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From Moral Panic to Moral Narrative: The Construction of 'The Prostitute' in The Province Newspaper 1993-2003

Sarah Beer
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Abstract

Over the course of the past 20 years, more than 63 sex workers have suspiciously vanished from the same Vancouver location. Early in 2001, Robert Pickton was charged with some of the murders associated with these disappearances. In what has since become the Missing Women case, the victims from Vancouver's downtown eastside have garnered much media attention, in which the social disregard for, and vulnerability of, street sex workers has been strikingly demonstrated.

Based on previous literature, the dominant discourse of 'The Prostitute' was established, deeming it a high-risk trade, among other personal characteristics commonly associated with sex workers. A qualitative content analysis was conducted on a widely distributed provincial newspaper, The Province, in order to assess any meaningful discursive shifts in the discourse of 'The Prostitute' between 1993 and 2003.

Notions of risk and discourse were incorporated into prior literature on moral panic theory. With the use of this theory, it was found that this rise in media attention could not be said to be a moral panic, but instead, a moral narrative. The latter term was used to signify the moral dimension of a discourse in which the message is directed toward the victim and pertains largely to a discourse of risk and proper risk management, otherwise implicating the subject their victimization.

It was found that The Province reinforced the dominant discourse of 'The Prostitute' by dissociating the Missing Women from murdered sex workers from other locations. Setting them apart to be acknowledged, emphasized the quasi-victim status given those involved in the sex industry. The murders were incorporated into a moral narrative that served as a warning to sex workers, thus problematizing them as victims. Presented as either illegitimate choice makers or victims of social ills and prostitution itself, the problems identified throughout the coverage of this case pertained mostly to a serial killer, while the solutions offered spoke largely to a need to get women off drugs and out of prostitution. This again reaffirmed the high-risk discourse of prostitution, rather than recognizing them as 'true' victims, and considering realistic and meaningful options that might reduce the particular vulnerability of street sex workers.

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Introduction

In what has become *The Missing Women Case*, over the course of the past twenty years, 63 women have been declared 'missing' from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside neighbourhood. Many of these women are presumed dead, and sufficient evidence has been gathered from a Port Coquitlam farm to charge the owner, Robert Pickton, with 27 counts of first-degree murder.

There have been numerous accounts of fatal violence in cities throughout British Columbia, however those from the poverty-stricken 'skid-row' area of Vancouver, known as the Downtown Eastside, have incited particular attention. While this notice has come several years after their suspicious disappearances, these have since become 'Vancouver's Missing Women'. Distinguished from those working in other locations in Vancouver and its surrounding cities, 'The Missing Women', are associated with the accused serial killer, Robert Pickton and his farm in nearby Port Coquitlam.

Concerned with the prevalence of violence in the sex industry, and in the wake of this particular case, this research began as a documentation of the lives of vanished and murdered sex workers from across Canada. It soon became evident that this would only further inform what was already known. That is, the victims are predominantly women, who are firmly positioned on the fringes of society. They are embedded within multiple forms of oppression including race, class, substance use, and work in one of Canada's most marginalized forms of labour, street sex work. Given the timing and sensitivity of the topic, the use of unobtrusive measures was important. Examining various media, speaking with police and social service organizations offered a frustrating and fruitless

search that provided inconsistent information, very little of which spoke to the lives of these women beyond their master status as 'The Prostitute'.

At the same time, I was disturbed by the fact that there seemed to have been a window of opportunity in which the Missing Women case might have positioned violence (fatal and otherwise) against sex workers as a social problem, and yet somehow this did not occur. Realizing that while the spectrum of violence perpetrated against sex workers is not rare or novel it is not a contingent aspect of the trade either.

It is striking that, in light of many murders during the past decade, no legislative changes have been made to reduce the prevalence of harm to sex workers. The sudden rise in media coverage regarding the Missing Women and the Pickton farm excavation in 2002 led me to believe we had experienced a moral panic that had simply failed to achieve legislative consideration. I was left perplexed by the fact that we did not see a collective recognition of the urgency of this issue and a call for action.

Realizing the importance of the media in shaping public opinion (Barak, 1994; Chermak, 1994; Chibnall, 1977; Durham et al., 1995), I undertook a content analysis of British Columbia's most widely distributed newspaper, The Province between 1993 and 2002 in order to explore the discursive shifts of 'The Prostitute' prior to, and throughout the Missing Women investigation. The goal was to make sense of both the presentation of women in the sex trade and how they, and the violence they experience, is discursively constructed in order to understand the lack of social public engagement

Chapter Outline

This thesis is arranged in five main chapters. Through the various discussions and views regarding prostitution, the first chapter offers a contextual account of this issue.

These ideologies, which invoke differing images of 'The Prostitute', will be considered in their seeming order of commonness, to include the police, the legitimized community, radical feminists, and sex worker rights advocates, in addition to the varying solutions these discourse creators suggest. This chapter will conclude with a review of the previous literature pertaining to the construction of sex workers in the media.

The following chapter addresses the role of these discourse builders or claimsmakers in the development of a moral panic. Considering two foundational perspectives of moral panic theory, to include Cohen's (1972) original concept, titled the Processual Model, and a latter adaptation referred to as the Attributional Model, the components and processes of these will be explained. It is found that both models are lacking within the context of neo-liberalism, and must be reconfigured to incorporate notions of risk and discourse. Chapter Two concludes with reflection on the research at hand, and consideration of the applicability of these models in the case of the Missing Women. The second part of this chapter provides some background on the role of media, as its importance is emphasized in the construction of a moral panic, and serves as the basis for this study.

Chapter Three builds on the above conversations and theoretical tools, and offers the final foundational layer to this research project. Further developing the ideological suppositions, this chapter offers the utility of feminist poststructuralism in order to frame the inclusion of discourse, the emphasis on language, and the assumptive basis that knowledge and 'reality' are created and constructed rather than objective entities, and should thus be studied in a manner in which current cultural meaning is not taken for granted as the inevitable 'truth' of a subject. These concepts formulate the

methodologies and specific research methods that will be explicated for the content analysis that was undertaken. This chapter concludes with some limitations of the current research.

Provided the above groundwork, the research findings and analysis are presented in the two subsequent chapters. In the first they are presented temporally and in accordance with how the data was categorically collected. This information that will be incorporated and examined in the analysis offered in the final chapter, providing a thematic account which suggests the discursive shifts related to 'The Prostitute' in The Province between 1993 and 2003. This will also include some of the marginal and absent discourses that facilitated a closed discussion, allowing only a single understanding of the issue of violence against sex workers to materialize and gain credence. In consideration of the above, Chapter Five concludes with a final reflection on the application of moral panic theory with this case specifically.

This research is both an attempt to fill the gap in literature pertaining to the representation of sex workers in the media as well as an analysis of whether the construction of 'The Prostitute' is reconfigured in consideration of their victimization in what has become Canada's largest serial murder investigation. That is, whether the victim status (as murder victim, not of prostitution) will override the customary and established master status of 'The Prostitute', whether sex workers might emerge as citizens with a rightful voice to speak to the issue as it affects their daily lives and the women they once knew, and in this way, if possibilities for change that might better enable protective services and reduce the vulnerability of sex workers that has long been documented will ensue.

Chapter I: Contextualizing the Prostitution Debate

*"To be a prostitute is not merely to hold a job,
but to have a whole identity" (Boritch, 1997:91).*

Varying between 'bad women' and 'victims', sex workers are typically portrayed in terms of their involvement in the sex industry. 'Prostitute' is an all-consuming designation that is seen to encompass a person's identity; it becomes a notion about who they are rather than simply what they do. As such all sex workers are understood to be similar people with little individual variation. This is what it is to have a master status, in which the label dominates the perception of a person and their social positioning (Schaefer, 2002). This status label conjures an image or an identity of the person to whom it applies, commonly bringing with it associations of drug addiction, poverty, and moral degrade. The dominant discourse of 'The Prostitute' is generally characterized as disgraceful, pathetic, and in need of salvation; sex workers are symbolic of public vice, and often associated with the illicit drug trade and HIV/AIDS (Chapkis, 1997; Gamson, 2001; Jeffrey and MacDonald, forthcoming; Pheterson, 1999; Sacks, 1996; Van Brunschot et al., 1999).

These images are of course challenged through alternate discourses. As people actively voice their claims on a given topic, discourse is established. This is the means by which a subject comes to be conceptualized and constructed through language and image. As social constructionism entails not 'truth', but a will to power by which some ideas are expressed and others deliberately silenced, the following is an account of the many voices that have emerged from the debate surrounding prostitution – in what seems to be the order of prevalence. These include the police, the 'community' (legitimized), radical feminists, and sex workers' rights groups and their feminist allies. Seeking to

claim the issue in a particular manner, additional consideration will be made to the solutions these agents present according to their differing problem definitions.

These conversations arise out of competing discourses on prostitution, and thus frame the general discussion on the topic. Conversations are informed by, but are not in themselves, discourses. They are distinguished in that they offer the various ideological positions and present possibilities for the discussion on prostitution, but are not solidified or articulated as a discourse, which is a more fixed understanding. These conversations then, will offer context to the issue, and allow for the dominant discourse to be isolated and further developed in proceeding chapters. These conversational elements are important in understanding the issue, and along with the theoretical framework and previous literature, helped develop the data collection instruments, highlighting the categories that would be used to analyze the portrayal of sex workers in the print media when they are victims of fatal violence.

In the first part of this chapter, I will consider the discourses of 'The Prostitute' as defined by the police, the legitimized community, radical feminists, and advocates of sex workers' rights. In doing so, it is important to recognize that these discourses are not equally validated or accepted as 'truth'. Subjugated discourses can be locally dominant (Duda & Willutzki, 1996:342), however it is the dominant discourses that are most widely accepted as the 'proper' world construction, and often assumed to be the 'reality' of an issue; ideas that will be expanded on further in subsequent chapters. This section will be followed by an account of the relatively sparse literature on the construction of 'The Prostitute' in the media and some of the prominent discourses on sex work in this realm.

The Police

Police agencies serve as community resources in terms of public education. Police websites construct prostitution as a problem harmful to both those involved in the trade of sexual services, as well as children, families, communities, and entire cities. The list of nuisances associated with the trade include the endangerment and exploitation of children, increased traffic volume and road congestion, discarded condoms and needles, drug trafficking, public sex, high risk of contacting sexually transmitted diseases, neighbourhood decay, decreased property value, and negative impact on community activities and businesses (Winnipeg Police Service, 2000; Calgary Police Service, 2004). These issues, as we will see, are generally echoed by community groups.

Notably, there are discrepancies between police agencies, and likewise between individual officers. However, regardless of differing personal opinions or jurisdictional mandates, police are "structurally positioned to approach the sex worker as a 'problem' for the community that police must address, rather than treating her as a citizen to whom they are responsible" (Jeffrey and MacDonald, forthcoming:135). While recognizing national disparity, police agencies tend to uphold a 'law and order' mandate, offering primary support and security to community groups by responding to their concerns and complaints. "For sex workers it appears that the 'serve and protect' motto of the police is serving one community, middle-to-upper class consumers" (Jeffrey and MacDonald, forthcoming:136). And while officers and agencies may practice a certain level of discretion, police work remains limited to current prostitution legislation. Although legal, there are several laws related to prostitution that make it virtually impossible to engage in legally. Of these, the communication law is particularly harmful to street sex

workers, as they are the most visible targets for police and public scrutiny, as well as a large majority of victims of severe physical and sexual abuse (Lowman & Fraser, 1995).

Section 213 of the Criminal Code or the communication law, prohibits public communication for the purpose of prostitution, resulting in street workers' movement to isolated locations and working alone to avoid drawing attention, both of which increase their vulnerability to violence. Additional impositions include Section 210 which prohibits a person from keeping or occupying a common bawdy-house, and Section 211 which disallows transporting or directing people to such an establishment (DOJ, 2003). Section 212 refers to procuring people into prostitution or to bawdy-houses, criminalizes living off the avails of prostitution, and maintains special provisions for anyone who does any of the above with a person under the age of 18 (DOJ, 2003). The criminalization of bawdy-houses, which also includes hotels that rent rooms on a short stay basis, forces women to turn tricks in cars, which are usually driven to remote places to avoid creating public nuisance that would attract police, placing them in greatest danger (Lowman & Fraser, 1995). Due to the criminal nature of prostitution, workers are impeded from going to the police when they have experienced violence or have information regarding violent clients, as they are often arrested for outstanding warrants and questioned about their work.

Police and State Solutions

The power of community activism is evident in the creation of the communication law, which was implemented as a response to citizens' complaints, and designed to move sex work out of 'their' neighbourhoods. While some jurisdictions have ceased arresting sex workers under this law, the dangers of criminalization persist. In terms of dealing

with the violence prevalent in street sex work, some police departments have instigated programs to identify both clients generally, and bad dates specifically (VPD, 2002). This may not help eliminate street prostitution, but can be an extremely useful tool in the investigations of missing and murdered workers, as well as other reports of violence. Interestingly, Jeffrey (2002) states, "A number of politicians who privately expressed openness to decriminalization or legalization felt that public opposition and moral approbation prevented them from supporting such ideas publicly" (as cited in Jeffrey and MacDonald, forthcoming:279).

The 'Community'

From the late 1970s onward, we see the gentrification of working areas that had historically been the site of sex workers 'strolls'. We subsequently see the emergences of a new claimsmaker – middle-class homeowners. These 'legitimized' community members have become active in problematizing prostitution in residential areas; specifically geared toward street workers in *their* neighbourhoods. When the communication law was introduced and upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1985, its purpose was made clear, "...to control the nuisances associated with street prostitution, *not* to prohibit prostitution itself" (Lowman, 1998). For community members, sex work is seen to negatively affect local businesses, property value, general neighbourhood image, and has become directly associated with disease and the illicit drug trade (Cole, 1995; DOJ, 1998). These 'nuisance' are defined according to the surrounding community members, and their complaints often result in 'police sweeps', in which police target street workers in a short period of time, usually as result of public pressure (Trew, 2003).

In the Working Papers on Pornography and Prostitution (Jayewardene et al., 1984) the problem of prostitution is constructed as an act that threatens morality, exploits customers and youth, and incites crime and a surrounding criminal culture. It is deemed harmful to the families of sex workers, entails the spread of venereal disease, presents a general public nuisance, and involves tax evasion (Jayewardene et al., 1984). In the City of Ottawa Task Force on Prostitution (1992), the main issues identified by residents were similarly associated with the corruption of innocent children, such as their witnessing sex acts and fear they would come into contact with discarded condoms, needles and syringes. Other problems pertained to noise issues such as "bumper-to-bumper traffic" (Ottawa, 1992:16) at night, large groups of prostitutes shouting and offering sexual favours, and "screams throughout the night by prostitutes being beaten" (Ottawa, 1992:15). Other complaints included harassment from clients, fear of going out at night, public sexual activity, and "the witnessing of a rape of a prostitute" (Ottawa, 1992:15). While some reports state, that public attitude toward prostitution includes concern for sex workers (Jayewardene et al., 1984), community members tend to position themselves as the primary victims of prostitution (even when their victimization involves witnessing the abuse of sex workers) (Ottawa, 1992).

Community Solutions

Sex workers have been vastly overlooked in the discussion on prostitution, "they are frequently not understood to be *citizens* who have a right to be part of the political process and public debate" (Jeffrey and MacDonald, forthcoming:260). As such, residential groups, along with police and politicians have played a key role in framing this issue, and so policy outcomes have tended to be in favour of elite groups. An

obvious solution to any problem is to simply criminalize it. This has been a strategy that has been actively pursued by residents.

Radical Feminists

Two theoretical arguments have emerged, one dominated by radical feminists and some sex workers, and the other dominated by sex workers and some feminists. At both ends of the spectrum is the insistence that prostitution is embedded in relations of power, "Where these groups diverge is on the question of who holds that power" (Chapkis, 1997:21). Radical feminists typically understand prostitution as an institution that harms all women; it is a practice of sexual harassment, rape, violence, racism, a violation of human rights, and a consequence of patriarchal domination (Farley, 2000). Believing that it is not sex that is for sale, but "a woman's lived-in body" (Cole, 1995:122), they understand sex workers as victims of patriarchy, who are forced to sell their bodies due to lack of power in the form economic, gender, and racial inequality, and in many cases because of actual or threatened force (Shrage, 1994; Russo, 1998).

While some feminists and sex workers argue in terms of agency and choice, radical feminists find this implication dangerous and misleading as it ignores the forces of poverty, violence and inequality, which are understood to be the reasons that women and children engage in any aspect of the sex industry. They argue that understanding prostitution as 'work' is an attempt to legitimize sexual exploitation and violence against women (Leidholdt, 1999:n.p.). Giobbe (1995) explains, "Prostitution is not a 'career choice' or a 'victimless crime' but, rather, that prostitution creates an environment in which crimes against women and children are defined as a commercial enterprise" (p.317). Advocates of this perspective tend to believe there can be no real consent from

those involved in this industry, instead those who do are misguided and would not participate given economic and social equality (Leidholdt, 1999).

Some radical feminists go as far as to suggest that counter ideology is 'antifeminist' (Dworkin, 1983). Radical feminism understands sex worker rights groups as offering 'romanticized' notions of an 'outlaw' profession; views that deny of the magnitude of harm inherent in the industry, the pervasive misogyny, and the destructive qualities of prostitution (Leidholdt, 1999). Anyone who accepts prostitution as a form of female labour is seen to promote and sustain women's systematic oppression and abuse, "One simply cannot be both for and against the exploitation of women" (Dworkin, 1983:197). Radical feminism recognizes sex work as a sexually exploitive practice that reduces women to sex objects and commodities, disengaging them from human experience and enabling both symbolic and literal violence against them; regarding this practice as the foundation of women's social oppression as women's bodies are viewed as marketable commodities whether they are being marketed or not (Barry, 1995). "When the human being is reduced to a body, objectified to sexual service of another, whether or not there is consent, violation of the human being has taken place" (Barry, 1995:23).

The above offers a very polarized argument that has been adapted over the years. There is some middle ground developing between radical feminists and sex worker rights advocates. Both have come to acknowledge how sex workers continue to be singled out in feminist debates as though they are all the same and yet categorically different from other women. Feminists from various perspectives are starting to recognize the diversity of voices within the sex industries (Cornell, 1995). Some radical feminists maintain that

prostitution is an exploitive institution, however uphold the right of sex workers to do their work with safety and dignity (Cole, 1995). They go on to claim that their contentions with prostitution are not to imply judgment on those who perform sex work (Pateman, 1988). "The goal is not to deny an individual woman's right to choose or participate in the industry, but to target the structural inequalities both within the industry and in the social relations, structures, and institutions that shape the industry" (Russo, 1998:28).

Radical Feminist Solutions

Radical feminists work from an abolitionist position, however recognize that the criminal sanctions around prostitution further oppress women and increase their vulnerability to physical violence. Their perspective is one in which sex workers are understood to be victims of patriarchal oppression, and the laws serve as an extension and example of this exploitation. Proponents of the decriminalization of prostitution, radical feminists are cautious of further victimizing women in their abolitionist pursuits, and understand patriarchal laws as infringements on the rights of women. Put another way, they want to criminalize the industry, but not the workers whom they define as victims.

Sex Worker Rights Advocates

Since the early 1970s, many sex workers and their feminist allies have organized in reaction to the claims of radical feminists to defend their position in what they consider a legitimate and valuable work option. Of primary concern, and the first priority of the International Committee for Prostitutes' Rights (ICPR), was the need to give "voice to whores" (Pheterson, 1989, as cited in Chapkis, 1997:182). Since this time, numerous prostitution rights groups run by current and former sex workers have developed

globally. Many are community-based, non-governmental, privately funded organizations that provide resources and encourage the participation of women, men, transvestites, and transsexuals who work in street prostitution, as escorts, erotic dancers, massage parlour employees, sex phone operators, porn actresses and models. Main objectives include support and information that might increase security, while fighting for the rights and dignity of all sex workers. Most are in favour of the decriminalization of prostitution, and seek to eradicate the social stigma associated with the trade.

While also recognizing that workers make choices out of a limited range of options, advocates see this as a reality for all people, and they recognize a multitude of realities within the sex trade (Network of Sex Work Projects [NSWP], 1996). The Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes clearly demands that prostitution be a career of choice, not a necessity (Bell, 1987a:115). For those who have chosen their work, it is understood as valuable, important, and powerful. "In private the whore has power. She is in charge, setting the terms for the sexual exchange and the financial exchange. In public, of course, she has absolutely no rights – no civil rights, no human rights. Prostitution laws are how women are controlled in this society" (St. James, 1987:82). In an interview, Mary Johnson says of her work in the sex trade,

> We are free individuals that do have a choice. It is society that stops us at every turn – from having bank accounts, from acquiring loans, from seeking other employment, from using the knowledge and the street expertise that we have obtained in our professions as street expertise or experience for any other line of work or any other way of life. That's where the *real* exploitation is (Bell, 1987a:118).

Some argue that taking prostitution off the streets and treating it as a skilled labour would position workers as respectable, middle-class professionals; in order to decrease its stigmatization sex work must be recreated as a 'normal' service (Chapkis, 1997).

Sex Worker Rights Solutions

Promoting the legitimization of sex work, these advocates .favour the decriminalization of the trade. Legal sanctions not only stigmatize sex work, but also discriminate against, and harm women. As the Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP, 1996) states,

> Laws against sex work also justify violence against those who work in this industry. Violence against sex workers is often not taken seriously by the police due to a widespread belief that violence is part of the job. In no other industry are victims of violence blamed for their experiences. Violence against sex workers has sometimes been ignored even in cases involving multiple murders (n.p.).

As such, the primary concern for most is the illegal or quasi-legal status of sex work in many countries around the world.

The practice of these laws and policies are understood to negatively affect the lives of sex workers; they encourage stigmatization and discrimination, reduce workers' self-esteem, and limit their participation in community activities and the rights enjoyed by non-sex workers. These laws also expose them to harassment, social exclusion, and force them to relocate to streets or hidden and exploitive brothels. When criminalized, sex workers are prevented from working together, which decreases their security and prevents them from organizing to improve working conditions, obtaining health and dental plans, or sharing and investing their earnings. These laws force them into environments of crime where not only do they lack protection, but are prevented from seeking help when they have been victimized. Those interested in improving these conditions see decriminalization as an option that would protect sex workers from abuses such as harassment, robbery, assault, rape, and murder (Sex Workers' Alliance of Vancouver [SWAV], 1996; International Union of Sex Workers [IUSW], n.d.; Sex

Workers' Alliance of Toronto [SWAT], 1998; Stella, 1999; Lowman & Fraser, 1995), in addition to affording them the human rights offered other citizens.

The International Union of Sex Workers (IUSW, 1997) calls for the decriminalization of all aspects of sex work among consenting adults, the right to associate and unionize, work as any other independent contractor, receiving the same taxations and benefits. Sex worker rights groups fight for fair wages and healthy working conditions, the right to travel, the choice to work independently or collectively, the right to say no, the opportunity for training, access to non-judgmental health services, and zero tolerance for coercion, violence, child labour, rape and racism (International Committee for Prostitutes Rights [ICPR], 1997; SWAV, 1996; SWAT, 1998; Parti Populaire des Putes [PPP], 2000).

The issue of violence is of key concern to these groups. Workings within the limitations of current legislation, various organizations such as Stella, The Sex Workers' Alliance of Toronto (SWAT), and The Sex Workers' Alliance of Vancouver (SWAV) among others, produce Bad Trick lists that enable workers to inform each other of violent clients. Many of these advocacy groups also provide education to policy makers and service providers regarding the needs of sex workers and actively oppose the attempts of residents and business owners seeking to eradicate poor and marginalized people from urban spaces (PPP, 2000).

These attempts are made to reduce the social stigma of sex work which is understood to contribute to the violence experienced by workers. "Sex worker self-advocacy strategies are directed not only at transforming the social *conditions* under which their work takes place but also at improving the *status* of those performing erotic

labor through a transformation in the *cultural meaning* attached to prostitution" (Chapkis, 1997:192). Until legal sanctions are changed, workers recognize that prostitution "may be tolerated according to the whims of local authorities" (NSWP, 1996:n.p.), and so the solution to the problem, which is constructed primarily as one of stigma and violence, is to confront these issues both in terms of addressing societal discrimination as well as challenging laws that criminalize the trade.

These conversations attempt to address the constructed issue of sex work based on the dominant discourse of 'The Prostitute'. The police and legitimized community members maintain the nuisance seemingly inherent in street prostitution, and respond through legislative initiatives to relocate and reduce the visibility of the sex trade. Radical feminists strive to abolish prostitution, however disagree with legal sanctions that further oppress women. Sex worker right advocates are proponents of decriminalization in order to reduce violence as well as legitimize this work option. These are the prominent perspectives on the topic, in efforts to either sustain or rebut the discourse of 'The Prostitute' and its ensuing images and associations.

The Media Construction of Sex Workers

While there are numerous articles regarding the social construction of children and youth involved in prostitution, trafficking in women and children, and prostitution in the third world (see for example, Staller, 2003; Doezema, 2001; Soderlund, 2002), there is relatively little written about the media construction of adult sex workers in North America. That said, there were some useful insights in Images of Prostitution: The Prostitute and Print Media by Van Brunschot et al., (1999), which provides an analysis of Canadian print media and its portrayal of sex workers. In their research, the authors

found four prevailing themes: nuisance, child abuse, violence, and non-Western prostitution. The researchers found that sex workers, specifically street workers, continue to be associated with other 'deviants' such as drug addicts, and presented as representative of "all that is negative about modern urban existence" (Van Brunschot et al., 1999:48).

Aside from some distinction between adults and children, Western and non-Western women, 'The Prostitute' remains a symbolic and legal representation of 'bad women' as opposed to an actual set of characteristics involving a group of people (Pheterson, 1999). 'The Prostitute' is held "in a particular kind of cocoon or vacuum, as if s/he is isolated in the social atmosphere, without clients, without interaction with others, and without identity beyond the label" (Jeffrey and MacDonald, forthcoming:8-9). Unlike the temporal status of men as clients, 'The Prostitute' is a label that maintains a person's master status regardless of changes in behaviour (Pheterson, 1999). In a study about public reactions to sex scandals involving sex workers and celebrities, Gamson (2001) found while "the purchase of sexual services by men is both shameful and understandable" (p.197), the women involved were portrayed as the source of these problems.

Chapkis (1997) understands 'The Prostitute' as a symbol with competing versions invented by "policy makers, researchers, moral crusaders, and political activists ... The prostitute is a shape-shifter alternately embodying sex, crime, gender, violence, work" (p.211). Reinforced by the media as an 'Othered' category, 'The Prostitute', namely the most visible, the street worker, is a specific target of public scrutiny. She is both "public

symbol of female vice" (Walkowitz, 1992, as cited in Chapkis, 1997:48) and symbolic of the problems of modern urbanization (Van Brunschot et al., 1999).

In the early to mid 1980s, street prostitution was constructed primarily as a problem of 'nuisance'. Media accounts pointed to physical evidence of the street trade such as used condoms and dirty needles, increased noise and traffic, and exposure to children, to aid in the creation of the nuisance problem. The voices of local residents were emphasized, and off-street work was rarely acknowledged. "Reporting of prostitution as nuisance prevailed in all cities often in reference to 'community standards' and 'property values'" (Van Brunschot et al., 1999:55). Furthermore, the hazards of prostitution began to 'converge' with other issues, such as organized crime and the illicit drug trade, and increasing reference was made to the drug addictions faced by sex workers. "Drug use and addiction were generally depicted as personal characteristics that accentuated the deviant/criminal status of the practitioner" (Van Brunschot et al., 1999:56). This seemingly natural association fuelled the image of the street prostitute as the filth of the streets and the downfall of the community.

A related problem associated with the trade is the perception of sex workers as the vectors of disease. "The stories tended to focus on the association of prostitution, hypodermic drug use, and the spread of disease with the higher Native and transient prostitute populations in these cities" (Van Brunschot et al., 1999:57). Similarly, in her research, Women and AIDS: An Analysis of Media Misrepresentations, Valerie Sacks (1996) found that in terms of the AIDS discourse, sex workers have been portrayed as a "dangerous form of female pollution" (p.61), in which they are deemed to be diseased and contagious. Regardless of the limited and inconclusive findings regarding the rates

of infected workers and the unlikelihood of a man contracting AIDS from a woman, this discourse assumes sex workers are infecting the 'general population' (Sacks, 1996). Because of their master status, all sex workers are blanketed together and no distinction is made between drug users and non-drug users. With that, there is no mention of the fact that HIV/AIDS infection among sex workers is primarily due to intravenous drug use as opposed to work in the sex trade, given workers who are non-intravenous drug users have similar rates of infection as those of non-sex working women (Sacks, 1996). And while studies indicate very high use of condoms among sex workers, there remains a general lack of attention to men's role as clients, and the frequency with which clients request and offer to pay more for sex without a condom (Sacks, 1996).

When infection is reported in the media (usually in the context of men going abroad to non-Western countries) the emphasis is on the sex worker as 'infector', rather than the client as 'infected' (Sacks, 1996). Sex workers are frequently portrayed as "a devastating health menace to men, women, and babies" (Pheterson, 1999:n.p.). When viruses are spread to the 'innocent' wives of clients or infect their children, the sex worker remains the primary source of blame and is offered little sympathetic attention. "Prostitutes are almost by definition beyond the bounds of 'respectable' society. AIDS discourses reproduce and perpetuate notions of their deviance, a notion of deviance closely linked to notions of female as polluting" (Sacks, 1996:64).

Research on print media from the mid-1980s to late-1990s found that on the few occasions sex workers were provided the opportunity to voice their opinions, they became powerful claimsmakers in attempts to legitimize their work. However the most frequent use of sex workers' own voices were in stories pertaining to violence, which

were in turn used to demonstrate the risks of the trade. Violence was generally associated with pimps, and this emphasis enabled the image of the prostitute as victim (Van Brunschot et al., 1999), presumably because the pimp is the worst of the two evils. Police echoed this view, denying workers agency, they were 'explained' as victims. The victimization prevalent in the trade is especially associated with workers from Asia and the Far East, and to an even greater extent, children (Van Brunschot et al., 1999). The adult North American sex worker tends to be viewed as either a poor, drug addicted, and immoral deviant, the likely victim of abuse who sells her body, or as "an agent in her own miserable demise" (Jeffrey and MacDonald, forthcoming:8) who has made poor choices, and is thus a willing participant in a risky lifestyle with violent consequences (Jeffrey and MacDonald, forthcoming). "Prostitutes epitomize social illegitimacy and are thereby designated fair game for scrutiny and attack" (Pheterson, 1999).

The previous literature on the construction of sex workers in the media, in combination with the various conversations that have emerged in the debate on prostitution, have formed the context for this research. Provided the inferences regarding the lifestyle of sex workers, they are commonly responsibilized, while not legitimized, for their involvement in prostitution, and thus tend to be viewed as less 'deserving' of a victim a status when violence is perpetrated against them. The Missing Women case offers an event in which a large number of sex workers from the same location were victims of extreme violence over the course of two decades, eventually highlighting the social disregard of victims under these circumstances. The sudden attention given to this case was indicative of a moral panic. As such, this was the theoretical framework of this research, and will be presented in the following chapter.

Chapter II – Part I: Theoretical Framework: From Moral Panic to Moral Narrative

"...the analytic possibilities of sociology can be realized only when there is an abundance of discrepant theories which no one theory can contain"
(Downs and Rock 1998:5).

The aforementioned conversations provide the context of the discussion on sex work. These are to be considered throughout the media analysis of how 'The Prostitute' is constructed in a particular instance provided an example of extreme violence and social disregard, evident in the Missing Women case. Moral panic theory offers a useful framework in a media study of this nature. There are however, some problems identified with this concept in an era of neo-liberalism, and with the study of marginalized victims in particular. At its most fundamental level, a moral panic is evident when a specific problem is generalized far beyond its local, and offered as a moral lesson to the general public. In the circumstances of victims with whom the larger community does not easily and directly identify, the moral lesson seems to shift inward, to the victims and those seemingly like them. As such, the term 'moral narrative' was seen to describe this circumstance in which the message is directed to the now problematized victims, as opposed to the perpetrators or 'folk devils'.

This chapter is divided in two parts. Although the case of the Missing Women did not result in a moral panic, this theoretical approach offers useful concepts to understanding what did happen within the media construction of the issue of murdered and missing sex workers. As such, this first part of this chapter will present the two models that have been foundational to moral panic theory. I will go on to incorporate more recent literature that raises some contemporary problems with these models, suggesting that within the context of neo-liberalism, a new framework is required to

makes sense of the subject under analysis. The basis of this examination begins with the British concept from the 1970s, referred to as a Processual Model, and the second, developed in the United States in the 1990s, called the Attributional Model (Critcher, 2003). These are later criticized as somewhat lacking, and the inclusion of discourse and risk are deemed necessary inclusions in the analysis of modern moral panics. Because the media is an important component of moral panic theory, and the basis of the present research, the second part of the chapter will look specifically at media studies literature in order to provide the necessary contextual information that will be incorporated into the analysis of a midmarket newspaper's construction of sex workers as victims of violence.

In conceptualizing moral panics, the Processual Model will be explored as the foundation of this ideological concept. This examination will include the role of politicians and legislators, law enforcement officials, action groups, the public, and the press, as the key players in the development and construction of a social problem, and its emergence as a moral panic. This section will also explore the role of the folk devil, who is placed in opposition to society's moral boundaries, and is targeted by the above mentioned groups as the culprit in the degradation and moral downfall of society. The stages to this model will be considered, followed by the attributes that are emphasized in the latter model, and its important contributions to this concept.

The Processual Model

Moral panics are perceived threats to the social order. Regardless of the actual threat, these heightened levels of concern demonstrate society's moral boundaries. The use of the term 'moral' implies something that is "a threat to the social order itself or an idealized (ideological) conception of some part of it" (Thompson, 1998:8). The term

moral panic was coined in 1971 by Jock Young (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994:12; Thompson, 1998:7), and made famous a year later by Stanley Cohen (1972) in what has become a classic text in media studies, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*. A second text, *Policing the Crisis* (Hall, et al., 1978) has also become a foundational source for present analysis, providing a unique contribution in its incorporation of history and political culture (McRobbie & Thornton, 1995:562). These texts represent the 1970s British model of moral panics, and what Critcher (2003) refers to as the Processual Model. They will be used to understand the establishment of the moral panic concept, and as the basis for further development.

Originating as an analysis of social reactions toward a group of British youth (the 'Mods' and 'Rockers') in the 1960s, Cohen (1972) used the term moral panic as a suitable metaphor for the distorted and exaggerated media reports that generated extensive public outcry. The disturbances were relatively minor acts of hooliganism that took place over Easter weekend at a seaside town in 1964; by virtue of media engagement, this incident was escalated into a large-scale 'threat' of youth crime. Similarly, the issue of mugging at the time when Hall et al. (1978) studied it, entered into a larger discourse of a "steadily rising rate of violent crime" in Britain during the 1960s (Hall et al., 1978:vii); both of which had more to do with the "disintegration of the social order" (Hall et al., 1978:viii) than the actual crimes.

Cohen (1972/80) describes a moral panic as a condition defined by claimsmakers that is picked up and reinforced in the media. From this process a folk devil materializes and is presented as a threat to society's moral values and order. Various experts then emerge to offer their solutions and diagnoses, finally resulting in the disappearance and

ensuing reemergence of the condition (Cohen, 1972/80:9). This process involves five main actors: politicians and legislators, law enforcement, action groups, the public, and the press (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994:24).

Politicians and Legislators

The emergence of the Mods and Rockers as folk devils presented politicians an opportunity to gain public approval. Regardless of their feelings on the issue or whether they acknowledged its exaggeration, "the dominant mood among politicians and legislators toward youth crime in the period following the initial incident was angry, self-righteous, vindictive, condemnatory, and punitive" (Cohen, 1972:138). The youth were made into a specific social type to be favorably compared to; the youth gangs became an easy target, "the fact that the target hardly existed was irrelevant" (Cohen, 1980:138). Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) add, "What counted was not the nature of the target but what side they were on and what they were against" (p.28). This alignment is cited as one of the defining qualities, and perhaps the purpose of the moral panic, as it clearly identifies moral boundaries and those who do, and do not, fit within them.

Law Enforcement

The social control agents Cohen (1980) considers are the police, the courts, and action groups. These groups carry out a process of 'diffusion', 'escalation', and 'innovation', in which various agents begin to organize and collaborate with each other, expanding their scope and intensity, and finally resulting in implementation of new measures of social control (Cohen, 1980:86-7). Law enforcement and other control agents respond to public pressure for increased measures to ensure citizens' safety and the protection of social values. This reaction constitutes what Lemert (1951) refers to as

'societal control culture' which includes "the laws, procedures, programs and organizations which in the name of collectivity help, rehabilitate, punish or otherwise manipulate deviants" (as cited in Cohen, 1980:85).

Action Groups (Moral Entrepreneurs)

Arising from the belief that there is a particularly troubling or threatening condition, accompanied by the notion that certain values must be upheld, action groups are formed. These action groups, or moral entrepreneurs, act out of specific interests, which are important to identify, as they shape the subsequent campaigns for changes to legislation and enforcement practices (Cohen, 1980:115). The role of the legitimized community members described in the preceding chapter, who were active in relocating the street sex trade and the resulting communication law according to their own interests is a clear example of this.

In order to create or change rules, problems must generate mass appeal, defined as a crisis for a larger population than those directly affected. 'Social problems' are the result of a political process by which opposing views are argued and compromised in an attempt "to have the problem officially recognized so that the power and authority of the state can be engaged on one's side" (Beck, 1967:11). Depending on the circumstances, the action groups tend to either blame law enforcement or else shift their complaints toward government to provide police with adequate power to deal with the problem (Cohen, 1980:113).

The Public

Without 'public' concern, a moral panic would cease to exist. Stories in the media must resonate with members of society at large, appearing to reflect common

values and beliefs. Sex workers offer an interesting point of analysis in this regard, as even when they are the victims of violent crime, their master status as 'The Prostitute' is maintained and in contestation with society's values. This is an important aspect of the present research, and will be further explored in subsequent chapters. As the media are primary sources of information for which people learn about issues and concerns, their initial interpretation and presentation of events are crucial. Cohen (1980) does however note that public reactions are not entirely homogenous. With regards to the reporting on the Mods and Rockers there was public recognition of the media's tendency to exaggerate and distort events, as well as varying opinions according to age, political affiliation, etc. (Cohen, 1980:65).

The Press

Although the public is granted some personal and critical analysis, Cohen (2002) stresses the media's key role in the formation of moral panics,

> The media have long operated as agents of moral indignation in their own right: even if they are not self-consciously engaged in crusading or muck-raking, their very reporting of certain 'facts' can be sufficient to generate concern, anxiety, indignation or panic. When such feelings coincide with a perception that particular values need to be protected, the preconditions for new rule creation or social problem definition are present (Cohen, 2002:7).

Hall et al. (1978) emphasize the influence of this aspect of moral panics even more so than Cohen (1972), claiming the media is *the* most powerful force involved in molding public knowledge of social issues. Through 'over-reporting' and the use of sensational headlines and vocabulary, the mass media provide exaggerated accounts of events, with the implicit assumption of their reoccurrence. These events would in fact be seen to reoccur as reports highlight any action, however slight, that could be construed as related,

while playing down those events that defy these assertions (Cohen, 1980:39). In all of this, the media are understood to play a fundamental role in the creation of folk devils, considered a central element of the moral panic, as these characters symbolize the threat to the moral order.

The Emergence of Folk Devils

A 'threat' that instigates such mass concern must also hold someone accountable. Folk devils are presented and understood as entirely bad, stripped of any favorable characteristics and positioned in opposition to mainstream (and moral) society. Once defined in this way, all future action is viewed in relation to their master status, and society must work to rid themselves of these hazards. The media aid in identifying these social groups and linking them with other characteristics, thus reinforcing and amplifying the threat they present.

Through the media's symbolic use of language they are able to create associations that aid in the evolution of what can be a relatively insignificant issue into large-scale threat. By intensifying both the behaviour and number of people involved, the media aggravates tensions between these groups and those who have become associated with them, as well as their communities (Potter & Kappeler, 1996:7-8). The 'Mods' and all of that they came to represent, youth, clothing styles, etc., became "distinguishable social types" (Cohen, 1980:10). Youth in general came to be associated with the Mods and Rockers, and as such, 'youth' became the substantial threat. Similarly, in the case presented by Hall et al. (1978), themes of youth, race (specifically Black), and crime came to be associated with mugging. The folk devil and all that they are seen to represent offer a reminder to society of how people should not act, dress, appear, etc.

Folk devils are the quintessential deviants, "...they are engaged in wrongdoing; their actions are harmful to society; they are selfish and evil; they must be stopped, their actions naturalized" (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994:29).

Within these models, the position and presentation of the victim is largely overlooked. They do not play a dynamic role, but instead, there tends to be an assumption of them as a vague 'every person', simply the innocent sufferers of moral degrade. This lack of attention is a limitation of this theory within modern moral panic analysis, in light of a risk discourse, and will be taken up later in the chapter.

Stages to the Processual Model

While the object of a moral panic can vary in form, duration, and effect, they are understood to unfold in the same way. According to Cohen (2002), moral panics evolve as a process (hence the term Processual Model) which includes seven distinct and necessary steps. The first is a *warning* of potential danger, referring to "some apprehensions based on conditions out of which danger may arise" (Cohen, 2002:12). This is ensued by the *threat* in which "people are exposed to communication from others, or to signs from the approaching disaster indicating specific imminent danger" (Cohen, 2002:12). The third stage occurs when the disaster strikes causing the *impact*, and gives rise to the *inventory* stage where those exposed to the disaster form an image of what happened and their condition (Cohen, 2002). It is in this stage that Cohen (2002) understands the media to play a crucial role in defining and shaping social problems. This stage is followed by the *rescue* which takes place to assist the victims. Cohen (1980) classifies the responses to the event in terms of sensitization, the societal control culture, and exploitation.

Through sensitization in the mass media, certain concerns have been brought to the forefront of people's minds; they become acutely aware of occurrences they may have previously dismissed. "Sensitization occurs because symbols are given a new meaning" (Cohen, 1980:81). People tend to over-react and become overly cautious. As public nervousness increases, there is increased pressure for police action and the maintenance of law and order. According to Cohen (1980), there are three common elements to the reaction of the control culture. These include diffusion, escalation and innovation (Cohen, 1980:86). This involves the expansion of localized enforcement efforts to large-scale ones. Along with increased scope and intensity, stronger measures and new methods of control are established and enforced. Finally the third category of this stage is exploitation, where the deviant is used to meet social ends with little regard of the consequences to them, such as the establishment of tourist attractions, entertainment stories, merchandise sales, etc. pertaining to the event.

The rescue stage is followed by the *remedy* phase in which specific initiatives are suggested and taken to alleviate harm (Cohen, 2002:12). The moral panic concludes with *recovery*, where the community either recuperates or adapts as necessary to the damage that has occurred (Cohen, 1980:22-23).

The Attributional Model

While largely influenced by Cohen (1972), Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) offer an alternate model in which moral panics are considered from contextual social constructionist perspective. The social constructionist perspective emerged from a critique of the objectivist stance, and considers social problems legitimate based on the premise that "social problems are what people think they are" (Spector & Kitsuse,

2001:73). While absolute truths may be questionable, who gets to speak and construct the commonly taken for granted 'reality' can be identified. As such, Spector and Kitsuse (2001) suggest abandoning the notion that social problems are a condition, but a "claims-making activity" (p.73).

Social constructionists "define social problems in terms of claimsmaking; they focus on the subjective judgments" (Burr, 2003:337). They are more interested in "why and how the conditions or event come to be viewed as a problem" (Thompson, 1998:12). Because anything can be defined, from some perspective, as socially problematic (Beck, 1967:5), moral panics are particularly interesting as they present "observable effects upon moral values, as well as legal and social policy" (Critcher, 2003:23).

Instead of a process involving seven steps, the Attributional Model distinguishes the moral panic by five necessary characteristics, or attributes. These are concern, hostility, consensus, disproportionality, and volatility. As with the Processual Model, a folk devil emerges over which there is *concern* and ensuing *hostility*. The dichotomized relationship between the folk devil and the rest of society lays the foundation for *consensus* that the former group poses a real and substantial danger to the greater society. The emergence of this threat is contingent upon an assertion of "the need for eradicating, ameliorating, or otherwise changing some condition" (Spector & Kitsuse, 2001:76). As such, there are often calls for new means of control, which Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) claim almost inevitably accompanies the moral panic. This model pays less credence to the role of the media than does the previous model, referring to it as simply another claimsmaker (Thompson, 1998; Critcher, 2003). As such, consensus might only be present within a specific group or community, which represents not the lack of a moral

panic, but regional variation in its eruption. There will always be opposing voices, sometimes faint and disorganized, and other times, strong and unified (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994:33-5).

One of the distinguishing features of this model is that the panic necessarily gives rise to *disproportionate* levels of concern relative to the 'real' threat. This is an arguable notion among social constructionists, as 'reality' is understood to be immeasurable, and as such, impossible to 'over' react to. Given that Spector and Kitsuse's (2001) claim that social problems cease to exist until they are constructed, any reaction would be disproportionate. Cohen (2002) and Thompson (1998) consider 'disproportionality' a value-laden term, where any attempt to measure it entails moral judgments and an inherent implication that "the concern is irrational or not genuine" (Thompson, 1998:10). While Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) recognize that they may be accused of "smuggling objectivist principles into a study of subjective claims" (p.36), they argue there are *degrees* of confidence that some claims are true and others are not. As such, they emphasize, "The concept of the moral panic *rests* on disproportionality" (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994:38). Lastly, the final attribute of the moral panic is its *volatility* which is evident in the sudden eruption and equally sudden descent of concern over the issue (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994:38).

The Processional Model emphasizes social anxiety and the influence of the state, political elites, and media (Thompson, 1998:16). The success of a moral panic within this framework is indicated by ideological closure or consensus (Critcher, 2003:29). Conversely, the Attributional Model focuses on the influence of claimsmakers in constructing social problems, and is criticized for its comparative dismissal of the role of

the media (Thompson, 1998; Critcher, 2003). The success of this moral panic is dependent on the validation of claimsmakers (Critcher, 2003:29).

Adapting the Two Models

New arguments have emerged complicating the traditional moral panic modalities outlined above. In the current era of neo-liberalism, we have seen the emergence of discourses of risk, within which the role of the victim needs to be addressed, the folk devil reevaluated, and the necessity of disproportionality reconsidered. There are two components of this notion of risk. The first is a condemnation of those who engage in risky behaviour, and the second a society consumed by perpetual anxieties and risk management strategies.

The Attributional and Processual Models have been foundational in the development of moral panic theory, and its establishment as a key sociological concept (Critcher, 2003:1; McRobbie & Thornton, 1995:560). It is argued that current sociological theory and analysis should now be concerned with risk instead of functionalist explanations (Thompson, 1998). Rather than a specific threat, moral panics now seem to contribute to, and perpetuate, a dominant discourse about risk.

Within the modern moral panic, not only has the traditional folk devil been reconstructed, but the role of the victim has become considerably more complex as well. The players in the script are no longer acting out the same moral story they once were. The new discourse is one of self protection and risk management; failure to do so tends to responsibilize the victim. The role of the victim and folk devil mark the largest modification of modern moral panics.

As with the previous models, the advice of experts regarding the causes and solutions to a particular problem emerges from a moral panic. Within risk society however, these images construct "the locus of the problem", and the victim is seen to have identifiable characteristics (Voumvakis & Ericson, 1984; Critcher, 2003). The 'ideal victim' in random violence stories would be "usually a respectable person engaged in some innocent activity – who suffers a sudden, unexpected, unprovoked, violent attack by an assailant with no connection to the victim, no reason to hurt this person in this way" (Best, 1999:7). These 'ideal victims' become increasingly difficult to locate as their stories are contaminated should they be tainted by any 'risk' factors, which can include anything from poverty, single parenting, racial/ethnic group identity, drug use, employment, or walking alone at night.

As the victim becomes an increasingly dynamic and complicated character, so too does the traditional folk devil. McRobbie and Thornton (1995) argue that moral panics are presently more difficult to establish given "'folk devils' are less marginalized than they once were" (p.559), and increasingly able to fight back (Ungar, 2001). The complication of the characters within moral panics have also put in question the necessity of disproportionality of reaction to event. The moral panic continues to signify society's moral boundaries and offers an opportunity for people to align themselves against the threat. The threat however, now extends beyond that presented by the folk devil to the dangers pervasive in a risk society. In this sense, as the victim becomes increasingly implicated in the narrative, the dichotomized relationship with traditional folk devils is disrupted. These instances no longer present the opportunity for others to align themselves against the folk devil, but instead to distance themselves from the victim who

has engaged in dangerous behaviour. Will sex workers be presented any differently provided a case of fatal violence? Will their master status as 'The Prostitute' and the implications of this as high-risk behaviour distance them from the audience and prevent them from becoming 'ideal victims'?

The stereotypical presentation of the folk devil can now be extended to the victim, and the widespread consensus relates more to proper risk management than the perpetrator. This complication of characters has also negated the necessity of disproportionality. For example, given the traditional moral panic definitions, Critcher (2003) refers to the AIDS epidemic as a "negative case" (p.24), meaning it was not a moral panic according to traditional models, as the threat was real and not disproportionate to the attention it received. This can be attributed to the fact that the dominant discourse about AIDS in the United States was largely confined to one of sexuality, and thus cast as an issue about gay men. Typically portrayed as folk devils, the concern over AIDS "involved estimating who was at risk and how they placed themselves at risk" (Critcher, 2003:164). The threat presented in the moral panic no longer has to be disproportionate as the concern is diluted by notions of the victim's partial responsibility for their circumstances. Again, we might ask ourselves whether 'The Prostitute', who is also a traditional folk devils, will thus be constructed as a culpable victim.

The all-pervasive quality of risk creates a platform in which specific attention to a given event is incorporated into a larger social issue. Prior concern with volatility has become generalizeable beyond the specific panic. In his later work, Cohen (2002) states that the explosive or volatile quality of moral panics have now been replaced by "a

generalized moral stance, a permanent moral panic resting on a seamless web of social anxieties" (p.xxix). This web of concern in turn facilitates the creation of a moral panic, as "successful moral panics owe their appeal to their ability to find points of resonance with wider anxieties" (Cohen, 2002:xxx). Critcher (2003) suggests that future analyses should consider "discourses evident in moral panics and their relationship to perceptions of risk" (p.177).

Particularly interested in the "discursive construction by the media and moral campaigners" (Thompson, 1998:12), Thompson (1998) attempts to situate moral panics within a context of moral regulation, in which they serve to identify tensions and struggles with regards to changes in cultural and moral principles. Likewise, Doyle and Lacombe (2003) describe moral panic as "an instance of moral regulation, albeit an extreme one. It is a short-lived but heightened moment in the construction of social anxieties" (p.288). This regulatory practice is not a conspiratorial one, but emerges out of a system of complex social interactions which serves to control certain populations (Doyle & Lacombe, 2003).

Critcher (2003) points out that risk can help identify how people or events get constructed as posing a threat to the moral order, while discourse analysis sheds light on some of the rhetoric involved in this process. He suggests thinking about moral panics as "discourses about risk" (Critcher, 2003:164). The above demonstrated one aspect of 'risk', which is a willingness to engage in perceived 'risky behaviour'. The following explanation of 'risk society' provides the neo-liberal context in which risk and risk management have become pervasive characteristics of modernization. These two notions

will now be explored as important contributions to the development of moral panic theory.

Risk society

Through modernization a discourse of risk has emerged, resulting in society's extreme sensitivity to, and concern with, risk management (Beck, 1992; Critcher, 2003; Giddens, 1991; Lupton, 1999; Thompson, 1998). Risk management can be defined as a "*systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself*" (Beck, 1992:21 [emphasis in original]). Where welfarism identified problems as a concern to the system, neo-liberalism problematizes the individual. This resulting shift requires the person to manage their own safety (Critcher, 2003; Garland, 2001; Pratt, 1999). In this way, it is understandable to conceive of how moral panics have become embedded in a web of continuous social anxiety. In the case studies Critcher (2003) considers in his book, "risk emerged as a fundamental issue…in ways not captured by existing models" (p.164). Now a pervasive aspect of society, risk is understood as manageable and associated with individual choice and responsibility (Critcher, 2003:165).

Recognizing that law cannot be the sole means to achieve social order and security, neo-liberal discourse is based on deregulation and privatization, individual choice, market security, and minimal government, which has established those who were once subjects of government to now be active in their own governance (Rose, 1996). Moore (2000) states, "Undeniably, the art of governing through risk has become increasingly mainstream" (424), confirmed through "techniques of risk" (Moore, 2000:411). This de-centralized form of government serves to disseminate power,

maintaining order by placing onus on the individual to manage their risk and thus ensure their own security (Cohen, 1996; Lee, 2001). As a result, sense of security is based on managed and inspected spaces, or 'safe territories', and those who cannot or do not gain access to managed territories are construed as deviant and therefore dangerous (Lianos & Douglas, 2000).

A new territory of exclusion has emerged, and along with it, new means of governing. Those who were 'needy' under welfarism, are now perceived as 'dangerous' or 'risky', and become what Rose (1999) refers to as 'the excluded'. The excluded are "relocated in both imagination and strategy, in 'marginalized' spaces" (Rose, 1999:59). Marginalized spaces are taken up by street sex workers, the homeless, drug-abusers, and others, who are not accorded equal status or value as 'legitimized' citizens. These are communities made up of 'non-citizens', who are unable or unwilling to manage their own risk, "incapable of exercising responsible self-government, attached either to no moral community or to a community of anti-morality" (Rose, 1999:59). Sub-groups are identified through a discourse of risk that offers a limited and partial image, "typically strengthening those institutions and groups that have carved out, severed, denied connection to, and then promised to 'save' those who will undoubtedly remain 'at risk'" (Fine, 1993:91).

Neo-liberal discourse is highly moralized (Foucault, 1982). Self-direction and appropriateness of conduct are guided by moral undertones (Dean 1999; Rose, 1996). There is a presumption of what is 'good', and responsible citizens act accordingly. 'Responsible' behaviour is rewarded in membership among the 'included', whereas the 'non-responsible', perceived threats to the social order, are effectively cast out (Dean,

1999; Cruikshank, 1999; Rose, 1999). Instead, the construction of social issues tend to focus on degraded people by which the problem is understood to be "a moral flaw – and the only thing to be done is to punish and pray'" (Furedi 1997:171). These responses are largely based on closed definitions which are affirmed through discourse.

Discourse

As will be further explained in the Methodology Chapter, the concept of discourse provides an interesting dimension to moral panics. Involving numerous and competing claims, the moral panic results in a dominant discourse, or specific way of understanding and talking about a problematized issue. Given the incorporation of risk society, this 'threat' becomes a 'risk', and the larger discourse has more to do with avoiding victimization than anything else. This entails aligning or distancing oneself from the victim, as it is the risk they took that becomes the threat to avoid. When the discourse becomes less specific and more generalized,

> The threat is no longer localized; we are all at risk; we confront not people mostly like us but the Other embodying evil. The pressure for action becomes unbearable. This may not happen, but when it does, society is in the throes of a moral panic. That is how the theories of risk society and the analysis of discourse indicate that moral panics should now be understood (Critcher, 2003:175).

As such, discourses can be located 'beyond' the confines of previous moral panic models, for example, a discourse of sexuality in relation to AIDS, or childhood innocence and defenseless in cases of pedophilia (Critcher, 2003). Likewise, Thompson (1998) plays particular attention to the "discursive construction by the media and moral campaigners" (12). Competing discourses can shed light on the slant of a particular issue. That is, assessing not the risk itself but how it is perceived and by who, and ultimately how it affects the person potentially viewed as a poor risk manager.

The concept of discourse offers a valuable contribution to the conceptualization of moral panics, or their lack thereof. Critcher (2003) offers AIDS and child abuse as two examples in which the discourse confined the rise of the moral panic. It was not until AIDS was dissociated from a particular discourse about sexuality that it gained momentum in the media; that is, when AIDS spread to drug users, and namely to blood donor recipients, that it became a problem to the population at large. Likewise, it is in this way that child abuse in the home has failed to emerge as a moral panic insofar as it cannot escape the confines of a discourse regarding the sanctity of family.

A 'successful' discourse can be identified when a specific problem becomes associated with a larger issue or a 'master discourse' (Critcher, 2003:174). This master discourse is demonstrated when a specific folk devil comes to embody a larger 'evil'; this presents a large scale threat that affects the masses rather than an exclusive population. As associations are solidified between certain risks and particularly risky people, there is a tendency to blame victims for any imprudence. As such, "discourses of risk management often end up doing old moral regulation work" (Valverde & Moore, 2000:514-5).

This is particularly relevant as it pertains to sex workers' positions of vulnerability. In light of a case in which their susceptibility to violence became abhorrently evident, will they continue to be identified by a wide variety of 'risky' characteristics or will they be constructed as 'true' victims with whom the reader can empathize with and fight for? Should this issue become one with which the public becomes concerned and proactively works toward reducing the harm, this would likely be understood as a moral panic. However, if the media emphasizes the seemingly risky

behaviour of the victims, this moralized story applies more to the victims and those deemed like them, than the general public, and as such, does not fit the moral panic model.

Modern Moral Panics and Moral Narratives

Given the tendency to focus on the individual moral 'flaws' in events that might otherwise be construed as moral panics, the implication of these incidents might more accurately be described as moral narratives, in which the emphasis is placed on the role and responsibilities of the victim in their risk management initiatives. The difference then between a moral panic and what might be called a moral narrative is that the latter is a closed discussion pertaining to the people involved and attests to their moral downfall as the situationally defined problem. Simply put, the locus of the problem is placed on the victims for being improper risk managers, and the issue then, does not give rise to wider social concern. Comparably, moral panics are understood to materialize when an issue is constructed is disseminated in a way that implicates the larger population than those directly involved. In the moral panic, all people are potentially at risk, and align themselves with the victims and against the folk devil, as opposed to the moral narrative in which the general population dissociates themselves from the event, and the messages of warning pertain more to the victims and the risks they took than a particular folk devil. As such, the moral narrative can be seen as highlighting the moral dimension to the discourse of risk.

Incorporating risk and discourse are helpful in examining how certain events get constructed as a threat to society's moral order, while discourse analysis assists in detecting the rhetoric involved in this construction. The concern over youth throughout

the 1960s and 1970s in Britain provides a useful example of how moral panics indicate sources of social anxieties, and also demonstrate the role of claimsmakers, moral entrepreneurs, and the mass media in establishing a dominant discourse (Thompson, 1998:31). Moral panics continue to provide a useful framework that clarifies social boundaries, regulatory practices, and identifies the process by which social problems are constructed, and hopefully in turn, might offer possibilities for change.

Given the emphasis on media in this study, the following section will provide some key points in media analysis, and that of midmarket newspaper, such as the one that will be examined in this study, and the influence of the media on the creation of moral panics and moral narratives.

Part II – The Role of the Media in Moral Panic Theory

"The daily press and the telegraph, which in a moment spread inventions over the whole earth, fabricate more myths...in one day than could have formerly been done in a century"
(Karl Marx, 1871)

While the role of the media is debatable within the moral panic models, many researchers assert this forum plays a primary role in constructing an image of reality upon which the public bases their beliefs and actions (Barak, 1994; Chermak, 1994; Surette, 1998). Within this research, the media is understood to be largely influential in the construction of social problems. This research falls in line with Cohen's (1972) original model, echoed by Critcher (2003) who states, "Modern moral panics are unthinkable without the media" (p.131). Likewise, Hall et al. (1978) strongly emphasized the role of the media in both defining and distorting the issue of 'mugging'. The media plays a key role in the construction of moral panics and moral narratives.

Given the importance of the mass media within this analysis, the following section offers some background on prior research within the realm of media studies. This offers important methodological and theoretical tools that were used in collecting and analyzing the data from The Province newspaper. Demonstrating the importance of claimsmakers, the influence and role of midmarket print media, and the construction of news stories, this background allowed for comparative consideration in conducting the present research and the portrayal of violent crimes against sex workers.

The Models and Media

As previously stated, the role of the media is understood differently between the Attributional and Processual moral panic models. The Attributional or social constructionist view of this concept is criticized in their treatment of the mass media as "mere channels through which passes information about deviance or about labels that others have assigned" (Shoemaker et al., 1987:353). Instead, it is argued that the media are actively engaged in identifying key players, defining problems, and suggesting plausible solutions (Critcher, 2003; Shoemaker et al., 1987; Jenkins, 1998; Spector & Kitsuse, 1977).

While the Attributional model understands the media as one of many public spheres in which a moral panic can be constructed, Cornwell and Linders (2002) see mass media "as a special category of social actors...playing key roles in selecting and disseminating information about emerging social problems, thus fueling the interpretive ambiguities and conflicts surrounding potential moral threats" (p.309). The media has been demonstrably influential, as both claimsmaker and as a channel through which the claims of others are heard (or ignored).

Claimsmakers and Primary Definers

The construction of social problems is accomplished through competing interest groups who respond in what Spector and Kitsuse (1977) term, 'claimsmaking activities' (p.78). This is generally perceived as successful when a particular group or ideology emerges and their ideas are disseminated accordingly. The media is an efficient means to gain awareness of the newly recognized or re-articulated issue (Jenkins, 1998:8). Likewise, in order to establish a seemingly objective and authoritative perspective on news events, journalists frequently source established figures from the community, who in turn reinforce their credibility by exerting their 'expertise' in the media (Chermak, 1994; Chibnall, 1977; Critcher, 2003; Ericson et al., 1989).

Claimsmakers can include people from a variety of social settings, including academics, activists, politicians, and as previously stated, the media. It can be almost anybody insofar as they can access public arenas (Critcher, 2003:22). They are important figures, especially in the emergence of a moral panic, as it is they who get to construct the 'problem', and as such, also play a significant role in offering solutions. Claimsmakers are defined as "those individuals who systematically make claims about the seriousness of a given social problem" (Critcher, 2003:179). They are also known to have a tendency to offer exaggerated figures and numbers on deaths, victims, and the like in order to assert their claims (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994:36).

Claimsmakers are to be distinguished from primary definers, who are more likely to be alliance groups rather than detached individuals. They are those "with established authority or expertise who have the power to define the terms of the debate around the social problem" (Critcher, 2003:182). Clearly, these are not mutually exclusive

positions, but not necessarily one in the same, nor is the dominance of the primary definer absolute (Schlesinger, 1990:76). In order for their claims to be successfully taken up they require support from significant media and/or political elites. Within media studies is the ongoing debate regarding the extent to which the media act as their 'mouthpieces', however, in some cases no primary definitions are ever taken up, and in others these definitions come from other sources such as authoritative experts alone (Critcher, 2003:136). Claimsmaking is usually deemed successful when the issue passes through various arenas, namely gathering media support, and thus attention from politicians and ultimately government agencies with ability to make policy changes (Critcher, 2003:22).

Hall et al. (1978) conceive of the media as secondary definers, who receive and disseminate information received from primary definers. In relying on this information, the media ensure the dominant ideology is continually reproduced (Hall et al., 1978; Killingbeck, 2001:188). While the media are usually referred to as secondary definers, taking up the claims of others, at other times, they seek this role for themselves. The media agenda is a determining factor of the public agenda, and works toward influencing policy changes. The media incorporate the voices of varying claimsmakers, while omitting or minimizing others. Whether they reinforce or dismantle 'The Prostitute' discourse for example, can then be understood as an editorial stance, as the previous chapter demonstrates there are competing claims on the issue, and only one dominant discourse that emerges. However, like others, in order for their claims to gain momentum, their position must be taken up by forums of higher status; firstly upmarket newspapers, followed by broadcasting, "only then will the weight of opinion require

response from government" (Critcher, 2003:136). Therefore, with governmental response commonly the claimsmakers' ultimate goal, their route in this endeavor is primarily through newspapers, which in turn gain credibility through other papers and broadcast media.

As particular groups make claims about an aspect of society or an event, seeking steps to remedy the situations, a social problem is either reinforced or comes into being. Whether these claims are legitimate or valid is not particularly important from a social constructionist perspective, but the process through which these claims either get taken up or dissolve is worthy of its own analysis (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994:90).

The Police as Claimsmaker

Police are considered primary definers in crime news stories, to the extent that most crime stories will not be reported without the acknowledgment from at least some criminal justice body (Chermak, 1995b:13). This does not however, usually include criminologists, who are markedly lacking from media discourse on the topic (Jewkes, 2004:44).

The police are important informants as they are already established 'experts' on crime related topics, seen to offer credible and reliable information (Killingbeck, 2001:190). The police and media usually are known to hold a symbiotic and mutually beneficial relationship. On the part of the police, it is important that they be constructed for the public in a positive way. Additionally, the police also seek the assistance of the public through media, requesting coverage on unsolved crimes. On the part of the media, police sources offer a perceivably reliable source, that is easily accessibly and cost-effective (Chermak, 1995a:21; Surette, 1992).

That said, mainstream newspapers tend to portray the criminal justice system as ineffective, "yet the cumulative effect of these portraits is support for more police, more prisons and more money for the criminal justice system" (Surette, 1992:249). The end result is still beneficial for enforcement agencies, and journalists remain reluctant to report questionable behaviour on the part of the police in fear of jeopardizing this valuable source. Only strategically will this be done as it can also benefit the credibility of the media, presenting them as an independent and objective voice of the public. "If the news media did not present these exceptions, then their role as an organizational propaganda tool would become obvious" (Chermak, 1995a:37). This relationship between media and police as primary definers is both mutually beneficial and tense.

Provided the importance of the role of police, their representation in this study is strongly considered. Public complaints about enforcement agencies, police response to these complaints, their conversation on 'The Prostitute', and how they define and suggest resolving the issue have been some of the categories used to analyze how this issue was constructed in the newspaper articles.

The Difference in Medium

Media are distinguishable in form. That is local versus national, broadcasting versus press, and within the latter, upmarket, mid-market, and downmarket newspapers, and type of articles. In analyzing these difference however, Chibnall (1977) warns that while opinions may vary slightly, they are all similarly committed to maintaining the social and economic order; all working within a framework of already established discourses whereby, "opinion and world-views which occupy the margins of that system or fall outside it receive very little representation" (Chibnall, 1977:3).

News media is generally characterized between two polarized categories. These are a market model and a manipulative model, although, "realistically, news agencies do not fit neatly into either model but operate somewhere in the middle" (Killingbeck, 2001:190). As such, they can be understood in what has been termed the organizational model (Surette, 1992).

The market model is one in which newsworthiness is determined according to public interests, based on the media as a big-business capitalist enterprise (Chermak, 1995a:37). Conversely, the manipulative model reports news based on the interests of the news agency owner as opposed to the public. This has also been referred to as a conspiracy theory, in that journalists are understood to simply and uncritically reproduce the dominant ideology of the ruling classes based on the media's capitalist ownership (Welch et al., 1997:489). Most would agree that the media are more complex than this ideology offers. The organizational model offers a balance in understanding news as not "totally reactive (market) or totally proactive (manipulative)" (Killingbeck, 2001:190). Regardless, it is important to bear in mind that news production is usually based somewhere within these two extremes. As such, what constitutes 'newsworthiness', is ascribed based on the interests of the public, while reproducing a dominant ideology beneficial to media owners, as well as primary definers, and the ruling class in general. In light of the previous discussion on sex work, this would be to reproduce the dominant discourse of 'The Prostitute'. However, given a case of an alleged serial killer, which is among the most newsworthy topics, there is perhaps the potential to disrupt this ideology.

Central to the models is whether the item is of particular value or 'newsworthy' (Surette, 1992:58). One topic that is prominently deemed newsworthy is crime and

deviance, and thus makes up a large component of all news reporting. These topics are "prepackaged (manipulative) and popular (market), it helps the news organization in its routinization process" (Killingbeck, 2001:191). The stories are beneficial in that, "the news media presents exceptional, unusual, and violent crimes because these stories sell newspapers" (Chermak, 1994:99). They additionally enable the reporter to follow a routine and standardized format in news reporting in which only the details of who was involved and the ensuing police action change, however the plot remains the same (Chermak, 1994; Surette, 1992). This has to do with some of the aspects that influence media reporting, resulting in simple explanations of crime which will be covered in the following sections.

Making News Newsworthy

News values refer to what constitutes a 'good' story. Crime, for example, tends to be a universal news focus, as "deviance in a broad sense is the staple, defining feature of newsworthiness across the board" (Reiner, 2002:381; see also Chermak, 1995b). Newsworthiness is an important consideration relevant to the development of moral panics, as it is one of the defining characteristics of whether or not, and to what extent, an event will receive media coverage (Shoemaker et al., 1987:351). These reports are based on an inferential structure, which is a system of underlying assumptions, usually "the driving force behind news construction" (Critcher, 2003:133).

A story's 'newsworthiness' is in large part determined by the individual journalists as well as the particular news organization. However, deviance is almost universally deemed newsworthy; and the greater the deviance, the better the story, and more coverage allotted (Shoemaker et al., 1987:354-5). It is also helpful if the event is

both spatially and culturally proximate to the audience. This is the geographic closeness and relevance to the reader. Cultural proximity refers to the similarities between the players and the audience based on various characteristics such as race, class, gender, etc. Jewkes (2004) states,

> If the victim is male, working class, of African Caribbean or Asian descent, a persistent runaway, has been in care, has drug problems, or is a prostitute (or any combination of these factors), reporters perceive that their audience is less likely to relate to, or empathize with, the victim, and the case gets commensurately lower publicity (p.52).

These lacking, the story must usually be large and dramatic in order to gain publicity (Jewkes, 2004:51).

Rare and extraordinary events are particularly newsworthy, although more difficult to cover as they are less predictable. That said, predictability is newsworthy in itself as media organizations can preplan the reports, therefore, "if the media expect something to happen it will happen, and journalists will usually have decided on the angle they are going to report a story from before they even arrive at the scene" (Jewkes, 2004:42). This relates to the prior mention of how news stories are fit into a prepackaged framework with a heavy reliance on official sources such as the police and a premeditated editorial stance.

The Construction of a News Story

Media news stories are influenced by a variety of factors. Too often the influence of the individual reporters is overlooked. Content is directly affected by journalists' writing styles, as well as personal biases and attitudes. Given their power to label people, both deviant and innocent, within their articles, journalists exert their own perceptions of

the roles of the actors about whom they write. As such, the content can be seen as a "function of ideological positions" (Shoemaker et al., 1987:354).

Other newsmaking influences include time restrictions and unreasonable deadlines, operational needs and guidelines, lack of resources and heavy reliance on particular sources, gatekeeping, and appeals to advertisers, owners, and audiences (Shoemaker et al., 1987; Surette, 1992; Welch et al., 1997). Whether the issue becomes a moral panic or not, stories usually serve to perpetuate and reaffirm the dominant discourse of the issues they cover. The media are understood to have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo; both serving the interests of advertisers and owners of production, as well as establishing their legitimacy among readers (Shoemaker et al., 1987; Surette, 1992). In the maintenance of the status quo, crime news serves the dual interest of intriguing the reader, while articulating social boundaries. In this way, news coverage on deviance is appealing to media owners offering "the simultaneous effect of giving the audience the conflict, sensationalism, prominence, and novelty it desires and of setting the boundaries of what is proper and acceptable behaviour in society" (Shoemaker et al., 1987:354). This tends to produce, as mentioned above, prescribed stories, in which new actors are neatly placed, resulting in a simplification of events, and frequently ignoring the broader social context that lead up to, and facilitated, the said event.

Keeping it Simple

News reporting is known to ignore the complexities of a story in lieu of simple explanations. This is in part due to the time constraints in which new details are fit into an already prescribed scenario, and consequently maintains social norms, while

establishing their credibility in providing a storyline with which the audience is familiar with and easily accepts. Crime stories are particularly useful in this regard. They can be quickly placed within a framework of 'right' and 'wrong'; a format with which the reader is already accustomed and easily consumes (Chibnall, 1977; Chermak, 1994). Characters in these "morality plays or struggles" Barak (1994:4) are presented in uni-dimensional categories of 'villains', 'victims', and 'heroes' with specific traits and behaviour. Those to whom positive attributes are associated are symbolically rewarded, while the stigmatization of the negative characters serves as symbolic punishment. This is both specific to the people involved, but more so promotes this ideology to the reader. "The outcome of this process of symbolic policing is the resolution of short-term conflicts and the restoration of public order for the primary benefit of the status quo" (Barak, 1994:13).

Dealing in binary oppositions, these 'symbolic dramas' (Chibnall, 1977:xi) are a means of social control in which the characters personify 'good' and 'evil', easily identifiable as "folk heroes and folk devils, black against white, guilty or innocent, 'normal' as opposed to 'sick', 'deviant' or 'dangerous' and so on" (Jewkes, 2004:45). As such, there emerges a fixed discourse on the events and the people involved that become constrain alternative explanations or understanding. Jewkes (2004) does however warn that this is rarely the case for victims killed while committing an offence, but only for the 'tragic innocents', those "firmly located within familial and social contexts" (p.46). This issue will be addressed further in upcoming chapters considering the victimization of sex workers who, as previously indicated, have traditionally been firmly positioned as the villains in opposition to the public as the victims.

By reporting in this way, underlying causes and problems frequently go unrecognized and unresolved (Killingbeck, 2001:191). This eases the analytical work of reporters, while perpetuating a consumer driven culture that seeks sensational stories, with little attention span for any analysis or contextualization (Jewkes, 2004). In all, promoting what Postman (1985) refers to as a 'peek-a-boo world' in which a spectrum of events incessantly surface and diminish, "It is a world without much coherence or sense; a world that does not ask us, indeed does not permit us to do anything...but like peek-a-boo, it is also endlessly entertaining" (p.77).

Crime stories are particularly good as they spark immediate and sudden interest. As such they are easily recycled both as they proceed through the criminal justice system as well as within 'new' stories (Chermak, 1995a:34). Through this process, journalists will seek new angles in order to maintain the novelty of the story (Jewkes, 2004:41). The reader's understanding of crime is distorted in the newsmaking process, which involves condensing large amounts of information into limited space (Chermak, 1994). With that, potential stories that become too complex or tedious in their unfolding, or those pertaining to more abstract situations rather than about people, are neglected in news media (Jewkes, 2004:44). Given the preference of individual action over cultural, economic, or political contextualization, events are overly simplified and understood as though they occurred in a vacuum.

While the events themselves need not be simple, "they must be reducible to a minimum number of parts or themes" (Jewkes, 2004:43). While news stories cover the facts of a particular issue, they are generally "removed from institutional explanations regarding why crime occurs" (Chermak, 1995a:36). While this simplification process

compromises the context of a story, it does promote the short attention span of the audience, and restricts the possible conclusions of an event. Jewkes (2004) states that unlike other forms of communication, such as novels or movies, in which the messages are allowed further and more diverse analysis and meaning, newspapers are marked by their brevity, fast-paced, and easy consumption. They offer 'bite-sized' messages that come directly to an undisputed conclusion, from which the public views themselves as vigilantes, let down by an unjust system. As such, "immediate, micro-solutions to crime are sought with little tie for reflection or critical analysis" (Jewkes, 2004:46). This is what Cohen (1972) affirms in his moral panic model in which, through a relatively simple story, the message works its way into a collective conscience that is reaffirmed through future events. As such, crime news reinforces "shared morality and communal sentiments" (Chibnall, 1977:x), and serves as a warning to violators. Furthermore, when incorporating notions of risk discourse, these messages also pertain to the victims, warning others of avoidable 'threats' and the consequences of 'risky' behaviour that is seen to prevent their victimization.

These processes offer the reader a mediated presentation of crime events, which is unfortunate insofar as research indicates that people's perspective on crime is largely shaped through these mediated versions of events.

The Influence of News Media

It's been found that media portrayals of crime often deviate from criminal reality, but that these examinations do have an impact on public perceptions of crime (Barak, 1994; Chermak, 1994; Chibnall, 1977:12); this has been especially documented in studies of newspaper content (Durham et al., 1995:144). Barak (1994) argues, "Mass news

representations in the 'information age' have become the most significant communication by which the average person comes to know the world outside his or her immediate experience" (p.3). As such, others go so far as to state understanding of the underlying dynamics of society can be gained, "by examining the points of contact between society's primary information system – the mass media – and its primary system for legitimizing values and enforcing norms – the criminal justice system" (Surette, 1992:6). This involves an overrepresentation of violent crimes, as well as misrepresentations of both victims and offenders. Of particular concern is the influence of the media in generating public enthusiasm for solutions to crime, and their tendency to overestimate the likelihood of their own victimization, especially related to violent crimes (Durham et al., 1995:145-150)

Simplistic distortions lead to stereotypical images pertaining to race, ethnicity, gender, and class. Research demonstrates that particular groups, especially visible minorities are over represented in 'bad news', which is usually deemed more newsworthy and receives greater coverage, and under-represented in 'good news'; all of which occurs in the absence of any contextual basis beyond their visible race. Likewise, depictions of women are usually based on those of lower class status, and in statistically uncommon roles, and in subordinate positions to men. All the while, crimes perpetrated by the rich and powerful are vastly underreported (Barak, 1994:11-12).

Media offer powerful sources by which issues and discourse are created and confirmed. The character of the media has changed; this has arguably become "the age of the moral panic" (Thompson, 1998:1), given their increasingly rapid succession and all-pervasiveness. McRobbie and Thornton (1995) argue, "Moral panics, once the

unintended outcome of journalistic practice, seem to have become the goal" (1995:560). Prior media research and the moral panic models, along with their necessary incorporations of risk and discourse, offer the theoretical tools that will be used in the content analysis of The Province newspaper pertaining to the issue of violence against sex workers between 1993 and 2003. Provided this framework, the methodological approach in conducting this research will be explained in the proceding chapter.

Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter will illustrate the research process that was undertaken provided the epistemological assumptions, methodologies, and specific research methods that were used, concluding with the limitations of this research. The analysis of the construction of murdered and suspiciously missing sex workers, as presented in The Province newspaper between 1993 and 2003, will be presented. Based on a feminist post-structuralist epistemology, which suggests that language is never concretely established, meaning is always in question, feminist analysis is specifically concerned with how language and discourse are constructed at the expense of certain groups of people (sex, race, and class to name some of the more prominent categories that typically mark marginalized groups). Focusing on discourse, a qualitative content analysis [1] was employed as the methodological means of researching the coverage of this topic within this provincial newspaper.

Epistemological Assumptions

Epistemology refers to a way of knowing, or "theory of knowledge" (Stanley & Wise, 1990:26). It is, "the study of the philosophical problems in concepts of knowledge and truth" (Hill Collins, 1991:202). As the foundation for research methodologies and methods, epistemology entails questions about the meaning of 'knowledge', who can claim to 'know', and under what circumstances this can be asserted. The approach here is poststructuralism given the concerned with how public knowledge and personal identity are constructed (McCann & Kim, 2003). Accordingly, there is no inherent meaning in anything; reality and bodies are not pre-existing, instead they are constituted

[1] This is to be distinguished from a 'discourse analysis' which is a very specific approach, informed by linguistics (see for example Kress, 1990; Schiffrin et al., 2001).

through language (Rosenberg, 2005). From this perspective it becomes clear how the use of language is crucial in the construction of 'The Prostitute', and how this identification comes to be marked by a particular cluster of characteristics.

From a poststructuralist perspective, social reality and human subjectivity are formed through language, "What we know about the world and ourselves is defined and contested in the language of historically specific discourses" (McCann & Kim, 2003:282). Discourses refer to "'practices that systemically form the objects of which they speak'" (Foucault, 1972, as cited by Rosenberg, 2005:43); understood to be historically and culturally specific. Poststructuralists seek to theorize how cultural discourses shape concepts of knowledge, meaning, subjectivity, identity, and other notions that are often overlooked (McCann & Kim, 2003:282).

Poststructuralism offers a mode of inquiry based on what can be known, understanding knowledge as a relationship by which truth is not discovered but created. Of special significance in poststructural theorizing, "is a particular interrogation and critique of the practices of producing and representing knowledge that are more usually taken for granted and thought of as 'the right way'" (Rosenberg, 2005:39). Through poststructural insight, we can begin to think and see things differently; it is a consideration of what is *not* written, what is *not* said. This is a concept that relates directly to discourse, as it was briefly discussed in the preceding chapters, and will be further explored here as a key idea in the present research.

The Notion of Discourse

Discourse is a particular understanding of an issue or social dynamic, premised upon a more or less clearly articulated set of assumption and beliefs by social actors

situated within a given context. The concept serves as an exclusionary device, as the dominant discourse establishes what can be said about a given topic, and who can rightfully speak to the issue (Critcher, 2003:168). This can be seen in the many cliché or token labels used to identify certain populations; any mistreatment of children automatically becomes 'child abuse' (Critcher, 2003), just as 'youth at risk' describes any adolescent exhibiting "high absenteeism, has been retained, performs poorly in class, indicates a 'previolent' disposition, is pregnant, lives in a low-income single-mother household, or simply arrives from Puerto Rico" (Fine, 1993:104). Language is used to identify and describe 'at risk youth', or any other social 'problem' or 'threat', limiting the possibility of conceptualizing the matter in any other way, and locking actors into a relationship of "oppressor/oppressed, helper/helped, benefactor/beneficiary roles" (Swadener, 1995:21); ultimately resulting in a question of "what must be done to save *us* from *them*" (Fine, 1993:92).

An analysis of the dominant discourse allows the possibility to see beyond the prevailing construction of a given idea. The above description of a 'youth at risk' individualizes the perceived risk, to their family and personal circumstances that might be 'fixed' to remove them from this categorization. It can be understood as an exclusionary tool as this discourse diverts attention from an economy that does not support low-income youth and adults, systematic racism, impoverished schools, lack of affordable housing, among other barriers (Fine, 1993:105). Some discourses are legitimized while others are not, "much depends on the authority attributed to discourses and the degree of contestation between them" (Critcher, 2003:174).

Poststructuralism has been of particular interest to feminists in theorizing oppression. Insisting that knowledge is formed within power structures and constructed through language which is not neutral or objective, a prominent concern amongst feminist poststructuralists is how language (more specifically, discourses) constitutes the world and how we know it (Rosenberg, 2005:41). For poststructuralists, the 'subject' position is imbedded in these relations of power (Weedon, 1987; McCann & Kim, 2003).

This epistemological assumption offers a point of entry when considering the construction of prostitution as situated within pre-existing structures of power and knowledge that must be reflected upon critically, rather than a taken-for-granted understanding of 'reality'. The Literature Review Chapter offered the conversations that have shaped the prominent discourse of 'The Prostitute'. The following research is intended to address whether the numerous cases of fatal violence have served to alter the discursive discussion, offering images and language that might facilitate a forum through which sex workers emerge as legitimate victims, and efforts to reduce this violence are conceptualized and acted upon. In doing so, the dominant discourse of 'The Prostitute' must be looked upon critically, in consideration of assumptions associated with this characterization, the production of these notions, and how and by whom they are reaffirmed or refuted.

Critical Methodologies

Methodology is the understanding or theory that frames the research process and identifies how it should proceed (Stanley & Wise, 1990; Harding, 1987). This entails the process by which the research goes about exploring the social world, and for feminists, locating women's position in it. Critical methodologies were developed with special

interests in challenging “sexism, racism, colonialism, class, and other forms of inequalities in the research process” (Naples, 2003:13). Critical methodological approaches attempt to drawn attention to lines of inquiry that are systematically overlooked, missed, or simply ignored.

Critical of traditional knowledge claims, qualitative research is an approach that echoes many of these values in this mode of inquiry. Given my concern that little is being done to change the circumstances conducive to such violence, I have chosen to do a qualitative content analysis of how this issue has been presented in newspaper media. Gubrium and Holstein (1997) describe quite well the quest upon which I embark, “…it is the everyday calling of qualitative researchers, who have traditionally tried to describe social life in ways that challenge popular understandings. The underlying presumption is that conventional appraisals, especially systematic quantitative assessments, fail to appreciate the nuances of the social world” (p.11).

Traditional deductive methodologies have often been unable to gain insight into the intricacies of the social world given the extent of social diversity (Flick, 2002). Given ‘the social’ is a complex arena of varying perspectives, meanings, and interactions, it follows that it would be interpreted and studied in such a manner. Qualitative research is very much a reflective process by which one acknowledges how the “research procedure constructs reality as much as it produces descriptions of it” (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997:9).

Derived from skepticism about what is commonly known about the world, qualitative methodology prompts researchers to scrutinize messages, and in doing so, place themselves in close range to those being studied (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997;

Altheide, 1996; Krippendorff, 2004). In considering an event that might have given rise to a moral panic, and in hope that the lives of sex workers in Canada might be positively affected, Gubrium and Holstein (1997) reflect my attempts,

> ...we must have a good, clear picture of the qualities of the world before we can attempt to explain it, let alone predict or modify it. Thus, description justifies itself, as researchers aim to apprehend and comprehend the diversity, intricacy, subtlety, and complications that compose the social (p.12).

Qualitative content analysis has been criticized for its acknowledgement of subjectivity in the research process and the assumed interpretative freedoms of the researcher. It is equally suggestible that all research is subjective, provided all perspectives originate somewhere. This was a systematic documentation of how accounts of violence against sex workers were problematized by various agents and presented in this newspaper. This process could be repeated by others, and a qualitative approach allowed for an examination of nuances that would have been inaccessible through other methods.

A study of discourses necessitates an in-depth scrutiny of the subtleties that construct a taken-for-granted image of the world that make discursive implications so powerful. Further research, namely a comparative analysis of other media or to like-cases, such as the mounting number of unsolved murders in the Edmonton area has the potential to locate other points of discursive analysis and implications. As an important provincial newspaper, the findings with regards to The Province are however, significant on their own, offering an account the position of this particular newspaper with regards to the victimization of sex workers.

Content Analysis

Stanley and Wise (1990) define 'method' as research technique. Part of a range of possibilities in analyzing the construction of discourse (Burr, 2003), the method employed for this study is content analysis. This is an unobtrusive measure whereby a coding scheme is applied to data in order to analyze its content (Berg, 2001:238). This was done using the articles from a provincial newspaper as primary documents. A document is any "symbolic representation that can be recorded or retrieved for analysis" (Altheide, 1996:2), and an analysis of which is used to understand culture. Content analysis is widely used in media studies, useful as an unobtrusive means of systematically locating themes within texts. While possible through both qualitative and quantitative approaches, the former has been primarily used in for this study.

Qualitative analysis provided a useful method of assessing the discourses on 'The Prostitute' over a long period time. Rather than a manifest or surface reading of the text, this was a latent analysis focused on "the *deep structural* meaning conveyed by the message" (Berg, 2001:242). This method allowed for consideration of both the literal words used in the texts and how they were employed. Sometimes criticized as a subjective method, this research, while of course never entirely objective, involved a rigorous and orderly management of the data that could be repeated by other researchers, and the analysis was justified and supported through the used of relevant details and excerpts from the text. As such, this qualitative content analysis provided " a passport to listening to the words from the text, and understanding better the perspective(s) of the producer of these words" (Berg, 2001:242).

Provided the epistemological basis of these methods, the analysis of language in the construction and reaffirmation of the dominant discourse of 'The Prostitute', and its cultural meaning, was considered as it was presented and contested throughout the coverage of violence against sex workers in The Province newspaper between 1993 and 2003, and the ensuing discursive shifts upon the rise in publicity over the Missing Women case.

Data collection

The Province and the Vancouver Sun are the two most widely distributed daily papers in BC, both owned by the Pacific Newspaper Group Inc.; they are cumulatively exposed to 74% of all adults in the Greater Vancouver area (PNG, 2005). The Vancouver Sun is marketed toward a more affluent, educated and well-established audience. Conversely, The Province is unique in its appeal to a varied audience, and advertises itself as "young, up-to-date and socially conscious" (PNG, 2005). This midmarket entertainment paper is convenient and popular. Provided its book-like layout and colourful covers, it is read by more than 500,000 people daily, making it the most widely read provincial newspaper in BC (Ezine, 2001), attracting almost half of the province's daily newspaper readers (PNG, 2005).

Using the Canadian Newsstand database, which offers access to many Canadian newspapers, including major dailies, national and leading regional papers, the articles generated from the keyword search where identified and analyzed. Based on my qualitative approach to this research, this was important as I wanted to grasp every instance in which the women were reported, in order to follow any nuanced discursive shifts.

The findings were limited to articles published between January 1, 1993 and December 31, 2003. This seemed a timely period as it offered some coverage leading up to the predominant event of Robert Pickton's Coquitlam farm investigation. The articles were generated using keywords such as missing women, Pickton farm, sex workers, prostitutes, hookers, along with the terms violence, killing and murder (see Appendix A for detailed list). This resulted in a total of 663 newspaper articles. After omitting those that were duplicated and irrelevant, 271 articles were analyzed (see Appendix B).

Articles referring to the Green River Killer in Washington State were included, as there was question of a possible link to the murders of women in BC. Otherwise, those regarding violence against sex workers that took place outside of, and deemed unrelated to Canada, were omitted. The articles considered in this analysis were further limited to primary news slots; that is, hard news stories, and excluding secondary news slots such as editorials, letters to the editor, etc. Commonly divided by 'hard' and 'soft' news, the first refers to current events as opposed to the latter which generally consists of more abstract and lifestyle pieces. A hard news story tends to present the event in a factual manner, whereas soft news serves primarily as entertainment and advice articles (MAN, 2005). The hard news stories were selected as they are representative of the newspaper's position on the event as they report it in a seemingly factual manner. While editorials and letters to the editor are selected by the newspaper, they are not seen to be reflective of the paper's position. Given my interest in how the events were understood and reported by the newspaper itself, I chose to consider only those reported as hard news stories by The Province.

Data Analysis

Coded numerically by article and year, the newspaper content was subsequently imputed into corresponding charts. These were not "merely arbitrary or superficial applications of irrelevant categories" (Berg, 2001:241), but informed by previous research and the theoretical framework pertaining to media studies. The following ten categories that emerged from the literature were used to collect, organize, and later analyze the newspaper data (see Appendix C). The *tone of the article* allowed for a brief description of the events reported in the newspaper article, and were grasped according to 'factual', 'descriptive', 'emotive', or 'derogatory'. Factual accounted for relatively brief accounts in which only minimal and basic details were provided. Descriptive articles allowed further detail accounting the events. Emotive articles were understood as those in which there was an appeal to the reader's emotions, while derogatory articles were those that made particularly demeaning language or messages.

The tone was often informed by the proceeding categories such as *language used* and *references to sex work*. The first accounted for all the terms used to describe the victims, while the latter indicated the inferences (both implicit and explicit) made regarding the victims and sex work in general regarding their lifestyle and character. Two separate categories were used for *description of victims* and *description of suspects* and allowed for only the factual details of each. Consideration of the enforcement agents were made in the categories describing *complaints about police* and *police discourse/response*. Complaints included those made against police and other agents such as lawyers, the Attorney General, etc. The police response and discourse included both response to these complaints as well as the agents' descriptions and explanations of

the events, as well as their actions and concerns. Throughout the articles, consideration was made to the often implicitly reported *causes of violence* and *solutions offered.* The causes were accounted for primarily in considering the emphasis of the article. That is, focus on a serial killer, would presumably mean this was the cause of violence. The solutions offered included all the action that was taken or advocated in light of these events. Finally, *claimsmakers* were considered and documented by who was quoted or referred to in the newspaper article, and the prevalence of this voice indicated by the length of the reference and sometimes the position of it within the article; that is, if there was a single line at the end of the article that had little relevance to the rest of the statements made.

First temporally organized, and then reviewed individually, newspaper data was retracted according to the categories that emerged from the literature review pertaining to both sex work and media studies. These groupings were subsequently summarized by year and imputed into a single table (see Appendix D), which offered a visual representation of the themes annually. The detailed information that was entered in the chart was read both vertically and horizontally. Through this rigorous and systematic analysis, the discourses and subsequent discursive shifts became apparent, and the data was again considered in light of previous research on the subject of prostitution discourse, media studies, and moral panic theory.

Relevant and informative quotes and excerpts, reflective of discourses, were extracted. The notion of discourse was operationalized as how a subject is conceptualized, and how components of that subject are, through language and images, constructed, and by whom. This concept is an important one as it pertains to the

theoretical tools that were used in this research, and the resulting analysis of the media discourse of sex workers.

Research Limitations

In considering whether the issue of violence against sex workers became a moral panic, only a single newspaper was reviewed. Given previous research which indicates that newspapers seek the consensus of other print media and ultimately broadcast news for an issue to be disseminated from a particular perspective or ideology (Critcher, 2003:136), it would important to consider the coverage of this topic through other forums. The limitations of the research in this respect includes not only the need for comparative analyses, but also consideration other calibers of print and broadcast media to properly address the issue.

Given the database that was used to collect the articles, there were no pictures or sense of how the articles were placed in the newspaper. That is, there was little consideration as to whether the story was on the cover or located in the middle of the newspaper, whether it was presented in a short column or a full page piece with available photos. Thus, the present analysis lacks the visual aspect of a newspaper such as pictures, spacing, size of text, and placement within the paper.

While the role of journalists in framing newspaper articles is considered in the previous chapter, this was not significantly measured. Upon reading the articles, the names of reporters that offered particularly sensitive or degrading depictions of the victimization of sex workers were noted, however this did not amount to more than a few articles, and was thus omitted as a meaningful finding. There were a large number of reporters that covered this topic over the decade that was examined, and so the overall

findings regarding the dominant discourse could not be said to be the construction of a particular journalist, a finding that is supported by pervious research. Provided more systematic consideration however, the role of the journalists in the construction of discourse is an important one that might have offered a point of analysis considering whether the construction was that of individual journalists or the newspaper as an organization, to which reporting is somewhat confined.

Provided the theoretical tools, epistemological assumptions, and specific research methods employed, the findings that emerged from this content analysis on the topic of violence against sex workers as it was presented in The Province newspaper between 1993 and 2003 will be put forward in the following chapters.

Chapter IV: The Construction of The Missing Women 1993-2003: Locating the Problem as Prostitution

The research findings regarding the coverage of missing and murdered sex workers in The Province newspaper will be presented in the following section. Because the data collection chart that was developed and explained in the Methodology Chapter was examined both vertically by year, and horizontally by theme or discursive shifts, it seems most suitable to present the findings in this way. This presentation is thus divided into two chapters, the first offering the temporally organized account, structured according to the time periods in which the themes emerged. Recognizing that yearly accounts are fairly arbitrary categorical divisions, some time periods were particularly important and were presented annually, whereas others could be grouped together based on the similarities of reporting within several years. In Chapter Five, the findings will be presented thematically and demonstrate the discursive shifts that occurred throughout the past decade.

In addition to a general description of the events that took place over the scope of this study, the specific findings will be offered in the present chapter. This will include the assertions of claimsmakers pertaining to the causes of violence and solutions they suggest, in addition to police and politicians' discourse. Finally, this section will incorporate the portrayal of the victims and the sex trade in the articles. In order to provide context for the data, a brief history of the area known as the Downtown Eastside and the process through which it emerged will be provided.

History of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

Located along the Pacific coast, Vancouver is British Columbia's largest city with an estimated population of 560,000, and set in a region of more than 2 million people

(City of Vancouver, 2003). Once the transportation hub and commercial district of Vancouver, the Downtown Eastside has since been cited as the poorest postal code in Canada (Mesbur, 1997), infamous for a high prevalence of crime, prostitution, drug use, HIV/AIDS and hepatitis.

As a vibrant section of the city, numerous hotels were initially established in the area for tourists, and later became the homes of the many single men working nearby as loggers and miners. During the 1960s, some of the central offices and stores relocated close by to what has since become the downtown core. In the 1970s, with gentrification which resulted in the loss of other low-income locations around the city and funding cutbacks resulting in the de-institutionalization of thousands of psychiatric patients, many people congregated to the increasingly affordable and welcoming neighbourhood of the Downtown Eastside (City of Vancouver, 2004).

While injection-based heroin was prevalent at the time, by the late 1980s, its popularity had been replaced by cocaine and its derivative, crack. The area became a mecca for people who used, and perhaps abused, these substances, and given the nature of the drug in that the frequency of use impedes the sustenance of regular employment, many resorted to theft, increasing the number of second-hand stores in the area, and further deterring the investments of other businesses. The cumulative economic deterioration was characterized by the closure of the largely popular Woodward's department store in 1992 (City of Vancouver, 2004).

While there has always been prostitution in the area, the street sex industry has expanded rapidly since the early 1980s (Lowman & Fraser, 1995: part 10). When the stroll moved into a mainly residential area in 1986, an organized resistance to street

prostitution ensued. By 1988, police task forces relocated street workers along Hastings Street (the core of the Downtown Eastside) and the surrounding twenty to thirty block radiuses (Lowman & Fraser, 1995: part 10). These displacement practices occurred in other areas around the city as well; the Downtown Eastside is currently considered the lowest end stroll, often referred to as 'skid row' in reference to the seeming desperation of its inhabitants. The 1996 Census reports 5,440 people living in the area, with an average household income of $12,485, compared to the city's average of $48,087 (City of Vancouver, 2005).

There are an estimated 2000-4000 women involved in *street* prostitution in British Columbia, 480 of whom work in the Downtown Eastside (as of 1992) (Lowman & Fraser, 1995: part 10). Mostly women, street-level sex workers are 60-120 times more likely to be murdered than any other adult woman in Canada (Lowman & Fraser, 1995). As a low-end stroll, the workers from the Downtown Eastside are more likely to be drug-addicted and described as 'more desperate' and thus less discriminating about their clients (Lowman and Fraser, 1995: part 10). There are more murders and assaults against workers from this area than any other stroll in Vancouver.

The Collision of Class and Race in Creating the Downtown Eastside

The above-detailed succession warrants reflection and is to be understood as part of larger social trends and processes. The displacement of particular populations is a colonial practice and a characteristic of bourgeois culture (McNally, 2001). Largely used against Aboriginal people as they migrated from the reserves to the city, it is a process whereby certain bodies are ascribed outcast/Other status, perceived as less than fully human and recognizable by their physical markings and the space they occupy. Resulting

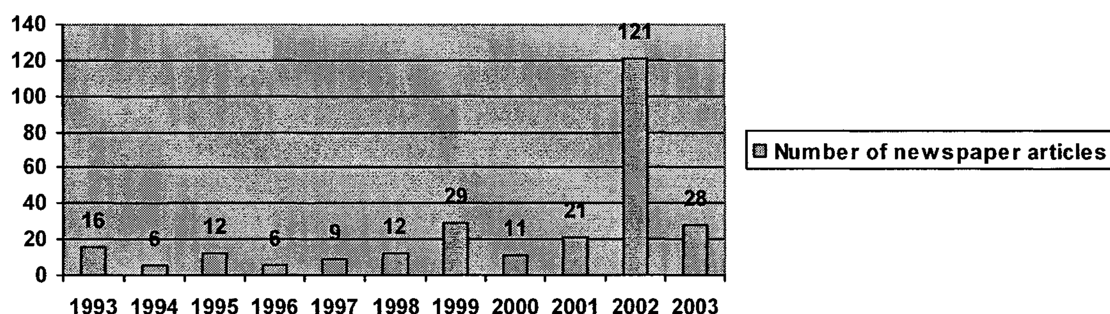
in what Razack (2002) refers to as the racialized space of the 'Other', this effectively ghettoizes certain groups. Although termed 'racialized space', it has a dehumanizing effect on everyone in it (Roberts, 1992). Within the risk discourse, it marks the territory of 'the excluded' (Rose, 1999), and serves to maintain the current social order.

The power of the ruling-class is further maintained through the denial of class divisions. This often goes unacknowledged, especially in a society designated by the ideological discourse of merit (the belief that people are rewarded for hard work and talent, and conversely those who are not, are by definition not hard working or deserving). This induces a tendency to blame those in poverty for their condition based on a myth of social mobility, "a myth of pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps – as if everyone had boots" (Adams, 2000:379). Alternative explanations consider the differing relations of power which are based on factors such as race, class, and gender. These structural and systematic aspects of class division are evident as "female-headed households, communities of colour, the elderly, the disabled, and children find themselves disproportionately living in poverty" (Langston, 2000:397).

Coverage of Violence against Sex Workers in *The Province*

In the following section the research findings of the content analysis of The Province newspaper's coverage of violence against sex workers will be presented temporally, as this is the most effective way to document the discursive shifts that occurred over the scope of the study, which will be discussed in the next chapter. As noted in the previous chapter, 271 articles were analyzed. The distribution of these articles is indicated in the following chart.

Table 1: Distribution of the Number of Articles per year 1993-2003



Notably, a large portion of the articles (121 of the 271 articles) were produced in 2002. While the concern over an escalating number of missing women from the Downtown Eastside area garnered increasing media attention, there were many women murdered and missing prior to this, generally receiving coverage in fewer than 20 articles per year. It was at the beginning of this year that 'Canada's worst accused serial killer' Robert Pickton was charged with multiple counts of first-degree murder, from which ensued mass coverage on the investigation.

Provided the commonalities in the coverage during the first part of the study, the events will be discussed in temporal categories. Within this chronology, the findings and some of the discursive shifts that occurred will be presented as they pertain to the language used in describing the cases and the victims, the identified problems and solutions, and those offered the opportunity to speak to the issue; all of which will be further analyzed in the subsequent chapter[2].

1993-1996

Between 1993 and 1996, there were 40 articles devoted to the murders of 25 sex workers from across Canada. Among these were three articles noting that between 40

[2] References to newspaper articles are distinguished from books and other sources provided the pages numbers of the former also include letters, (ex. B7).

and 48 sex workers had been killed in BC over the past 12 and 8 years, respectively, and another claiming 'dozens' and 'about 25' since 1982. Of these reports, a number of victims were from the Vancouver area, although not necessarily the Downtown Eastside. In 1993, there was some coverage of three murdered sex workers in Kelowna (about 400km northeast of Vancouver), and in throughout 1995 the bodies of three known sex workers were found along the highway from Mission to Agassiz (about 80km east of Vancouver). In all of the cases during this period, the murder victims were women, four of whom were transgendered or transsexual workers.

The victims during this time period were described according to their master status as 'The Prostitute'. This labelling brings with it a sense of disregard and little sympathy is allotted to them. The only occasions when the reader is granted a quasi-sympathetic portrayal of the victim is when she is deemed to have been potentially 'salvageable'. This was evident throughout the entire scope of the study.

Their master status is indicated not only in their identification with the use of terms such as 'hooker' and 'prostitute', but in descriptions in which that is all they were; frequently referred to as 'hooker murders' and 'prostitute killings', it is clear that a woman's work and her identity are being conflated in journalistic accounts. This is exemplified in statements such as the article titled, "Suspect charged in murder of hooker: Also held for sex assaults on 2 *women*", in which the article goes on to describe "the brutal murder of prostitute Lisa Lynn McLaren, 24, before the later attacks on the two *women*" (Middleton, 1993b:A4) [emphasis mine]. Another example of this, "Police are investigating links between the murder of a Vancouver prostitute and *two other women*" (Middleton, 1995b:A52) [emphasis mine]. Likewise, another article tells of the murder

of a 'Vancouver prostitute' in addition to that of a 'Surrey Woman' (Jiwa & Ogilvie, 1993:S5). Notably, the 'prostitute' was identified by her occupation (or character), rather than by her place of residence as was the latter victim.

In addition to contradictory numbers offered in many of the reports, an attitude of disregard pertaining to their deaths is indicated in the very rough estimates of the murder statistics, with figures such as "dozens" and the "murders of *about* 25 B.C. prostitutes" (Rees, 1993:A4) [emphasis mine]. They are further treated with insolence as newspaper reports provide scant descriptions of their deaths, with virtually no mention of their lives. In the tone of, "he bashed Joe's head, stabbed her and slashed off her breasts and vaginal tissue" (Horwood, 1993:A8), or "The slashed body of the prostitute was found behind an apartment building. She was seven months pregnant", and about another in the same article, "She was shot in the head 10 times" (Hookers death latest in killings, 1994:A47). Not only are the images of gruesome incidents lacking the usual drama the media are infamous for, but there is nothing offered about the victim beyond her death.

The only exception to this is when there is hope that had she lived, she may have left the streets and sex work. In one article, the reporter interviews a waitress who asserts about a local street worker, "She seemed like she might have been a nice kid once" (Middleton, 1993a:A26), a statement which of course also reinforces the dichotomy between nice women and sex workers. One woman's common-law husband claims, "When she was off drugs she was a beautiful person" (Middleton, 1995b:A52). Another loses credibility as, "several people tried to help her change her lifestyle, but she continually returned to her boyfriend, who detectives believe is a drug dealer" (Anderson, 1994:A6).

While 'The Prostitute' never takes up the role of a purely 'innocent' victim, and the violence never amounts to a large-scale threat, during the first part of the study, 'the Pimp' emerges as a folk devil. Unique to the early period, ('The Pimp' essentially disappears by 2000), the violence against sex workers is largely discursively linked to pimping. This folk devil receives particular attention when the violence extends outside of the sex industry. In one article, "now, the violence surrounding prostitutes is reaching beyond the street and into the homes of those trying to help. The teenage daughter of a Halifax cop recently was raped in her own home by five men after her father was credited with jailing a local pimp" (Hooker's death latest in killings, 1994:A:47).

Not surprisingly given the risk discourse and responsibilization noted in the theoretical framework, another prominent theme that was evident in articles throughout all of the years under analysis is the notion of prostitution as a 'high-risk' occupation, which tends to infer the victims were knowingly involved, and thus somewhat culpable. Any sympathy to this effect pertains to their lack of choice given drug-addiction, and occasionally poverty, as the only 'excuses' for prostitution. Otherwise, their seemingly dismal lives are constructed in such explanations as in the investigation of a murder in which police search a descriptively filthy hotel finding, "...drug addicts, drugs, drunks and pathetic abuse-ravaged prostitutes and their even more pathetic clients" (Middleton, 1995a:A16).

In the stories about murdered sex workers we find reports to the effect of, she "would go anywhere, with anyone, and do whatever they wanted – as long as they gave her enough money to get stoned on home-made crack cocaine" (Middleton, 1993a:A26). The fact that they engage in a 'high-risk' trade induces the sense they are partially to

blame for the violence inflicted upon them; this is compounded as they are regularly warned by police and support workers. A woman who heads Stepping Stone, a support agency for workers in Halifax offers a victim's life as a warning, "Lucas's death is another example of the dangers inherent to prostitution" (Hooker's death latest in killings, 1994:A47). Likewise, a woman from The Corner, a Kelowna drop-in centre states, regarding the homicide of a local worker, "If (other prostitutes) don't believe something terrible can happen to them, then this should tell them just how dangerous it is...they're just fooling themselves – something terrible will happen. If any good can come out of this, it will be to make other girls more aware" (Hunter, 1994:A4). As such, the dangers are reported as inherent to the trade, not as a function of laws or the illegitimacy afforded those working within it.

These warnings are also issued by police who regularly affirm, "it is a dangerous occupation...We're asking those women who work the streets to always be careful, and don't hesitate to call us. We're not what they have to be afraid of" (Middleton, 1993a:A26). An assertion that sex workers may have reason to question, as in another article later that year, the police boast of an operation in which they ticketed 40 customers and made 14 solicitation charges. When a woman is murdered in the area that very night, the police respond, "What happened to her underscored the fact once they get in a car or go off in a lane we can't protect them anymore", which has "renewed police warnings about the dangers of the sex trade" (Colebourn, 1993:A7). As the women are warned about these 'inherent' dangers, the police are somehow excused from failing to protect them. The contradicting nature of the laws they were enforcing that night are, perhaps not surprisingly, absent.

Other than a single article in 1993 citing complaints that police minimize murders in Native communities, there are no other criticisms of law enforcement during this period. Instead the causes of violence are presented as the dangers of the trade, the naivety among workers, cruel, violent, and controlling pimps, and the drug-addiction that brings them to the streets and keeps them there. The solutions offered for this multitude of problems are to create a safer environment through safe-houses and self-defence classes, and by cooperating with police, while increasing awareness of the dangers of the trade and cracking down on child prostitution as preventative measures.

1997

Of the nine articles on the topic in 1997, three pertain to child-prostitution, blamed largely on pimping rings; three articles concerned legislative problems; the remaining three offer reports on Pamela George, unsympathetic accounts of five more murders, and the risks associated with the trade.

In 1997, Pamela George was murdered in Saskatchewan. While there were few articles pertaining to her case in The Province, it was an important one in that claimsmakers emerged confronting the issue of Aboriginal marginalization and social disposability. The judge's derogatory remarks regarding her work in prostitution and the omission of the whiteness and privilege of the two young college men who assaulted her enrages both Aboriginal and Women's groups across the country. Activists expressed anger to the effect that the justice system does not adequately serve the most vulnerable and marginalized sectors of society.

The effect of pimps also remains a prevalent issue this year, with warnings of their attempts to lure young women into the trade, along with identifiable risk or warning

signs of those who might serve as easy prey. An 'expert' on pimp control methods speaks in court, offering a profile or reasons people get involved in prostitution. Stating low self-esteem as a shared characteristic by most prostitutes, "typically, they are victims of sexual abuse, come from poor families where the parents or single parent are alcoholics or drug addicts, or from families where parents have no control over them" (Sgt. Gorgon Elias, cited by Ivens, 1997b:A21). This seems to endorse a larger discourse of risk in which certain family dynamics or particular parental characteristics places people (namely girls) at risk of engaging in prostitution. The pimp continues to be presented as one who preys on women with low-self esteem. Provided various accounts demonstrating their cruel and violent tendencies, in which they make the life seem glamorous using "promises of money and sometimes drugs to get their way with vulnerable girls" (Ivens, 1997b:A21). While homicide victims in this trade are not offered much consideration, there is some level of concern over the exploitation of underage workers, who are seen to be naively lured into the trade, where they are trapped by drug addiction and controlling and manipulative pimps and pimping rings (Ivens, 1997a:A5).

When another woman is found murdered from Vancouver, a vigil is held in the Downtown Eastside by activists critical of a system in which so many murders go unsolved. There are four articles that mention that 63 sex workers have been murdered in Canada from 1991-1995, one of which goes on to state, "of that number, 50 were killed by clients", however "the unsolved murder rate for prostitute murders in Canada is about 50 per cent", which is compared to 20 per cent for general population homicides (At-Risk prostitutes…, 1997:A13).

Over the course of this year there are two quotes from criminologist John Lowman, who claims that not only has enforcement been futile, but that the trade has become more dangerous since the implementation of the communication law in 1985. Additionally, he cites the city as the biggest pimp of all, profiting from off-street agencies (Lowman, cited by Middleton, 1997:A7). There is an additional quote by a former sex worker, stating legalizing the trade would make it safer (Calls renewed…, 1997:A22). Likewise, an activist from the vigil claims "violence against women engaged in the sex trade is vastly lower in countries and cities where the business is regulated and legitimized" (Jamie Hamilton, cited by Jiwa, 1997:A30).

While criticisms pertaining to the regulation and marginalization of sex workers in BC begin to surface, for those who are murdered in Alberta, the police maintain a discourse of the high-risks of the trade. In an article titled, "At-Risk prostitutes provide info", the reporter claims, "Alberta prostitutes, aware of the dangers of their high-risk trade, are giving police information to be used in the event they are murdered" (At-risk prostitutes…, 1997:A13). As strategies to address the murder problem in Edmonton, they developed a 'high-risk homicide registry', which contains personal data to enable them to quickly identify bodies.

Given the identified problems of pimps, racial discrimination, and unsolved murders of sex workers, during this year we find the first mentions of a need for legislative changes, in addition to the continued discourse of the 'inherent' risks, and efforts to keep women out of the industry by 'cracking down' on child prostitution and pimping rings.

1998-1999

In 1998, Sarah deVries disappeared from the Downtown Eastside. While she is far from the first to vanish, her family and one friend in particular are quite vocal and active in gaining publicity and recognition of these disappearances. Here we see the emergence of a new discourse, one that implicates the disappeared as contextually opposed to 'The Prostitute' who is traditionally dissociated from external connections and ties. Positioned as the adoptive daughter of a middle-class family in which her mom is described as "a former head nurse at Vancouver General Hospital" (Luba, 1998:A4), her sister, a university professor, has been involved in organizing and attending numerous vigils and marches in remembrance of the missing women, as well as later publishing a book on Sarah's life including many of her journal entries and poetry that she wrote. From these efforts, when Sarah deVries is spoken of, it is in a relatively benignant tone, as "a special friend who kept a journal as she wrestled with her personal demons" (Luba, 1998:A4). Her friend, Wayne Leng is especially instructive the development of a website which lists all of the missing women and documents the media accounts related to the case.

This discursive shift is marked in the presentation of the women as 'victims' and as people beyond the regular associations made to 'drug-addicted hookers'. There is an especially sensitive account of Angela Jardine, in which the reporter (Tanner, 1999:A10) describes her the day before she disappeared as "a kind-hearted, sensitive girl few ever got to know"; she was "a boisterous fixture in her tough milieu. She had a crowd of friends". On the day before her disappearance, in a satiny-pink dress, she is "a splash of colour against the grime of Vancouver's skid row", as "she bounced through the crowd"

of a community safety meeting. Leaving in the early afternoon "headed for the stroll where she turned tricks to feed her drug habit. She hasn't been seen since". In response to the notion of transience, the reporter qualifies, "despite Angela's problems, she always kept in touch with her mother". The articles concludes with a poetic account of the personal effects left in her 'tiny room' including photos, a teddy bear, neatly folded clothing, grade-school homework, and a romance paperback titled, 'The Measure of a Heart' (Tanner, 1999:A10). This is the kind of personal account, generally standard in the popular press in the event of a murder of a non-sex working woman but strikingly absent from accounts of women in the trade. Notably, of the 271 articles pertaining to the 63 missing women, and countless other murder victims, this is the only such article.

There is increased coverage on the anxieties of the families and friends of the women, both showing them as part of a social network, and allowing the families to speak of their fear of a serial killer and critique the social tendency to treat sex workers as 'disposable'. This is exemplified in the concern, "somebody (or maybe more than one somebody) is kidnapping and killing women in Vancouver because we don't care enough to stop him" (Stall, 1999a:A12). And similarly with the question, "Is a serial killer murdering prostitutes in Vancouver? Suddenly, it seems that we care to find out" (Stall, 1999b:A16). A reporter perceptively notes, "There are no bodies, no signs of foul play. Just class politics, accusations the police aren't taking the disappearances seriously and a sudden media interest in the case" (Tanner, 1999b:A4).

The families of the women begin to be portrayed as victims in need of closure in statements such as, "Tragic too, was the grief and guild of mothers who tried but could not save their children" (Tanner, 1999a:A12); although this leaves the reader wondering

whether the real salvation was from a gruesome death or life on the streets. That is, despite the sensitivity evident during this period, street life remains the ultimate culprit in the event of these disappearances. In some articles the women are blamed for not taking precautions, "Downtown hookers aren't taking advantage of cell phones issued to them for their safety", and "the women know it's a dangerous business" (Jamieson, 1999:A32). With 41 articles issued over the course of these two years, this marks the beginning of a rise in awareness and media attention to the numerous women who have gone missing from this particular location, and families increasingly emerge challenging the police conversation on the issue.

The new conversation that emerges pertains to criticisms from the public along the lines of, "such murders often go unsolved because crimes against prostitutes are low on the list of police priorities" and "Human life down here is so disposable it's disgusting" (Papple, 1998:A30). At the vigil, a sex worker is quoted (this is notable given that these women are rarely quoted in the media), saying, "It's worse than they say. I'm scared every day for my life. No one cares about it at all" (Lorna, cited by Papple, 1998:A30).

The families start developing a profile which reveals that "the missing women were all from the same area, worked in the sex trade and were drug users, and their bodies have not been found" (Wayne Leng cited by Luba, 1999:A16), informally titling them the 'missing women'. While this offers a relatively respectful account of the facts, their master status is maintained with such descriptors as, "skid-row prostitutes and drug addicts" (Stall, 1999:A16), or simply, "drug-addicted prostitutes" (Tanner, 1999d:A4), and with in such references to Wayne Leng as "hooker's pal" (Luba, 1999:A16).

The newspaper seemingly demonstrates its alliance with the families in listing the names of these women 'unofficially' as opposed to documenting them according to police accounts. The documentation of these lists varies between 20 and 28 women missing since 1995, depending on the article. The families pressure the local government to offer a $100,000 reward for information on the disappearances, which is equivalent to that being offered for tips on several break and enters in an upscale Vancouver neighbourhood.

The police respond to this increased publicity with the claim that sex workers are a transient population, maintaining:

> This number usually goes down as time passes and more information is obtained, particularly when it pertains to women from the Downtown Eastside...They will disappear for a wide variety of reason. Sometimes if they're involved in the sex trade they'll go to Calgary or Edmonton and just get out of Vancouver (Luba, 1998:A4).

However, they do encourage women to cooperate with them by providing information; this is the only 'solution' offered in 1998. In response to this, families begin actively challenging the police conversation through statements such as, "She went missing the same day she paid her next month's rent in full and she took neither her belongings nor the cash in her bank account", and how the victim was close to her sister, "they talked on the phone every day" (Stall, 1999a:A12). Similarly reports emerged to the effect of, "They left behind children, apartments, bank accounts and social-assistance cheques" ('Most Wanted' coming here..., 1999:A4). There are also blatant assertions that "Prostitutes and drug addicts do not lead transient lives" (Tanner, 1999b:A4). Still, enforcement personnel maintains, "Police have no bodies, no crime scenes and no reason

to believe that 21 women missing from Vancouver's eastside streets are dead. Their conclusion: No serial killer – probably" (Lack of bodies doesn't prove…, 1999:C28).

Solutions offered in 1999 include local organizations' continued documentation of bad dates, another develops a registry program collecting identifying information on women and requests them to check in once a week, forty cells phones are issued to 'carefully chosen' participants, and the women work in teams, writing down license plates for each other. The police advocate coming to them for help, and offer a small reward to turn themselves in. They continue in their attempts to locate the 'missing', conducting cross-country checks for welfare claims, the use of health services, and attempt to match unidentified bodies. By the end of this period, police start collecting DNA samples from the relatives of the missing women, and also start looking at the bad date sheets that local organizations have been keeping record of for years. Against the advice of the police who suggest the women may not be 'legitimately' missing, the Attorney-General, reportedly caving to public pressure and in light of the attention of *America's Most Wanted*, on which the host comments, "it's very unusual for 31 people – no matter what they do, no matter what trade they're in – to disappear" (Host John Walsh, cited by Proctor, 1999a:A12). Upon the airing of this episode, a new poster to be distributed across North American is unveiled, and $100,000 reward for information on any of the missing women is offered.

Comparably, an 'unrelated' Vancouver worker receives only a few merciless articles of about her gruesome death. While there is no standard number of articles a victim ought to receive, those outside of the Missing Women case received comparably few accounts of their deaths, and relatively no comment on their lives. The reporter

replicates a witness' courtroom account of Michelle Fiddick, whose body was found badly burned in a park, prior to which she was taken to the outskirts of Vancouver,

> 'The next thing I know we're in [Wilson's] driveway and [Fiddick] said, 'don't kill me, I have a four-year-old son,'' Roberge testified. He said Wilson pulled the victim from the back seat, dragged her to the front of the car, grabbed her hair and pulled her head back, then cut her throat with a knife. Roberge said Wilson let out a scream. The trial is scheduled to last three weeks" (Ivens, 1998:A18).

In other descriptions of this particular woman, she receives a short and simple account of her death to the effect of, "Fiddick's badly burned body was discovered in Fraser River Park. She had been stabbed and her throat had been slit" (Hung jury in murder trial, 1998:A4). Likewise, the murdered women in Kelowna receive qualitatively different treatment from the Missing Women. They are still associated with pimping, with the opening line of one article: "Kelowna fathers, lock up your daughters. Pimps are on the prowl for young girls", the article goes on to report of "An explosion of pimps in the area are preying on young, naïve girls with low self-esteem" (Papple, 1999:A13).

During this period, there is one article that mentions the murders of the three women who were found between Mission and Agassiz in 1995, and another woman found in North Vancouver in 1997, as well as a single mention of a Kelowna woman beaten to death and found along the highway in 1998. All unsolved, these women's deaths are not part of the increasing concern over the women from the Downtown Eastside. As the newspaper articles increasingly associate the missing women to the Downtown Eastside location and the possibility of a serial killer, the issue becomes case-specific. With the belief of a single perpetrator in the area, murder victims from other locations continue to be treated with the same disregard as they were previously. In

short, there is a typical portrayal and understanding of sex workers, and the missing women are presented as a special case.

2000

In 2000 there were relatively few articles on the sex trade, and the missing women inexplicably seem to disappear from the conversation. Of the few accounts that are documented, there is still very little empathy for the presumed victims. With only eleven articles this year, most of the reports pertained to six separate trials and convictions that took place this year, only one of which was in BC, for assault against a sex worker. Additionally, one of the men convicted for manslaughter in the murder of Pamela George in 1997, is granted parole. This year, Robert Yates from Washington State, confesses to having "killed prostitutes and wrapped their heads in bags" (No link…, 2000:A3). He is charged with 10 murders, but this case is not deemed to be connected to those missing in nearby Vancouver. At the beginning of the year a convicted pimp is charged with the attacks against seven 'skid-row prostitutes', and is questioned about those missing in Calgary. This is the last reference made to pimping in this sample. As a folk devil, this character is absent throughout the rest of the reports. This could be due to the increasing emphasis on the case of the missing women for which a pimp is not believed to be responsible.

In articles, the 27-28 missing women continue to appear as a recurring issue, referred to with such terms as 'skid-row prostitutes', 'drug-addicted prostitutes', 'bedraggled women', missing prostitutes', 'hooker', 'aboriginal prostitute', one 'sister' and another 'mother of two'. Interestingly, one article describes the murders of five individuals, with an inference that they were all sex workers, stating "he has murdered

several prostitutes and homosexual men in cities from Halifax to Vancouver to Seattle" (Auld, 2000:A3). With other murder victims to include a 'hooker' in Halifax, a 'hitchhiker' in Dartmouth, and a 'Halifax teenager', it is difficult to know whether the homosexual men who are lumped together with 'several prostitutes' were also sex workers. While 'The Prostitute' is usually presented as the master status of the victims, in cases where the victims are identified as homosexual, transgendered, or transsexual, their sexuality or gender identification seem to take precedence over their status as 'prostitutes'.

The four transgendered and transsexual workers that were reported throughout the scope of this study were considered according to their sexual 'confusion', which seemingly predominated over their status as sex workers. Their work in the sex industry was often only inferred, compared to the cases of the other workers in which the articles were quick to maintain their work as their master status. In the case of one transvestite worker, there is no mention of 'prostitute', or 'john' for that matter, but simply, "he'd been with a man at the Hasting Rooms" (Middleton, 1995a:A16). Within the very limited number of pertaining to their murders, the victims were clearly identified as 'transgendered' or 'transsexual', and like other sex workers, there seemed to be a need to 'explain' them; this however, related to their sexuality as opposed to their work.

It is mostly the police who are offered the occasion to speak to the cases this year, and there are no reported complaints against them. While they are unable to link any of the accused or convicted to the Vancouver case, they begin exchanging DNA samples with those working on the eight homicides in Calgary, and police agencies in other parts of Alberta. Notably, one judge states at the trial of a man from Vancouver convicted for

the aggravated assault of a victim identified only as 'a prostitute', that, "women in general and prostitutes in particular are at risk [because of] your pursuits" (Judge Jack McGiven, cited by Ivens, 2000:A22). While this infers a larger discourse of violence against women, those charged and convicted serve as the locus of the problem, to which the response is a four-person task force to review the files in Vancouver. Additional efforts include those of Sandra Gagnon who takes posters into downtown Vancouver, and talks with workers in hopes of locating her missing sister, Janet Henry.

2001

By the beginning of 2001, the case seems to have lost momentum. Having used relatively huge resources with no apparent success, and as, "no bodies have turned up…it still hasn't been determined that actual crimes have occurred" (cited by Ivens, 2001b:A3), the police cut back on the investigation, leaving only one or two officers reviewing the files of up to 45 missing women. However, the newspaper reports on mounting public fear of a serial killer, and families of potential victims and activists plea for renewed police attention, including the involvement of RCMP. In February, the list of women is lengthy and still growing. Even so, the Vancouver investigation is disbanded "down to only a skeleton staff", having already devoted "a tremendous amount of resources" (Const. Anne Drennan, cited in "More east-side women…", 2001:A16). At the Valentine's Day memorial march in the Downtown Eastside, families and friends display outrage at this seeming disregard. Soon after, the RCMP become involved, and the police regain some credibility.

In April, police officially add three names to the list of those missing from the area since 1984, bringing the total to 31. A large portion of the articles this year pertain

to inner-departmental issues concerning the dismissal of an inspector who developed a geographic profiling system. As he upholds the theory that a serial killer is at work, he accuses an 'old boy's network' of infringing on his work within the Vancouver Police Department (VPD). He goes on to allege that the VPD acted slowly on the situation of a drastically increasing number of missing women in the late 1990s due to "sex, race and the low social status of the missing women" (Ivens, 2001a:A3). In September, while the police remain leery of the possibility of a serial killer, they suggest as many as a dozen more names might be added to the list of 31, most of whom have vanished since 1998. As the RCMP join efforts reviewing files of "prostitute murders, attempted murders and sexual assaults in BC" (Colebourn, 2001:A28), by October a joint Vancouver Police and RCMP 4-person task force is implemented to review the files of 40 missing women (Wilson, 2001:A5).

With the arrest of the 'Green River Killer', Gary Ridgway, in nearby Washington State, Canadian and U.S. police forces cooperate in information sharing. While Ridgway did spend time in BC, they soon confirm that he is not linked to the Vancouver case. However this prompts the implementation of a U.S. regional task force to investigate the deaths of more than 90 women from San Diego, California to Vancouver, BC since 1982[3]. Likewise, by early December, the now 16-person joint Canadian police task force officially adds more names to the list of missing women bringing the total to 45 since 1984. Of these, 20-30 vanished since 1998, in addition to the 40 unsolved murders of BC workers over the past 20 years. All the while, police maintain "no bodies, no crime scenes, no strong suspects and no proof that any of the missing women met with foul

[3] Ridgway is later convicted in the United States for the murders of 49 women, almost all of whom were sex workers.

play" (Colebourn & Fournier, 2001:A9). They continue to review more than 5,000 files with the common thread of "sex-trade workers and drug addicts" (Colebourn & Fournier, 2001:A9), and by the end of the year begin to assert the likelihood of a serial killer.

As the essence of a profile materializes, indicating that the case pertains to 'drug-addicted prostitutes from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside', more families emerge to describe these particular women as human, loved, non-transient, and vocalize their anger that they have been disregarded due to race, drug-addiction, and their status as 'skid-row prostitutes'.

All the while, the discourse of 'high-risk' is adamantly maintained in the media, as the area is described as "Vancouver's dangerous downtown" ("More east-side women...", 2001:A16). This is extended to more abuses by police as well when a report is issued by the Prostitution Alternatives Counseling and Education Society stating that "prostitutes are at equal risk of attempted rape by a cop as by a pimp" (Wilson, 2001:A11); an accusation that is denied by both police and the executive director of the Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society (DEYAS). The police, reportedly offended by the claim, dismiss it with the response that "some prostitutes may have made the allegations out of anger at police who arrested them" (Wilson, 2001:A11).

During this year, Dawn Crey, another woman connected with prominent people, disappears. Her brother is an important Aboriginal political figure, and is frequently quoted in the newspaper as a diplomatic but political claimsmaker regarding the high proportion of Aboriginal women who have vanished. Dawn Crey emerges as,

> ...not just another native woman gone missing on Vancouver's dangerous Downtown Eastside. She's the beloved sister in a large Sto:lo family, a mother, an outgoing, fun-loving friend, a once-beautiful woman with

> glossy hair who was on steady methadone maintenance and visited twice-weekly with her sister (More east-side women..., 2001:A16).

This both dismantles the notion of transience, and offers hope that she could 'clean up', and perhaps even 'regain' her beauty. That said, she remains a 'special case'. The victims are otherwise described as 'hookers', 'Vancouver's vanished women', 'aboriginal prostitutes', 'Downtown Eastside women', 'missing hookers', the '30-odd prostitutes who have disappeared', 'drug-addicted prostitutes', and 'hookers and junkies'. Master status and the informal profile are evident in the police's statement that Gary Ridgway is a suspect, having "preyed on the *kinds* of girls that we are investigating as missing" (Sgt. Wayne Clary, cited by Jiwa, 2001:A8, emphasis added). While these descriptors are common, the victims also become the presumably politically correct, 'sex trade workers', in addition to some mentions of them as 'mother', 'sister', 'daughter', 'woman', and 'loved-one'.

While initially a seemingly counter discourse, the discussion reported of the families of the missing become subsumed within the larger understanding of the illegitimacy of sex work, which will be further discussed in the following chapter. Indicative of this however, are accounts of the women that tend to 'explain' or 'justify' their actions, as families maintain that society needs to care about these women, regardless of what they did. Sto:lo Nation Aboriginal leader, Ernie Crey says of his sister, Dawn, "Aboriginal women like my sister who grew up in foster homes lived down here out of poverty and desperation didn't have a lot of choice about their pathway in life. It's still our responsibility as a society to care about them and do everything we can to find them" (cited in "More east-side women missing...", 2001:A16). These vindications

become increasingly prominent the following year, and are an important component of the 'counter discourses' that will be discussed in the proceeding chapter.

Another competing discourse, which is not subsequently taken up by The Province, is offered in one of the few references made to a former sex worker. Contradicting prior mentions of the need for 'street-smarts', Gladys Montgomery states, "I knew 10 of the missing women and being street-savvy did not protect them. One of the smartest was named Sarah and she was really streetwise. She has gone" (Gladys Montgomery cited by Grindlay & Wilson, 2001:A5). This is one of the few times over the scope of the study that a current or former sex worker is quoted. However the inference that the problem is not with the women and their assumed naivety, and her challenge to the police's continued warnings for women to be careful and to protect themselves, is seldom picked up in the coverage of this topic. Another example of this is offered in the account of what is referred to as the second 'prostitute murder' in two months in Victoria, BC. The sole mention of the death of Roberta Elders, known as Bobby Crow, invokes the advice, "Victoria police are warning prostitutes to protect themselves" (Hookers at risk, 2001:A4). This both counters the above stated challenge, and additionally implies the onus of protection is on the individual as opposed to enforcement agencies.

In considering the reports of victims unassociated with the Downtown Eastside, the names of the three women whose bodies were found along the route between Agassiz and Mission are offered in two articles. They are described as "the four women who were found dumped near Agassiz and Mission in 1995" (Jiwa, 2001:A8), associated in that "all were involved in drugs and the sex trade" (Colebourn & Jiwa, 2001:A4). The

reports indicate that their DNA is being considered in the Ridgway case, but receive no other mention. Additionally, there is a single article about the conviction of a "knife-wielding john who attacked three prostitutes in Surrey" and would "slash, sexually assault and rob them" (Bermingham, 2001:A38). The women are never named, and the violence overlooked in the article's final statement from the defence attorney that focuses on the issue of prostitution as opposed to violence, "Nobody ever knows why some men seek out prostitutes...There are some questions the court will ever know" (defence lawyer, George Wool, cited by Bermingham, 2001:A38).

2002

Early in 2002, what was originally termed the 'Port Coquitlam Pig Farm'[4], and has since become the infamous Pickton Farm, is searched, and its owner, Robert Pickton is charged in February of this year. In 2002 there are 121 articles pertaining to the case that has now become that of 'Vancouver's Missing Women'. At this point the articles relate less to the women, but more about the investigation which involves hundreds of police, scientists, and students in white suits searching through mounds of dirt at the excavation of the 7 hectare farm. During this time family members mourn near the site, holding vigils and prayer ceremonies, both angry at the police ignoring reported suspicions about the Pickton farm years prior, while fearfully anticipating the police announcement that the remains of their loved ones have been found. The victims receive scant descriptions in the tone of, "Vancouver police had the farm under surveillance as a

[4] The change in terminology was in response to the appeals of BC Pork Producers who experienced a drastic loss in profits following a recall of Pickton products (although never sold commercially), based on the suspicion they may be contaminated by human remains (this was further inferred in a highly controversial media campaign launched by a human rights activist group).

result of a tip that prostitutes were being taken to the farm, killed and their bodies run through a wood chipper and fed to the pigs" (Middleton, 2002a:A4).

Throughout, the dominant discourse pertaining to the sex trade (assumed street work), is one of high-risk. As the women are presumed to understand these risks, they are assumed to have accepted them. Interestingly, these are the few times sex workers are quoted by reporters. The reporter speaks to one woman who was badly beaten and raped several years ago and, "is still working" (Tanner, 2002a:A6). Another woman who escaped the Pickton farm, "knows that every time she gets into a car with a strange man she may be risking her life" (Middleton, 2002b:A4). One victim's boyfriend says of the night she disappeared, he "tried to persuade her to take a night off from working the streets…I told her a thousand times not to work the street, but she didn't listen to me" (Tanner, 2002b:A4). The fiancé of another victim states, "Chinnock visited the Pickton farm to party and 'meet her needs' many times over the last decade, treating the place as a refuge from her difficult days in the Surrey sex trade…'Sometimes she'd come back from there and say it gave her nightmares, but she always went back'" (Gary Bigg, cited by Fournier, 2002f:A6). He goes on to say in another article that drugs "made her vulnerable to every creep" (Gary Bigg, cited by Fournier, 2002f:A9). Aboriginal claimsmaker and brother of one of the Missing Women, Ernie Crey sites the problem when saying,

> 'Our hearts and prayers go out to all the victims' families, regardless of whether they're aboriginal, but the disproportionate number of aboriginal women among the victims must form one of the focuses of what needs to be a thoroughgoing inquiry. It reflects a dismissive discriminatory attitude on the part of police agencies who didn't look as hard for these marginalized women as they would have if 63 women had disappeared from British Properties over time' (Stewart Phillip, president of the Union

> of B.C. Indian Chiefs, which represents the Stl'atl'imx, cited by Fournier, 2002f:A6).

And while likely valid, there is no mention of how unlikely it would be that women from British Properties would disappear, regardless of the ensuing action. That is, as the focus tends to rest on the disproportionate likelihood of Aboriginal women to work in the sex trade on 'skid row' strolls and the lack of attention they received from police, both of which emphasize the illegitimacy of the trade, resulting in a limited discussion on what is to be done to cease the prevalence of violence perpetrated against sex workers, regardless of why they engage in this work.

As such, the solutions offered point to the necessity that women leave the trade and to prevent others from entering it. For example, several Canadian musicians put together a CD dedicated to the women, in which the proceeds are said to "help women who are like those who went missing to get free of the drug addiction that got them down there and placed them in danger" (Fournier, 2002d:A4). Victim, Sereena Abotsway had previously been featured in a story "to illustrate the deadly culture of drugs, prostitution and a lack of serious effort by law enforcement to deal with the mysterious disappearances" (Jiwa, 2002:A4).

The moral undertones are evident as reports continue to establish the women as victims *in spite* of their involvement in the sex trade. In justify their actions and attempting to position them as 'more' than mere 'prostitutes', the dominant discourse is maintained. This is evident in remarks such as, "she wasn't just a prostitute, she was a mother too...she made a mistake" (brother of victim, cited in Woman's remains identified..., 2002:A6). As though victimization and prostitution are mutually exclusive,

and acknowledgment of a mistake in her actions, speaks strongly to a discourse of 'The Prostitute' as unworthy, un-innocent, easy targets of harsh judgments and unforgivability.

The 'reasoning' offered for their lives tends to set those from the Downtown Eastside apart from other sex workers, and this year, they become 'The Missing Women'. While no longer 'hookers', they are still identified as 'prostitutes', 'sex trade workers', 'degenerates', 'drug addicts', 'the disappeared' and 'the vanished women from the Downtown Eastside', 'working women' from the 'seedy', 'gritty', 'drug ghetto'. But mostly they are 'the missing' and 'the women', and increasing mention as 'daughters', 'sisters', and 'loved-ones'. By the end of the year there are 63 women officially listed by police as 'missing' and fit the now formalized profile of 'drug addicts and prostitutes from the Downtown Eastside'; Pickton is charged for 15 of their murders.

Comparably, during this period there are additional reports regarding the murders of six young women on Highway 16, which runs between Prince George and Prince Rupert, located in BC's interior. Of the six young women, only one is regularly named; she is a white tree-planter who was last seen hitchhiking along what has since been termed 'the Highway of Tears'. She was the last to go missing, upon which a task-force and reward were instigated. Of the other five, one went missing in both 1990 and 1995, and three more were found murdered in 1994. The other women are rarely spoken of, and no report was issued upon their disappearances; their families or friends were referenced. Police state, "there is not link between Hoar's disappearance and the other women other than the route…One of the main reasons is lifestyle differences: Two of the girls were known prostitutes. Four were native or part-native" (Sgt. Tom Bethune, cited by Bermingham, 2002:B7). There is one additional report of two murders from outside

of Vancouver. The lack of reports, and continued disregard for the lives of those from outside of the Downtown Eastside speak to the case-specific compassion that was finally established, but remains confined to those women only.

2003

In 2003, while 63 women remain missing from the streets of the Downtown Eastside, in addition to many more disappearances and murders in several other cities that receive almost no further media attention, the Pickton investigation wraps up, and there is substantially less media coverage. Of the 28 articles, most pertain to Pickton's pre-trials and the pain faced by the families of the murdered women. Of those missing from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside between 1996 and 2001, Pickton is charged with 15 and it is said that he will be charged with 7 more, including one 'Jane Doe'.

Upon the charges laid against Pickton, the reports become more about the investigation and ensuing trial than about the victims. While families and activists feel the courts and government have failed people from the area, they demand an inquiry into the police's lack of initial efforts, and demand better victims' services to help them cope. For those still seeking recognition of their loved-ones, they continue in attempts to distinguish their family members as 'more than' merely 'prostitutes'. Cindy Feliks', who's DNA was found on the farm is understood to have battled with drug addiction and was a prostitute, but "she was still my daughter...and a human being" (stepmother, Marilyn Kraft, cited by Fournier, 2003:A4). Given these descriptions, the women are depicted as 'victims' provided the reader gains sympathy for her plight, and she is not entirely to blame for her involvement in prostitution, and thus not totally culpable for her

murder. However the 'true' victimization, being involvement in prostitution, remains the undercurrent of the discourse.

This is additionally exemplified as the solutions to the perceived problems are related to prostitution prohibition initiatives. As a former street worker infers the larger issue of culpability to violence stating, "Getting hurt down here is inevitable" (Maggie Gisle cited in Hundreds march..., 2003:A40). The solution offered for this 'inevitability' remains the same: keep out of drugs and prostitution. This is demonstrated in the call, "governments must do more to help women who end up in places like the Downtown Eastside", along with pleas for legislative changes that might prevent children from falling into addiction and prostitution (Hundreds march...2003:A40).

The language describing those associated with the Pickton case is still 'prostitutes', the 'abused and murdered', the 'disappeared' and 'vanished', as well as 'daughters', 'sisters', and 'loved-ones', however they become more generally 'the missing women', 'BC's missing women', 'Vancouver's missing women', and 'our missing women', all from the 'drug-infested skid-row'.

In the meantime, there is one report of the 14 murdered sex workers in the past two decades found in and around Edmonton, Alberta, all of which remain unsolved. In the few cases that do not directly pertain to that of the missing women, the victims go undescribed as 'a transgendered prostitute', in which 'a man' is sentenced to seven years for his 'beating death' from Prince George ("Man gets 7 years in prison", 2003:A3). In another, two who will be tried "for murder of prostitute, 27" (Bailey, 2003:A10). She is later named as Annette Allan, and her death is described in the negligible account of "Allan's bound and gagged body was found in the Fraser River. She had been stabbed

several times, but had died of asphyxiation related to a drug overdose" (Bailey, 2003:A10).

Clearly distinguished from the Missing Women, those 'unrelated' to this case, are offered limited coverage and little sympathy. They are presented with scant, short description, never understood to be 'our' women, as those from the Downtown Eastside eventually became. As such, the police also continue to perpetuate a notion of disregard related to the high-risk discourse of prostitution. In a seemingly similar situation in Edmonton, provided the speculation of a serial killer, regarding the victims, the police affirm, "they both lived a high-risk lifestyle and were dumped in farmers' fields" (Constable Darren Anderson, cited in "Serial killer...", 2003:A33). In these reportedly distinct cases, the high-risk discourse continues to be maintained and used as reason for lack of sympathy.

The above offers a periodized account of the events and some of the data collected based on the language used in describing the victims, the associations and inferences made to sex work, the problems sited and the ensuing solutions offered, and those who spoke to these issues. Based on themes rather than time periods, the following section will contextualize these findings within the previous research and the theoretical framework presented in the preceding chapters. This analysis will identify the dominant and seemingly competing discourses that were evident in The Province newspaper between 1993 and 2003, based on articles pertaining to violence against sex workers.

Chapter V: Upholding the Dominant Discourse of 'The Prostitute'

The dominant discourse pertaining to fatal violence and the disappearances of sex workers between 1993 and 2003 in The Province newspaper is one of high-risk lifestyle. Evidence for this will be provided in the following section according to the conversations that were incorporated into this theme. These will include the shifting discourse of 'The Prostitute'. While families and Aboriginal claimsmakers initially appeared to challenge the dominant ideology, in the end they served to reaffirm the high-risk lifestyle deemed 'inherent' to prostitution, which resulted in the locus of the problem being placed firmly on the trade, and often onto the women themselves.

The data from the articles was placed on a grid from which the findings were presented in the preceding chapter, and will now be systematically analyzed according to the discourses and their pervasive notions. The components of this grid point to the dominant discourse of 'The Prostitute', who emerges simultaneously as a drug addict; both identities seemingly reflective of her character from which she is in need of salvation. Her salvation pertains to her moral integrity, or lack thereof, which is also to blame for her victimization, as it is inferred that her high-risk lifestyle led to her demise. There are two alternate discourses that emerge. These are the Missing Women as victims of a social system, compared to those unassociated with this area and personally responsibilized for their victimization. The discourse that emerged at the dawn of the Missing Women case allowed *these* victims a certain measure of sympathy. They are however differentiated from other 'prostitute murders', such as those from Kelowna, BC, who continue to be regarded in terms of their seemingly degrading and high-risk lifestyle,

where the high probability of violence can be expected; they are simply poor risk-managers who should have known better.

The Discourse Creators and Ensuing Discursive Shifts

There was a notable discursive shift in the representation of missing and murdered sex workers in The Province newspaper between 1993 and 2003. Until around 1999, the coverage on the topic offered numerous unconnected accounts of murdered women located in various cities throughout BC. During this time, the print media presented reaffirmed the discourse of 'The Prostitute' as predominantly one of 'high-risk lifestyle'. This 'lifestyle', as mentioned, incorporated emphasis on drug addiction, with some associations to the illicit drug trade, and the role of pimps in luring innocent girls into the sex industry. Victims were largely dismissed as 'hooker murders', and for those reported missing, police affirmed them as a transient population, who likely relocated to other cities.

By 1999, the families and friends of those missing from the Downtown Eastside began to unite and gained increased media attention. They quickly dismantled the assumption of transience and created an alternate discourse in which these women were regarded within the context of external connections to family and caring communities. They offered examples of women who had disappeared after paying their rent in full, leaving money in their bank accounts and unclaimed social assistance cheques, and spoke of women who had vanished from a location they had called home for years, leaving their children, personal belongings, and failing to make their regular visits and phone calls to their close family members. Angry that these women were so easily dismissed by the police, given the above abnormalities, the voices of the families gained credibility along

with advocacy groups equally frustrated by an ongoing and historical dismissal of Aboriginal people, who were disproportionately represented among the vanished. These voices mark a shift in discourse pertaining directly to what was to become the case of the Missing Women.

The new discussion of this case offered a measure of sympathy that was unlike anything prior. And while these two groups (family members and Aboriginal advocates) appeared to present challenges to the dominant discourse, their voices were subsumed within the dominant high-risk discourse that was adamantly maintained in The Province newspaper over the course of the decade under analysis. Confined to a discourse of 'The Prostitute', the issue of violence against sex workers was unable to emerge as a moral panic, but instead a moral narrative that reaffirmed the illegitimacy of this characterization, and thus the status of the women to whom it pertains.

The ideas will be explored in the proceeding section, which begins by unpacking the discourse of 'The Prostitute', and its affirmation within The Province throughout the scope of this study. This will incorporate the emergence of the apparent counter discourses, and how they were used to support the above. As these discourses offered a fixed understanding of the issue, there will be a subsequent section on marginal and absent discourses; those mentioned in a minimal number of articles but were not qualitatively significant in addition to some that were markedly lacking. This will conclude with a final consideration of the moral panic model and how this issue became a moral narrative based on the amiss of emphasis on prostitution rather than violence.

'The Prostitute' Discourse 1993–2003

Discourse helps identify the sites and means of maintaining the moral order. Through the competing claims described above a dominant discourse emerged, or in many cases, was maintained. As previously indicated, a discourse of risk adds a useful point of analysis in moral panic theorizing; this has been a particularly striking in considering violence against sex workers. Instead of immediately relating to the victims presented in news stories, risk discourse, to a greater or lesser extent, tends to distance the audience from the victim. In this way, sex workers were presented as significantly different from the 'average' citizen or 'common' reader. Blatantly described as living 'high risk' lifestyles, they were marked as distinguishable figures. This served the dual purpose of reducing the sympathy of the reader for the victims and limiting the discussion of efforts toward reducing violence.

It could be suggested that the reason this narrative took many years to gain publicity is due in large part to the fact that it was confined to a discourse of 'The Prostitute'. What is perhaps most unique about this case is that the victims are traditional folk devils. 'The Prostitute' habitually receives a lot of negative coverage, and so, when they became the victims, they did not easily fit the crime news mold in which actors are neatly placed in categories of 'right' and 'wrong' (Chermak, 1994; Chibnall, 1977). This was not a format with which the audience was accustomed.

Consistent with Barak's (1994) suggestion that players in news stories are described as uni-dimensional characters, the victims in this study were described according to their master status as 'The Prostitute'. Also congruent with previous research, this 'character' is deemed to be involved in a pathetic and degrading line of

work. Similar to the findings of Jeffrey and MacDonald (forthcoming), the victim is consistently portrayed as poor and drug addicted, lacking in moral integrity, as a likely victim living a risky lifestyle, and as the willing participant in her own demise. As no 'honourable' woman would engage in such a high risk and demeaning occupation, they were placed in opposition to the audience, with a subsequent shift that only pertained to the women from the Downtown Eastside, whereby the audience could perhaps feel sorry for their plight (as 'prostitutes').

There was a bifurcated relationship that shifted according to the perceptions of those involved. The Missing Women came to be seen as 'victims', and thus 'salvageable prostitutes'. Prior to their emergence as such, and for those outside of this particular case, they were presented as having chosen their plight, albeit without presenting them as legitimate choice makers. While negating their agency, this nonetheless responsibilizes them for their involvement in prostitution and ensuing victimization. An additional split in ideology was suggested in the homicide cases of transgendered and transsexual workers who, while largely dismissed, were offered a certain level of pity, however this was based on their sexual 'confusion' rather than their work.

Similar to Van Brunschot et al.'s (1999) findings, sex workers were largely associated with the illicit drug trade; the Missing Women were regularly reported to be from a 'drug-infested neighbourhood', holding the status of a dual deviant. The Downtown Eastside is described as an entity that consumes people in a world of drugs and prostitution, from which few successfully reemerge, and the victims are understood as "all women similarly snared in a destructive trap of drug addiction and prostitution" (Tanner, 2002d:A24). This results in 'The Prostitute' as a mark of social decay in

uncivilized space, as indicated in Chapter One, with descriptors such as the 'grimy' and 'sleazy' 'skid row', the 'dangerous downtown', the city's 'mean streets', and the 'tough', 'drug-riddled area'. This fits within a discourse of drugs as a social ill, inherently destructive, and its users, obvious. Omitted from a discussion of 'functional' and 'productive' citizens with what might also be deemed drug addiction problems that go unnoticed as they go about their daily business, 'Drugs' are presented as all similar with equally and unavoidably destructive consequences. They are portrayed as the beginning of a downward spiral to which all users succumb, inexorably resulting in their social dysfunction and noticeable physical deterioration.

Drugs were considered one of the primary reasons women were 'lured' to the neighbourhood and into the trade. It was understood as interlinked within an inevitable and destructive spiral beginning with a troubled upbringing, to alcohol and soft drugs use, leading to hard drug abuse, and finally prostitution in support of their habit. This effect is explained in such accounts as, "Her sister-in-law had gone from having a drinking problem to a heroin addiction and prostitution before she went missing" (Middleton, 2002d:A9). Another reporter states, "If anything, addiction and poverty trap them on the sleazy strip between Powell and Hastings where it's possible to turn a trick and score in a matter of minutes" (Tanner, 1999b:A4). While there was the odd reference made to HIV/AIDS when it pertained to a particular victim, this was not a central theme as was found by Van Brunschot et al. (1999).

As previously mentioned, the pimp was a component of this discourse, namely in the Kelowna cases during the early 1990s, and subsequently disappeared from the conversation. More so than violent johns or police, pimps were both blamed for the

violence perpetrated against sex workers as well as the evil character that lured them into the industry. When the pimp was present, they are presented as the ultimate folk devil, alongside whom, 'The Prostitute', especially if she was young, was deemed a victim. Consistent with Van Brunschot et al. (1999) findings, when the role of the pimp is prevalent, it enables the 'victim-hood' of the worker, (especially if the victim is a child), as the pimp becomes the greater of the two evils.

Within a discourse of risk, notions of self protection and risk management are strongly implicated in the moral agenda of a panic; that is to vividly mark the moral confines of society. As such, the victim becomes implicated in the narrative in new ways. This is strikingly notable in this case, as the role of the victims in their fatality was at the forefront of the issue, arguably even more so than the accused serial killer. Within these moral narratives, the women emerge with identifiable characteristics, particularly the victims whose lives begin to serve as cautionary tales to the larger community. This was evident as those murdered and missing were openly offered as 'warnings' to others both currently and potentially involved in sex work (presumably street level). As such it becomes important to identify the victims as particular 'types' of people, distinguishable from the average reader/audience, who becomes comparably secure and protected.

The dominant discourse is upheld by primary claimsmakers who played a significant role in defining the situation. The police were the most commonly referenced control agents, frequently positioned in response to the counter claimsmakers, who might be understood as discourse creators in their attempts to reclaim the issue as one of social and police disregard.

The Police's Shifting Conversation of 'The Prostitute'

The primary definers are police, politicians, and court officials. Over the entire scope of the study these groups were given opportunity to speak to the issue in 136 of the 271 articles. Chermak (1995b:13) states crime news must be first acknowledged by criminal justice agencies. This was not the case in this particular situation; however the listed numbers of missing women are mostly reported according to the police's 'official' statements. Perhaps it was because the claimsmakers, namely family members of the victims, who were the first to emerge with this issue publicly, that the primary definers were consistently in a position of *responding* to their claims, rather than defining the situation themselves, as is usually the case (Critcher, 2003). As such, the claimsmakers were able to initially define the situation as one pertaining directly to police malpractice and disregard. And while police were not first to define the situation per se, by *not* defining it over the course of the past twenty years police were able to establish the situation as 'non-problem'. And in that sense, the families and Aboriginal groups' claims were actually a response to this in order to bring to light there was a problem. This is a clear example of the struggle involved in 'claimsmaking activities' (Spector & Kitsuse, 1977).

While varying according to journalist, The Province generally seemed to position itself alongside the families of the victims, allowing their strong criticisms of police inaction to permeate reports as well as their own victimization throughout the course of the investigation and particularly during the preliminary trial. As the newspaper had also ignored the 'problem' for many years, it was likely in their best interest to ally with the families, presenting themselves as the critical voice of the public. This would seemingly

become the exception that Chermak (1995a) deems necessary in order for news media to promote their objectivist and independent stance. The police did however, gain more positive publicity when the RCMP joined efforts with the VPD in 2001, and throughout the course of the Pickton farm investigation in 2002. In line with Surette's (1992) assertion, the resulting cumulative effect was support for increased enforcement resources.

In response to criticism, these agents maintained a discourse based on prostitution as a high-risk occupation made up of a transient population (the latter notion was eventually dropped as the investigation became a homicide case). The risks deemed 'inherent' to the trade were initially presented by police as due to the fact that workers get into vehicles with strangers and are driven to remote locations outside of the realm of police protection. For this reason they make for difficult homicide cases, and due to their alleged transience, challenging missing person investigations.

Another category of claimsmakers that emerged were those who work in local street organizations. Deemed 'experts' on the Downtown Eastside area in addition to prostitution and drug-related issues, they were referenced in 30 of the articles. Their claims varied, most relating to the need for women to leave the streets, indirectly perpetuating the need for their 'expertise' in the area. This was emphasized again in the solutions offered pertaining to this case, which mostly included increased resources and facilities that might help women get off drugs and out of the sex industry. This is similar to the point Killingbeck (2001) makes in her analysis on studying school shootings, upon which school safety became big business.

Counter Discourses

Following the definition that was offered in the previous section, claimsmakers will be understood as those who systematically articulate the seriousness of a particular problem (Critcher, 2003). Family members and Aboriginal advocates emerged as these figures, attempting to challenge the dominant discourse and construct a new one in which the Missing Women are constructed as victims. It is difficult to say why the issue suddenly generated media attention prior to the investigation, but likely the activism on the part of these individuals, through several vigils, the creation of registries, missing persons lists, and actively investigating the disappearances of those they knew, was influential in finally gaining a voice in the media in the late-1990s.

While these claimsmakers did not receive a mass amount of coverage, they were provided the opportunity to articulate their views and concerns in 153 of the 271 articles (100 of which were in 2001 at the time of the Pickton farm investigation). Of these, a small group of family members repeatedly spoke to the issue, claiming that it should be taken more seriously by authorities. Most were critical of police inaction, blaming their seeming reluctance to investigate on the women's status as 'drug-addicted prostitutes'. There were family members, particularly the brother of Dawn Crey, who emerged as a claimsmaker on the continued marginalization of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Of the 271 articles, there were ten in which activists specifically argued on behalf of Aboriginal people's rights, three validating the rights of women, and three concerning the rights of sex workers specifically. With regards to the Missing Women, one of the most prominent claimsmaking groups related the issue to Aboriginality, and like others, this largely pertained to the lack of police efforts rather than a culture conducive to

violence. As one stated, "Police tend to minimalize murders in the native community – especially if the victim is a prostitute" (Terri Nesena, of the Aboriginal Women's Council, cited by Hauka, 1993:A5).

There were two discourses that allowed for the 'victim' status of the Missing Women (victim in the sense of becoming 'drug-addicted prostitutes'). These were Aboriginal claimsmakers and the families of the Downtown Eastside women. Aboriginal advocates identified the historical treatment of Aboriginal people as the leading cause of their marginalization, as families presented their individual loved ones having made mistakes, but nonetheless still human beings. While definitely a discursive shift, in which subtle nuances allowed the 'Women' to emerge as victims, these apparent challenges to the dominant discourse ended up offering explanations as to why these women were involved in the sex industry in the first place, perpetuating the illegitimacy of the trade. This mediated the women's responsibility in their victimization, however their work was constantly explained and excused, and the solutions offered concretely echoed and solidified the dominant discourse of high-risk lifestyle.

This was fairly consistent among all of the claimsmakers whose voices emerged in the articles. While family members articulated that their loved ones were not to be disregarded, they continually explained they were 'more than just prostitutes', which implicitly speaks to a larger discourse of prostitution in which one should hope to be 'more' than. However, the voices of family members in particular attempted to withdraw the women from the 'vacuum' of which 'The Prostitute' is regularly ascribed (Jeffrey & MacDonald, forthcoming). Until this time, like traditional folk devils, the victims were commonly detached from "normative social ties" (Jewkes, 2004:45). From this, they

emerged as people who were simultaneously daughters, sisters, and mothers, some of whom were allotted media space for their stories to be told. While some of these conversations offered images of loving families and amiable personal attributes, many served as explanations for their involvement in drugs and prostitution and the events that led them to the Downtown Eastside.

As family members present their individualistic claims, they set their daughters, sisters, etc. as separate, which reaffirms the dominant discourse rather than challenging it. To clarify, it is not the recognition of the victim's life that is being critiqued, but how they were positioned as special cases, or human beings *in light* of their status as 'prostitutes'. While the conversations of radical feminists, as presented in Chapter One are absent from this discourse, their perspective is echoes through these abolitionist positions, in which 'The Prostitute' is viewed as a victim of an inequitable social system, and thus exploited through prostitution. The solutions proposed by radical feminists however, are not included in this discussion.

Causes and Solutions Presented by Discourse Creators

The 'solutions' offered throughout the entire scope of the study mostly pertained to the Missing Women case, and resonated with notions of 'salvation', given the solutions were to get women off the streets and out of drug addiction. There were additional suggestions of educating young people about the dangers 'inherent' in this lifestyle, which follows the notion of responsibilizing workers regardless of personal or social context, in that they could have chosen differently, had they known better, which also diminishes their choice making capacities.

As has previously been discussed, the identified problems about the missing and murdered women did not coincide with the solution offered. While the problem for claimsmakers seemed mostly to do with police inaction, arguing that had they actively investigated sooner more deaths could have been prevented. This implies, as does the police's focus throughout these reports, that a particular individual is responsible for this violence. As indicated in the previous section on media, this is exemplary of crime reports which tend to simplify stories and neglect the social context in which the events occurred.

Interestingly, the newspaper simultaneously upholds both discourses of women as victims of a social system, as well as responsibilized 'prostitutes'. Journalists regularly reported on Aboriginal groups' claims regarding the disadvantaged positions of people, particularly related to race and poverty. However, rather than delving into this issue, in terms of solutions, they reported on suggestions toward educating people, namely youth, on the dangers of the trade and on drug addiction as a preventative measure. To do this allows no further regard for their social circumstances and the effects of systemic racism, but instead locates sex workers as responsible for their participation in the sex trade, which is adamantly maintained as a poor choice. The solutions offered are indicative of continued efforts toward the moral and legal regulation of sex work. Even though the issue is taken up as that of a serial killer, the solutions pertain to increased social service resources that might help women get off the streets along with more facilities to assist women out of drug addiction. In accordance with the articles related to pimping, were calls for harsher legislative measures pertaining to child prostitution, which in

comparison portrays young people in prostitution as victims rather than responsibilized choice makers.

The above solutions are interesting provided the problem is one of a serial killer given that the most dangerous aspect about this character is usually deemed to be it's the individual's pathological unpredictability and predatory nature to which, "the response is likely to be a demand for greater social regulation or control and a demand for a return to traditional values" (Killingbeck, 2001:188). Instead the solutions, and thus inherently the problems seem to be located with the victim. The dominant ideology pertaining to prostitution is one of an anti-prostitution discourse. From the solutions offered, (leave the trade, get off the streets), it appears that there is a sense of needing to return to 'traditional values' (although prostitution has long existed), from which follows the contention that this problem would not have existed had these values been maintained.

Marginal Discourses

While the above maintained the confines of the discussion surrounding the issue of 'prostitute murders', that which goes unsaid is equally interesting, and demonstrates some of the possible directions that this conversation might have taken. Below are the some of the marginal discourses that were mentioned in few articles, but never took precedence as relevant issues or topics. The subsequent section to this offers some of the many possible discourses that might have become prevalent, but were most notably absent from story presented by The Province.

Sex workers were only granted the opportunity to speak for themselves in nine of the 271 articles; in three cases the women were former workers. As indicated in previous research mentioned in the Literature Review, sex workers are traditionally overlooked in

potential to contribute to public debate concerning these issues (Jeffrey and MacDonald, forthcoming:260). In their research, Van Brunschot et al. (1999) found that when sex workers were given a platform on which to speak it mostly relates to violence, and is used to demonstrate the risks of the trade. They also found that given the opportunity, workers became powerful voices in claiming the legitimization of their work. In this case, their claims pertained to violence, as expected given that was the theme under investigation, however they could not be deemed 'claimsmakers' as their voices were largely overlooked and not offered the media space to solidify their claims. Of the few reference that were offered, they related to violence, the control of pimps, and the downward spiral into a life of drug addiction and prostitution. Interestingly, while most of these reports seemed to offer the women's experiences of severely violent dates, it seemed to be used as evidence that they knowingly engaged in high risk work. This is evident in one article in which a woman who has been working on the Downtown Eastside for over a decade describes a violent sexual attack, upon which the reporter points out that she is "still working", but does not carry the bad date lists with her (Tanner, 2002:A6). This seems to point out that while aware of the risks, not only does she continue engaging in this work, she does not take any precautionary measures.

The prevalence of violent men is offered in such accounts as a former Vancouver worker offers, "There were quite a number of times I was at gunpoint and knifepoint and beaten quite badly" (Paige Latin cited in "Calls renewed...", 1997:A22), and that of claims, "It's scary, every time I come out here it's life and death...Every guy who comes down here is weird. I've already had two bad dates this year. One broke my jaw" (Leah, cited by Colebourn and Fournier, 2001:A9). However, the level of violence they

described at the hands of numerous men (as opposed to a single serial killer) was never addressed.

Local criminologist, John Lowman, was one of the only other claimsmakers to speak to the issue of prostitution in the broader sense of their unique vulnerability to a spectrum of violence and harassment. Consistent with Jewkes' (2004:44) statement that criminologists are severely lacking from criminal justice discourse in the media, his claims were voiced in only four of the 271 articles, and responded with legislative options that might change these circumstances. The only other academic 'experts' were three professors and forensic anthropologists that would not be considered 'claimsmakers' as their role was in explaining the excavation of the Pickton farm.

Interestingly, while drugs and 'the pimp' were (initially) presented as the evil forces that lure women to the streets, there is never mention of the clients' role in the 'supply and demand' component of the trade. While there is a marginal discourse that relates to 'sting operation', in which potential clients are warned they may be "nabbed trying to buy sex in Vancouver could find their noses rubbed in the messes they make" ("Hookers' customers…", 1995:A5). These 'the messes refer to the damage to residential communities, now 'littered' with used condoms and dirty needles.

The transition to an area such as the Downtown Eastside is considered the trough of the downward spiral of hard drugs and prostitution. However, the mother of victim Angela Jardine offers a single alternate account in which her daughter spent her life trying to fit in, in light of her undiagnosed behavioural problems and mental health issues until she reached the Downtown Eastside. While this reflects negatively on mainstream society, it is one of the few positive accounts of this neighbourhood, as her mother

confirms, "That's one of the reasons she blended into the east side so well...People didn't treat her like she was an outsider" (mother of Angela, Deborah Jardine, cited by Tanner, 1999:A10). Similarly, as sex workers gathered in a prayer service for the missing women, upon which they released balloons outside the Pickton farm, a support worker commented, "They were laughing and saying how the balloons were all sticking together, just like they do" (Karen Duddy cited by Tanner, 2002:A6). These were however two of the only accounts that portrayed the area and those within in a positive light, admirable for its acceptance apparently uncharacteristic of mainstream culture.

Absent Discourses

As some conversations are clearly present and reinforced, others are notably absent; this being the main role in which issues are asserted in ways and become inconceivable in others. Claimsmakers emerge and work through discourse, seeking to perpetuate a certain perspective; they are likely picked up by mainstream media when they already fit into prior notions pertaining to the topic. This is claimsmaking activity, "This is the shaping of discourse. This is the making of controversy. And this is the perversion of possibility" (Fine, 1993:92). As such, it becomes "a struggle to impose one closed definition on the issue, to prevent other ways of speaking about it" (Critcher, 2003:173). It is perversion in as much as we lose creativity in our point of view, limiting our perspective on social issues. It becomes a struggle to maintain a particular outlook according to the agenda of competing claimsmakers seeking to have their views disseminated through media. While there are many more ways of conceiving of this situation, in the following section we will consider some of the many possible discourses that were absent in the newspaper reporting on this topic.

In this case, the 'locus of the problem' (Critcher, 2003; Voumvakis & Ericson, 1984) was firmly placed on 'The Prostitute' rather than violent and predatory men or discriminating laws and social perceptions. And while there were slight discursive shifts as the articles came to relate specifically to the Missing Women, their narrative was in line with Valverde and Moore's (2000) suggestion that discourses of risk, which dominated the discussion in all respects, replace moral regulation (also see Thompson, 1998). In this way, there was no further need to discuss the immorality of prostitution, however the same message prevails. The undercurrent of prostitution as 'bad' behaviour remains, now under the guise of 'high-risk' lifestyles which are to serve as a warning to both those on the streets and those contemplating such a lifestyle; the victims were seen for the most part as poor risk managers, and as those who could not be 'saved' from the streets.

The discourse on prostitution also tends to, and indeed did in this case, incorporate issues of drug addition, positioning the 'addict' in opposition to society. As Furedi (1997) warns, "The effect of concentrating on degraded people rather than on society is to abandon any hope of finding solutions, because it is only possible to conceive of effective intervention in relation to a social problem...the degraded person is not susceptible to effective intervention. The problem is caused by a moral flaw – and the only thing to be done is to punish and pray" (171). And while one support worker acknowledges, "As Canadians we all feel the impact of how we treat our weakest citizens and these women were our weakest members" (Elaine Allan cited in Fournier, 2003:A6), this is in the context of this particular investigation, qualifying the mistreatment of 'those women down there'. While the police were criticized for failing to investigate as they

might have with other populations, this was the extent of the claimsmakers' disapproval. Only one BC First Nations Summit spokesman poignantly remarked, "We should have all got off our asses 15 years ago and done something about this" (Fournier, 2002c:A20). Otherwise, the support workers were never criticized, activists never claimed responsibility, nor did community residents that pushed the sex trade into back alleys because they were too great a nuisance in their neighbourhoods. Violent clients narrowly escaped demonization, even Robert Pickton was barely considered. The implication of difficult childhoods emerged as a cause for women to seek a life on the streets; however some family members emerged to defend their efforts in their upbringing.

Claimsmakers tap into a larger discourse, which is how the 'problem' emerges as a larger issue than the particular incident at hand. In her study of the moral panic over school violence, Killingbeck (2001) offers an example of this in how, "school shootings raise issues concerning gender relations, without ever actually stating it" (189). She goes on to describe how this is accomplished in that the incidents are reported offering the family dynamics of the offender. She goes on to explain, "simply reporting the shooter's family arrangement says something about the breakdown of the traditional family structure: thus, the idea is conveyed that someone (usually the mother) has done (or hasn't done) something that either led to this situation or allowed it" (Killingbeck, 2001:189). This is evident in many of the reports of women, in which there is mention of them being raised in foster homes, transitioning through difficult teen years, or the emphasis on childhood sexual abuse, low self-esteem, and the like. Many points of the victim's life are highlighted as indicators of the 'breakdown' in traditional family values.

This both maintains the discourse of the sanctity of the family, while offering 'breakdowns' as warning signs.

Still the 'folk devil' really does not seem to emerge as a significant threat, arguably because the problem is with the trade, and the women, who might not necessarily be blamed for their involvement, but the solutions offered insist they ought to leave the trade. This infers two separate discourses, the first is that prostitution is bad and the women need to be saved, and for those who are not 'salvageable' are high-risk individuals and not worthy of true 'victim' status. This discourse additionally fails to address issues pertaining to serial killers that Jewkes (2004) states, "what most people would consider to be the 'worst' type of crime explains serial killing as the consequence of a culture which glorifies violence as 'an appropriate and manly response to frustration'" (Jewkes, 2004:45).

Discussion about legislation and alternative initiatives was conspicuously lacking. While John Lowman is not picked up as a claimsmaker, as he is rarely quoted over the course of the study, he is the most academically/theoretically sound, and in addition to one former sex worker, these are the only sources that speak to the reasons why sex workers (specifically street level) are susceptible to violence; that is the 'cause' of violence meets the 'solution'.

The specification of street work was largely lacking, as previous research indicates off-street workers are less susceptible to violence, or at least to particular forms of violence (see Lowman & Fraser, 1995). And while part of the high risk discourse was about how they get into cars and go to places where police are no longer able to protect, a discussion pertaining to remedying this situation was omitted beyond the conclusion that

women should simply no longer engage in this behaviour. There were few mentions of safe-houses, and none about legalizing bawdy houses or other means that might offer greater immunity from violence, and no comparisons were offered to the some of the security provisions available for off-street workers. This was especially striking given the close timing between the Missing Women case, the substantial number of workers found murdered on the outskirts of Edmonton, and the convictions Robert Yates and Gary Ridgway in nearby Washington State. Yates received little publicity in The Province. Whereas, the Green River Killer, later to be known as Gary Ridgway received substantively more, as a prime example of a 'prostitute serial killer', almost a new category of predator, and yet no panacea considered for the particular vulnerability of street sex workers.

Similar to the findings of Van Brunschot et al. (1999), during the earlier years of the study, there was more emphasis on local residents and the nuisance they experience than the workers. Ironically, in the first mention that states a large number of murders in BC stating, "Prostitutes are prime targets for violence", the article goes on about the need to crackdown on clients, and the commendable work of police these 'sting operations'. This resulted in a warning specific locations as, Vancouver police department's anti-prostitution task force was sending the message that, "If these guys are going to a residential neighbourhood, chances are it will be a police woman" (Constable Anne Drennan cited in Hookers' customers…, 1995:A5). Had the reporter attempted to link the initial cause of concern with these practices it might have been noted that these actions on the part of the police, largely in response to 'community' members, pushes the street prostitution into more secluded and dangerous locations. Even by the title of the

article, 'Hookers' customers to get down and dirty', offers a clear inference of that the onus is on the 'hooker' for the obvious immorality of the trade of these acts. And while police claim 'men' (rarely referred to as 'johns' or 'clients'), tend to blame others for their transgressions, such as "their wives, their loneliness and even the hookers walking the street for tempting them" (Hookers' customers…, 1995:A5), there is no mention of firstly, how blaming women might be an indicator of misogyny, and secondly, what the harm is for a 'lonely' person to seek the services of a person who might help them. There was an additional lack of consideration of why the consensual sale of sex between adults is inherently amoral or at the very least, criminalized.

An absence of agency was notable when considering women from the Downtown Eastside with their difficult upbringings, drug addiction, poverty, and other forms of despair. Meanwhile prior to this case, and for those outside of it, it is inferred that they have somehow voluntarily chosen a life conducive to violence and exploitation. And while notions of choice and agency are arguable, and presumably increasingly limited when considering street level workers from low-end strolls, the point is, the discourse is bifurcated and shifts according the perceptions of the victim. The Missing Women, while deemed to live 'high risk' lifestyles, were not necessarily to blame for their plight, they were 'explained' as being Aboriginal, as having learning disabilities, or grew up feeling excluded from middle class mainstream society. However, outside of this case, they are deemed responsible for their 'choice'. This is however lacking any slight inference that this is a commendable option. This was similarly indicated in the suggestions that more educational resources would deter young people from entering the trade, as though they would choose this work out of naivety rather than situational or personal factors.

The victims from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside have come to be known simply as 'The Missing Women'. Given this designation, it is clear to whom it implies. Setting them apart from other sex workers, the label might also be understood as a replacement for the 'drug-addicted skid row hooker' title. It does not seem to be a meaningful discursive shift, but only one that is more courteous and politically correct. Victims unassociated with this specific case continued to be referenced as 'prostitutes' and 'hookers', and as this case gains publicity, 'other' murders are rarely reported on. This indicates that the case of 'The Missing Women' did not become a moral panic as it did not extend into a broader issue of 'violence against sex workers', least of all 'violence against women'. As indicated in the theoretical framework, without 'public' concern, a moral panic cannot emerge. These stories must resound within society at larger, and appear to reflect common values, and thus commonly instigates new control measures (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994). Provided the strength of the dominant discourse of 'The Prostitute', and the media's reinforcement of it, sex workers were greatly distanced from 'the public', and this concern was specific to those involved, and mostly pertaining to their unfortunate circumstances that led them to prostitution.

Moral Narrative rather than a 'Panic'

When initially conceiving of the theoretical perspective to be used in this study, I conceptualized the 'Moral Panic' model as a loose fitting framework in which I could squeeze the Missing Women's case. As Jewkes (2004) points out, the problem with moral panic theory and its ensuing criticisms rests on "the way that it has been embraced by the generations of writers, researchers, journalists and students who have been applying it uncritically ever since its inception in 1971" (76). As such, incorporating

notions of discourse and risk seemed to be entirely suiting, in addition to following the suggestions of other researchers to treat Cohen's model as one to be built upon rather than a strict and narrow concept (Critcher, 2003; Jewkes, 2004; Thompson, 1998). Working upon it as such has provided a very useful and insightful lens through which to conceive of the sudden rise in concern over the issue of murdered and missing sex workers. However, one key component perhaps most essential to the moral panic is that the issue shifts from a localized event to a generalized concern. As such, this model has highlighted perhaps the most poignant aspect of the case of the Missing Women: it did not become a concern to a broader population.

The concern over murdered and missing women was not dispersed in The Province to effectively instill fear in, or concern with, the broader community of women, or even sex workers. The fatal violence was never promoted as an issue of misogyny with which all women, and further all people, should be concerned (except for the few references from Lowman). Nor was the issue extended to involve all sex workers, or even street workers from other locations. This is indicated in the further reporting (and lack of) regarding other cases, namely the multiple murders in Edmonton, Calgary, Prince George, Kelowna, along Highway 16 in BC, and in cities just south of Vancouver in Washington State.

The site of struggle within the moral regulation regarding prostitution is ongoing. While this could be largely due to media's tendency to simplify events and fit them within a framework of which the 'serial killer' story is not new. This is evident in the continual dismissal of the voices of sex workers, and the dismissal of the prevalence of violence perpetrated against them at the hands of a variety of people. The blame placed

on the workers is indicative of social reluctance to further reflect on the situation. From a reactive stance, the solutions offered relate to eliminating prostitution as opposed to eliminating violence, as opposed to considering a misogynistic and racist culture, as opposed to eliminating the moral regulation of space, as opposed to considering the need for the ruling class to 'other' sections of people and cities.

While the Missing Women case may not be considered a moral panic, the reason for this is equally important. Critcher (2003) states the pressure for political action does not always become unbearable, "but when it does, society is in the throes of a moral panic" (175). Likelihood of victimization is underestimated in this case given the dissociation between the general public and the targeted victims.

Through the omission of other discourses, this issue failed to become a moral panic in that it did not give rise to larger social concern. Whether it seeped into the collective conscious beyond the association to the Downtown Eastside remains to be seen. While it likely did in direct relation to The Missing Women, it may not be any more widespread than that. Further follow up to this research would be interesting, based on other media, as well as in comparison to the rising situation in Edmonton for example, which is presumably another serial killer case. While it should not necessitate a serial killer in order to do so, such an evaluation could reaffirm or refute whether we have been sensitized to fatal violence against sex workers. The issue should, as Cohen (1972) states it, "submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible" (9). As for the cases in Kelowna, among other cities in BC that are reported in The Province, it seems the issue of violence against sex workers has remained absent from our collective conscious. Instead what has emerged seems to be more of a location and case-specific concern.

It is arguable that had this issue been taken up within a larger social context of street level workers particular vulnerability to violence, it may have become an 'actual' moral panic. This understanding is however based on an assumption that the media is reflective of public perceptions. Considering that The Province very rarely gave credence to the voice of sex workers, it is possible that workers have long understood this as a broader issue, and this case may have instilled or increased their fear throughout the course of their work. Should this be the case, perhaps this is a moral panic, but with the omission of the larger population to whom the reports were directed.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

It is precisely because certain groups have
no representation in a number of recognized political structures
that their position tends to be so stable, their oppression so continuous.
-Kate Millett, Sexual Politics (1969)

The Missing Women have garnered a great deal of media attention, yet they are in fact far from unique. In addition to many individual homicide cases that remain unsolved in cities across Canada, are the suspected serial killings of numerous women from the Edmonton area, and in BC, five women found murdered and vanished along Highway 16, and three near a highway in the Fraser Valley. There have been the recent serial murder convictions of John Crawford in Saskatchewan, as well as Robert Yates and Gary Ridgway in nearby Washington State, all of whom targeted street sex workers. Upon his conviction for 48 counts of first-degree murder, Gary Ridgway poignantly stated at his trial, "I picked prostitutes because I thought I could kill as many of them as I wanted without getting caught" (Gardner, 2003:B7).

These recent and extreme examples have the potential to offer a lens through which 'The Prostitute' might be reconsidered as an unnecessarily easy target for violence. The possibility here is to disrupt notions of prostitution and instead turn our attention to the issue of violence. The possibility is for the general public to sympathize with victims in ways they might not have previously, in ways that might redefine sex workers, and in ways that might instigate a level of concern for further inquiry, prompting realistic and necessary violence-reducing strategies. As this research has demonstrated however, this lens has failed to move us beyond the traditional moral judgments of 'The Prostitute' to reframe the issue as one of violence.

Between 1993 and 2003, The Province maintained their initial discursive stance on prostitution. In light of multiple murders and many more disappearances, they reaffirmed the notion of sex work as high-risk, and the women were used to demonstrate the seemingly inherent dangers of the trade. Although the discourse pertaining to the Missing Women specifically was slightly altered to incorporate them into a relatively sympathetic characterization as victims, the editorial stance on prostitution never changed. While these women were eventually defined as 'women', 'daughters', and 'sisters', this was continuously underscored by their on-going identification and apparently dominant status as 'skid-row prostitutes'. The move from 'hooker murders' to 'Missing Women' was not a profound shift, but one that would set apart a particular group of sex workers from a specific area, recognized as people to be pitied for their involvement in prostitution. Comparatively, those unassociated with this particular local were not understood in this way, and continue to be presented as 'hookers'.

What emerged were two possible representations of murdered sex workers, both within the discourse of 'The Prostitute'. Presented as either responsibilized, although illegitimate choice makers, and thus culpable for their deaths, or victims of social circumstances that led to their involvement in the sex trade, and thus unfortunate casualties that could not be saved. From an abolitionist position, this newspaper reaffirmed the high-risk discourse of prostitution and continually represented sex work as either a poor and illegitimate choice, or operating outside of questions of choice altogether. I found, as has previous research in the area, an overriding attitude of disregard and judgment against those who work in the sex industry. Regularly dismissed by police, scrutinized by legitimized community members, and impeded by society's

moral boundaries, the sex industry is constructed as an arena in which violence occurs, and those within this ideological, and often physical space, are seen to knowingly participate.

The moral judgment on prostitution (and prostitutes) are so powerful, that they were maintained in light of extreme cases of fatal violence that clearly demonstrate sex workers' vulnerability to not only violent predators that went virtually undetected for decades, but also to the disregard and inaction of both police and the public. It was only in a very specific case did women *finally* materialize as victims, and even then, much of their victim status was conceptualized in relation to prostitution. The discourse of 'The Prostitute' is so deep-seated that it was maintained more intently than the position of a serial killer as folk devil.

Ultimately the Missing Women case did not constitute a moral panic; mainly due to the rigidity of this discourse, the concern did not shift from *these* women to a larger population of women, or even sex-working women. Moral panics maintain society's moral boundaries in offering lessons whereby the characters of the story are portrayed as 'good' and 'bad', and the reader is able to apply these narratives to their own lives and act accordingly. In this case, these messages were directed toward those working, or considering work, in prostitution. These narratives served as a warning to others of what happens to 'The Prostitute'. As such, it might be understood as a moral narrative, in which the fixed discourse is directed inward to the victims. The Missing Women were the main characters in this narrative, the general public was never positioned in alliance with them to feel equally threatened, and there was little indication that the folk devil was the real culprit. Instead, the Missing Women were respectfully referred to according to

their familial ties, but distanced in so far as the audience could clearly separate their lifestyles from those of the victims, reestablishing the status of the readers who are safe because they are good upholders of the moral code and manage their risks appropriately.

Laws that essentially outlaw prostitution are compounded by the stigmatization of the trade based on social perceptions of women and sexuality. This marginalizes workers, distancing 'good women' from 'bad women', and results in little change aside from attempts to make 'them' more like 'us'. It perpetuates the idea that some women are more deserving of abuse, or have knowingly and voluntarily entered into arenas in which violence is deemed to be inevitable. It is likely true that in no other field would so many people regularly vanish with such little notice, but moreover, in no other field would leaving your trade be suggested as the only remedy to violence.

In considering alternatives that might reduce regular violence, it would be necessary to reflect on our own positioning within an inequitable social system that tolerates the mistreatment of certain sectors of society. It would be necessary for the common citizen to rethink the 'nuisance' they are willing to endure or to creatively conceptualize and actively promote a space in which these concerns can be rightfully addressed. It would be necessary to assess legislative and other options that would realistically reduce the 'high-risks' of the trade. To perpetuate the current discourse of 'The Prostitute' is to perpetuate an environment conducive to violence against them.

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Appendix A

Keyword Search

1. 'missing women'
2. ('Pickton farm') and not 'missing women'
3. ('sex workers' and 'violence') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'
4. ('prostitutes' and 'violence') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'
5. ('hookers' and 'violence') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'
6. ('sex workers' and 'murder') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'
7. ('prostitutes' and 'murder') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'
8. ('hookers' and 'murder') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'
9. ('sex workers' and 'killing') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'
10. ('prostitutes' and 'killing') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'
11. ('hookers' and 'killing') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'

Appendix B

The following tables reflect the articles obtained in the data collection. The first shows the total number of articles retrieved in The Province given the keyword search indicated in the far left columns.

Table 1

('missing women')	314
('Pickton farm') and not 'missing women'	11
('sex workers' and 'violence') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'	1
('prostitutes' and 'violence') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'	26
('hookers' and 'violence') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'	10
('sex workers' and 'murder') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'	0
('prostitutes' and 'murder') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'	151
('hookers' and 'murder') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'	41
('sex workers' and 'killing') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'	0
('prostitutes' and 'killing') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'	61
('hookers' and 'killing') and not 'missing women' and not 'Pickton farm'	14
Total	629

The next table demonstrates the number of articles retrieved according to date and newspaper, after omitting all those that were duplicated and irrelevant.

Table 2

1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
16	6	12	6	9	12	29	11	21	121	28	271

Appendix C

Chart for Data Collection

The following ten categories that emerged from the literature were used to collect, organize, and latter analyze the newspaper data. This table was filled out for each article and later grouped by year.

Tone of Article	The tone of the article offered space to write a brief description of the reported event and the seeming angle taken by the journalist(s). These were classified as factual, descriptive, emotive, derogatory.
Language used	In this category all the terms used to describe the victims were charted. This equated to such labels as 'skid-row prostitutes', 'hooker killings', 'daughters', 'sisters', etc.
Description of victims	In the section, the factual (as opposed to referential) characteristics of the victims were imputed. These included such things as their name, age, ethnicity, or as was the case in many of the articles, the number of those missing and/or found murdered.
References to sex work	References included how the sex trade was described and some of the inferences made regarding those involved in the sex industry, namely the street trade. This included such things as noting the victims were welfare recipients, drug addicts, or under the influence of pimps. This also pertained to, and demonstrated, some of the shifts in discourse, as references were made to familial attachments, non-transience, and the victims as 'human beings'.
Causes of violence	The causes of violence were rarely stated explicitly, but mostly understood according the emphasis of the article. That is with a suspected serial killer as the sole focus, this would be the assumed source of violence indicated in that particular article, while in others statements were made to the extent of the number of violent and predatory men.
Description of suspects	Similarly to that of the victims, this chart was filled out according to the how the suspects were described, mostly referring to their names and ages.
Claimsmakers	This category was noted those who were voiced in the articles. This included both those quoted and referred to; notes were also made to indicate the prevalence of voice, that is, whether there was a short or lengthy quote, and sometimes if it was put at the end of the article with little implication to the report.
Complaints about police	This indicated all of the complaints made against police (which was to include control agents such as lawyers, the solicitor general, etc.). Mostly referring to police (mis)handling of the missing women case, this also included other complaints against the state with regards to reward money, a racist criminal justice system, inadequate victim services offered by police agencies, etc.

Police discourse/response	This section allowed for police response to both complaints and the cases in general. Information was filled out as police expressed their investigative frustrations with sex workers, how they described and/or justified their course of actions, their problem definitions and response to issues that were raised.
Solutions offered	The solutions offered were both implicit and explicit with some stating specifically that the laws were conducive to violence, while others were inferred in terms of needing to raise money get women off drugs and out of prostitution.

Appendix D

Chart for Data Collection and Analysis

The above charts were filled out for each article and then summarized by year and imputed into the table below. This table then allowed for the data to be analyzed both vertically and horizontally.

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Tone of article											
Language used											
Description of victims											
References to sex work											
Causes of violence											
Description of suspects											
Claimsmakers											
Complaints about police											
Police discourse/response											
Solutions offered											