018

CBC News. (2014, June 5). Calgary police chief praises ottawa's prostitution bill. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-police-chief-praises-ottawa-s-prostitution-bill-1.2665883

CBC News. (2014, June, 11). Alberta sex worker critical of new prostitution laws. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/alberta-sex-worker-critical-of-new-prostitution-laws-1.2671967

CBC News. (2014, June 14). Sex worker supporters dance against new prostitution bill. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/sex-worker-supporters-dance-against-new-prostitution-bill-1.2675934

CBC News. (2015, May 11). Sex workers further victimized by deportations, groups say. *CBC News.* Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/sex-workers-further-victimized-by-deportations-groups-say-1.3069626

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Appendix IV: Codebook

Codes	Included Terms	Description
Abuse	Abuse; Abused; Abuser(s); Abusive	Linking of sex work and abuse; reproduction of conceptualization of sex work as an inherently abusive process; sex workers, purchasers of sex, and third parties linked to abuse
At risk		Framing sex workers as 'at risk'
Activism	Activism; Activist(s); Activist groups; Advocate(s); Advocating; Advocacy	Discussions of sex work activism and/or sex work activists
Bill C-36		Making specific reference to Bill C-36
Community safety	Community; Community safety; Neighbourhood(s); NIMBY ('Not in my backyard')	Discussions of keeping communities safe; includes discussions of community boundaries and community spaces; includes discussions of possible 'consequences' of allowing sex work to continue in public space that is close to 'communities'; framing sex workers as being outside of 'the community'
Criminal	Crime; Criminal; Criminality; Illegal; Illegal activity/ies	Framing sex work as a criminal act
Criminalization	Criminalization; Criminalized	Discussions of the criminalization of sex work in a Canadian context
Danger		Framing sex workers as in danger
Dangerous	Dangerous; Harm; Harmful; Threat	Framing sex work as inherently dangerous
Decriminalization	Decriminalize; Decriminalization; Decriminalized; Efforts to decriminalize	Discussions of the decriminalization of sex work in a Canadian context; decriminalization as an alternative to current conceptualizations and/or criminalization of sex work in Canada
Derogatory language	Hooker; Slut; Tramp; Whore	The use of language developed through stigmatized assumptions of sex work that have been deemed derogatory or offensive
Dirty	Dirt; Dirty	Framing of sex work(ers) as dirty

Discussions of activist demonstrations/events		The reporting on, or inclusion of discussions of, sex work activist projects, demonstrations, and/or events
Discussions of labour		Framing sex work as a form of labour; inclusion of significant discussion of labour, and sex work as a form of labour.
Discussions of types of sex work other than street-based sex work		The inclusion of non-street-based forms of sex work, or discussions of such work, in reports – such as stripping, escorting, pornography, indoor sex work, among others.
Enforcement	Blitz; Charge; Charges; Charged; Enforce; Enforced; Enforcement; Raid; Sentence; Sentenced	Enforcement of sex work regulation; legal regulation of sex work(ers)
Epidemic		Framing sex work as an epidemic
Exploitation	Exploit; Exploitation; Exploited; Exploitative	Framing sex work as inherently exploitative; this also includes references to specific types of exploitation and/or exploitative practices
Forced	Force; By Force; Forced; Coerced	Discussions of sex workers being forced to perform sexual labour; framing sex workers as incapable of choice
Immoral	Evil; Immoral; Morally wrong; Wrongful	The attachment of immorality to sex work and its related activities
Legalization vs decriminalization debates		The inclusion of the debates of new ways to consider sex work in Canada, namely the legalization of sex work vs the decriminalization of sex work
"Modern day slavery"		Framing sex work as an example of ongoing slavery; use of this specific phrase emphasizes the ongoing assumption of sex workers as victims incapable of possessing agency
Morality		Discussions of morality as it relates to sex work
"Must be saved"		Discussions of victimhood that explicitly include a ‘saviour’ narrative; includes a focus on ending sexual labour to ‘aid’ those performing sexual labour (a perspective born out of anti-trafficking perspectives applied to sex work); insinuating all sex workers are victims that require saving.

Non-sex worker perspectives included in reports		
Nuisance		Framing sex workers as a nuisance; discussions of sex workers as a nuisance to the areas within which they work
Organization	Group; Organization; Organizing; *Specific sex work organizations [i.e., POWER]	Sex work organization(s); discussion of sex worker organizing and group activist work
PCEPA	PCEPA; The Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act; New Prostitution Laws	Making specific reference to the title of PCEPA when discussing this policy
Perpetrator	Delinquent; Offender; Perpetrator	Framing sex workers as perpetrators of crime
Policing	Officer(s); Police; Police force; Policing	Policing of sex work(ers); reporting of police action as it relates to sex work
Policy	Bill; Criminal code; ~Sections of criminal code; Debate; Development (policy); Law; Legislation; Policy	Discussions of policy, policy development and implementation, specific policy related to sex work, and sections of the Canadian criminal code that govern sex work
Prostituted	Prostituted; Prostituted persons	Referring to sex workers as prostituted persons; links sex work to trafficking
Prostitution	Prostitution; Prostitute	The use of the term ‘prostitution’ as an umbrella term when discussing all forms of sex work
Protection	Protect; Protected; Protection	Discussions of sex work that include a narrative of the need to protect sex workers from sexualized labour
Quotes from non-sex workers		

Regulation	Regulate; Regulated; Regulation	Regulation of sex work(ers)
Risky		Framing sex workers as ‘risky’
Sex trade	Sex trade; Trade	Referring to all sex work as ‘the sex trade’
Sex work		Use of the term ‘sex work’ when discussing sex work
"Sex work is work"	“Sex work is work”; “Sex work is real work”	A phrase used commonly by sex workers, sex work activists, and supporters of sex work and the rights of sex workers; positions sex work as a legitimate form of work (labour)
Sex worker/activist perspectives/quotes included in reports		
Shame	Shame; Shameful	Framing sex work as a shameful activity/form of labour
Slavery	Enslave; Enslaved; Enslaving; Sex slave(ry); Slave; Slavery	Framing sex work as slavery; discussions of sex work as a system of ongoing slavery; invoking a slave narrative to discussions of sex work to underscore an anti-sex work perspective
Target	Target; Targeted, Targeting	Discussions of sex work that include narratives of sex workers targeted by either law enforcement or those perceived as predatory
The Harper/Conservative government	Conservatives; Conservative Government; Harper; (Peter) MacKay; Prime Minister; PM; Stephen Harper; The Harper Government	Government that oversaw federal politics during the Bedford v Canada charter challenge and developed/ascended Bill C-36 (PCEPA)
Trafficking	Trafficked; Trafficking	Focus on sex trafficking; conflating sex work and sex trafficking
Vermin		Perpetuation of social hygiene discourse that governed sex work policy pre-Bedford; sex work is considered unhygienic; sex workers are deemed vermin who carry disease and must be eliminated to ensure cleanliness and safety are maintained

Victim		Framing sex workers as victims
Violence	Violence; Violent; Assault(ed/ing)	Discussions of sex work as a violent practice; discussions of violence against sex workers; the perpetuation of the narrative that all sex work is inherently violent
Vulnerable		Framing sex workers as vulnerable

Codes (Demographic Information and Matrices of Identity)	**Sub-Categories**	**Description**
Ability		Discussion/mentions of the ways in which experiences are determined by one's in/capability of performing or possessing social, cognitive, physical, and emotional skills. This is recognized as a social construction of what has been deemed valuable and aids in dividing society into hierarchal categories based on one's dis/abilities.
Age	Under 18 18-29 30-39 40-49 50 and above	Discussion/mentions relating to one's age, a classification based on the position along the life course between birth and death. For the purposes of this thesis, this is divided into 5 sub-categories
Class and Socioeconomic Status		Discussions/mentions relating to one's social class and/or socioeconomic status – one's relationship to the social hierarchies and inequality based on one's income, educational attainment, and prestige.
Gender		Discussions/mentions of the socially constructed categories related to femininity, masculinity, and everything between these binary categories. For the purposes of this thesis, this is divided into four categories.
	Female	Gender identities associated with femininity.
	Male	Gender identities associated with masculinity.
	Non-Binary	Gender identities that are explicitly outside of the masculine/feminine binary and/or explicitly referred to as non-binary identities
	Other	Any other gender identities that do not fit into the previous three gender categories

Indigeneity		Discussions/mentions of Indigenous peoples and those that self-identify with one of the many Indigenous groups, communities, and nations that make up the land currently referred to as Canada. This thesis recognizes Indigenous sovereignty, and thus, this code includes making note of any use of Indigenous identity, Indigenous knowledge, and the interaction between Indigenous peoples with the Canadian government within the reports examined.
Racialization		Discussions/mentions of one's race. As racialization refers to the ways in which a group is defined by socially determined categories of "race," this category makes note of how one's racialized identity relates to social structures, hierarchies, and institutional systems.
Sexual Orientation		Discussions/mentions of one's sexual identity. Sexual identity correlates to one's sexual feelings, attitudes, and practices. This includes all sexual identities along the spectrum of sexualities.