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Major Research Paper

**The Female Chastity and Virginity
Movement in North America**

**Megan Ladelpha
3825472
SOC7938 S
Professor P. Couton
Professor W. Scobie
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Abstract

Through qualitative research and analysis, this paper sought to uncover how women's sexuality is conformed through patriarchal institutions (home, school, Church and Government), which evidently created a social movement, the Chastity and Virginitude Movement. North American society promotes women's worth based on their sexuality. With this understanding, this paper will examine how virginal conduct, one aspect of female sexuality, is socially constructed by these largely patriarchal institutions whose intent is to frame and control the sexual identities of women in North America. Marriage, media, and the Chastity and Virginitude Movement serve as tools to ensure male gratification and establish control over women's (sexual) identities. Tools such as these are used to tailor and maintain an "ideal" construct of how a woman should behave. To conform to these behaviours, women must learn to control their sexuality in order to successfully acquire male recognition, acceptance, and approval. To that end, I have coined the term *cherry bride* to describe a sexually "pure," romanticized, woman that is ideally shaped (and plucked) for male (sexual) companionship. My research discusses the implications of such strategies, in order to recognize how they promote or privilege a particular type of sexuality (virginal conduct) to women. Thus, this research addresses the following research questions: Does a Chastity and Virginitude Movement truly exist? Is there a female Chastity and Virginitude movement? If so, is it socially constructed for male pleasure?

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Megan Ladelpha
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The Female Chastity and Virginit Movement in North America

Introduction:

Sexual identity and politics are a topic of concern for women as it relates to morals and values. Myriad institutions provide them with multiple, ideal images and definitions of what is a “good girl” and what is a “bad girl.” The overt message is that the only way for women to be “good” is to stay clean, pure, and virginal until marriage. These keywords are used in numerous abstinence books, pamphlets and chastity events across North America in order to encourage individuals to attain a pure/virginal lifestyle. North American society promotes women’s worth based on their sexuality. Ironically, North America nurtures a hyper sexualized culture wherein famous pop stars such as Miley Cyrus, Jessica Simpson, Britney Spears, Ariana Grande, Kim Kardashian and Paris Hilton are all female sex symbols. These “role models” are seen daily in the mass media with their sexualized bodies on the front pages of magazines for women and girls of all ages to view. Abramson and Pinkerton note, “Sexuality plays an important role in shaping self-image and enhancing self-esteem, and provides a mechanism to express feelings of intimacy for another person” (Abramson, Pinkerton, 2002:152-153). Abramson and Pinkerton point out that sexuality is linked to self-worth. We can take this even farther and see how women shape their self-worth with their sexuality. With this being said, why do we continue to promote the

importance of virginity through home life, education, church, and governance? Why do women remain virgins? Why do we continue to wait to have sex until we are married? Media outlets continuously bombard women with contradictory messages of whom/what women are supposed to be. As hip-hop artist Ludacris' lyrics suggest, "We want a lady in the streets but a freak in the bed" (Azlyrics.com: 2011). This demand demonstrates a socially complex and contradictory state of being with a poorly defined, yet highly complicated, set of boundaries for women to navigate in order to satisfy their (potential) partner and conform to societal norms. Virginity is an ideal state of being that numerous abstinence political, educational, and religious leaders promote to young adults in hopes of getting them to participate in this purity movement. At the centre of promotion of sexual abstinence in both the United States and Canada are evangelical Christians. U.S. Evangelicals have created an abstinence movement outside the public school structure that persuades young people to pledge their commitment to wait to have sex until marriage. These abstinence leaders put boundaries on the term virginity and enforce a standard for sexual behaviour creating acceptable societal norms.

Institutions such as the home, educational organizations, the Church, and Government seek to promote and define moral boundaries and practices as to what is sexually and socially acceptable and what women can/cannot participate in sexually. People who run these institutions, (who are often men), instruct women to not express or discuss sexual gratification as it goes against their respective institutions codes of behaviour. If these abstinence until marriage leaders do discuss sexual gratification, it is only in context to marital sexual relations. This paper will examine how virginal conduct, one aspect of female sexuality, is socially constructed by these largely patriarchal institutions whose intent is to frame and control the sexual identities of women in North America. Marriage, media, and the Chastity and Virginity Movement serve as

tools to ensure male gratification and establish control over women's (sexual) identities. Tools such as these are used to tailor and maintain an "ideal" construct of how a woman should behave. To conform to these behaviours, women must learn to control their sexuality in order to successfully acquire male recognition, acceptance, and approval. To that end, I have coined the term *cherry bride* to describe a sexually "pure," romanticized, woman that is ideally shaped (and plucked) for male (sexual) companionship. This idealized image is reflected on and imposed throughout North America through media imagery. I will use the term *Cherry Bride* to demonstrate how females across North America suppress their sexual activity in hopes of attaining acceptance, marriage and happiness through life-long male companionship. The word *Cherry* is a sexually derogative term used to describe a female who maintains her virginal status, whereas *Bride* carries a largely positive social connotation that has been cultivated by numerous social institutions. At the same time, *Cherry* can also be used to describe a pure, modest, virginal woman as her hymen has yet to be broken, and the word *Bride* has historically situated women in positions of subservience, under the surveillance and power of her husband; a commodity. This term encapsulates the conflict of emotions and perceptions experienced by women who attempt to navigate the complexities and contradictions inherent to the patriarchal construct of idealized female (sexual) conduct. And to ensure the actualization of this conduct, the Chastity and Virginitude Movement has come into play with tools and symbols for women to use and promote a "desirable" virginal status. This research paper will examine both sides of this social movement. Some women are persuaded to join the Chastity and Virginitude Movement without a clear understanding of the movement's motive/pledge, while other women are choosing celibacy vows and membership in the Chastity and Virginitude Movement as a means of taking control over their

own sexuality. At the same time, other women choose sexual liberation to exclude themselves from patriarchal domination over their own sexuality

My research on women's sexuality sought to investigate how institutions (home, school, Church, and Government) influence women's sexual identities and actions through organizational tools. My research discusses the implications of such strategies, in order to recognize how they promote or privilege a particular type of sexuality (virginal conduct) to women. Thus, this research addresses the following research questions: Does a Chastity and Virginitude Movement truly exist? Is there a female Chastity and Virginitude Movement? If so, is it socially constructed for male pleasure?

Literature Review:

Sexuality in the social sciences has been theorized from two different perceptions: essentialism and social constructionism. Even though essentialist perspectives have previously dominated, there has been a movement towards social constructionist perspectives to theorize and comprehend sexuality. My research is positioned within the social constructionist perspective because it looks at social processes and practices that influence women's sexual identities.

I must point out right away how males are often the dominant figures in policy and decision-making processes around the world, including in North America. In the United States, there are only 20 women US Senate members of the total 100 members (Thomas: 2013). While in the Canadian Government, (until just recently in November 2015 when Justin Trudeau's new Canadian Liberal led Government has called for 50 per cent of the Canadian Senators members will be women), women mad up only 27.6 per cent of the House and Senate (Keung: 2015). This high number of male policy makers is problematic as they are responsible for making critical decisions concerning women's sexual health and sexual identity/politics. Numerous male policy makers are then responsible for creating sexual health policies and educational curriculum that discuss women's sexuality. Men are speaking on behalf of women's sexual health, which not only is problematic, but it also illustrates patriarchal connotations within the Chastity and Virginty Movement as men are seen shaping value to women's sexuality and that women's worth is connected to their sexuality.

Human sexuality has been portrayed by using metaphors. Farrel and Bartkowski both have used metaphors to describe men and women's sexuality; "Men are like waffles, women are like spaghetti. Men are microwaves; women are crockpots. Men are wired visually, women are

wired by touch” (in Jones, 2013: 1). The metaphors that describe both men and women illustrate the importance of sexuality, desire, and subculture. Katherine Jones explains further, how

“Men’s brains function like waffles, compartmentalizing different aspects of their lives, while women’s brains connect everything, like a plate of spaghetti. Men’s desire is like a microwave, they can become aroused quickly, while women become aroused more gradually, like a crockpot. And while men are aroused through sight, women are aroused by touch. These differences in men’s and women’s brains, and their experiences of sexuality and desire, help bolster claims about the necessity for separate gender roles in marriage and family life” (Jones, 2013: 1).

With this ideology, Evangelical abstinence promotion leaders as well as other governance policy leaders, use distinct gender role characteristics when discussing the motives and positive aspects for being a member of the Chastity and Virginitly Movement. Here we can also see how men govern the *Cherry Bride’s* sexuality. Men are the ones who structure virginitly into political, social, and religious organizations. Literature on social movement theories will not only help illustrate how men oversee women’s sexuality but it will also help shape and bring value upon the Chastity and Virginitly Movement for women.

Social Movement Theories:

In 1977, John McCarthy and Mayer Zalad define a social movement as “a set of opinions and beliefs in a population, which represents preferences for changing some elements of social structure and/or reward distribution of a society (in Staggenborg, 2011: 6). Let’s examine this a bit further through a religious lens, and how religion constructs ideologies regarding women’s sexuality. Religious institutions, including the Catholic Church, impose a modest being as a true moral human. I have decided to focus solely on Catholicism and not other religions in this research paper as this is the most prevalent religion in North America. In 2014, Pew Research disclosed in one of their case studies that 70.6% of the US population are Christian, while 5.9% of the population practices Non-Christian faiths, including Judaism, Muslim, Buddhism faiths

(PewResearchCentre: 2015). Christianity in North America is very prevalent, as major public holidays are observed through a Catholic, religious lens. In Ontario, Canada, the two major school boards, both in French and English districts, are Public and Catholic School boards. The teachings within Catholic Churches and educational systems follow the Ten Commandments, where the seventh commandment states, *Thou shall not commit adultery*. Abstaining sexual intercourse until marriage is something Christian churches follow and promote throughout their readings, church programs and services. The Catholic Church communicates messages to its membership about sexuality, even during marriage prep-courses. Dr. Janet Smith, a professor of moral theology, is a moral, value, guru regarding contraception and other Catholic sexual ethics issues. Online marriage prep-courses, such as *Catholic Marriage Prep*, use Dr. Janet Smith's teachings to communicate messages about what is and isn't morally acceptable sexual behaviour before a sacramental marriage that takes place in the house of God, the Catholic Church (Smith: 2014). Waiting until marriage to have sexual relations is a key item used within a Christian framework to discuss morals, values, sexuality and purity.

The Catholic faith promotes the belief for women to attain a chaste and virginal lifestyle as a way of attaining a husband. By doing so, priests, daughter's fathers, and male religious leadership figures enables female purity to be seen as a fundamental characteristic to ones well being and the essence to being a worthy individual, bride, and mother. McCarty and Zalad previously stated that social movements have particular political positions that they view, uphold and live by (in Staggenborg, 2011: 6). If one remains pure until marriage, the Chastity and Virginitly movement idolizes and respects that particular member, and in turn, that member has gained not only acceptance into the group but also respect. This takes place in the Chastity and Virginitly Movement.

Religious faiths place women's worth and value on their sexuality rather than their morals and values. Numerous Catholic high schools and abstinence pledge groups (such as Purity Ring Posse, Silver Ring Thing, and Pure Freedom) use abstinence-only sexual health education as the principle tool for shaping females and males' beliefs on sexuality, virginity, and morality. These patriarchal, religious connotations shape and bring value upon the Chastity and Virginity movement for females.

Suzanne Staggenborg's examines different social movement theories. I will use the New Social Movement theory to explain how the Chastity and Virginity Movement can be considered a social movement based on structural foundation. She describes, "In the new social movement approach, theorists emphasize both how large-scale changes affect the organization and goals of movements and how movements create new cultural forms and identities and develop ideas and strategies within the structures of contemporary society" (Staggenborg, 2007: 24). In a religious context, values on female virginity are organized and promoted within Evangelists communities and are promoted in Catholic high school curriculums. Female sexual identity is structured to promote male ideologies on what is seen as acceptable female sexuality. Females are trained (and seen by others), to identify and define themselves with their body and sexuality rather than beliefs, morals and values. We can begin to understand how the Chastity and Virginity Movement is a social movement through structural religious and educational endorsement.

In Aldon Morris' and Suzanne Staggenborg article *Leadership in Social Movements*, "leaders are critical to social movements: they inspire commitment, mobilize resources, create and recognize opportunities, devise strategies, frame demands, and influence outcomes" (Morris, Staggenborg: 2002). Governments, schools and social institutions are taking presence in regards to the virginity affirmation. Social movements are broad social alliances where people

are connected through their shared interests, whether it is blocking or affecting social change. The New Social Movement theory can be used to illustrate how individuals who pledge their virginity until marriage develop chaste thoughts and promote these ideas with tools, symbols and keywords. Resource mobilization theory can now be used to help explain why people mobilize for change, therefore creating a social movement.

Resource Mobilization:

In the 1970s, resource mobilization became a major sociological structure in the study of social movements. It stresses the ability of a movement's members to accomplish two objectives. The first is to acquire resources and the second is to mobilize people towards accomplishing the movement's goals (Kendall, 2005: 531). Social movements need resources to be effective. For the Chastity and Virginity Movement, resources are political leaders, religious leaders, celebrity leaders, the Holy Bible, religious and academic organizations, as well as social networks between the organizations such as Evangelical groups like The Silver Ring Thing, Pure Freedom and Purity Posse. These resources allow for the Chastity and Virginity Movement to excel as a social movement.

The Chastity and Virginity Movement's organizational institutions (home, school, Church, and Government) effectively use tools that promote following a chaste and/or virginal lifestyle. Here these institutions mobilize their resources to further indoctrinate/remind individuals to remain steadfast in their (sexual) behaviours/modesty. Pope Francis is a charismatic leader that promotes norms and behaviours that follows a modest and chaste lifestyle. The Chastity and Virginity Movement draws upon the teachings of the Catholic Church and promotes the validity and value of its resources. Purity Balls, modest attire, purity marches, purity conferences, and chastity rallies, are all religious resources and that attempt to recruit

members, which are mostly geared towards females. Often these resource mobilization acts involve religious representation towards female sexuality and virginity enticing women to become members in this social movement in order to be seen as a valuable individual.

Pro-Active Institutions in the Chastity and Virginity Movement:

In this research paper, the home, school, Church and Government institutions focus proactively on women's sexuality, that promote women's pro-virginity as a means of attaining a pure and desired lifestyle. Speakers, group leaders, and practicing members of Abstinence-pledge based social groups create social institutions that demonstrate how individuals (mainly addressing women) are perceived as good, moral, human beings based on their sexuality, rather than their ethics and values of what is good and what is bad behaviour. However, we must also fairly note that some females are turning voluntarily to the Chastity and Virginity Movement in order to remove themselves from North America's hyper-sexualized culture. Some North Americans have categorized the following individuals as social movement leaders within either the political or pop cultural spheres: Pope Francis, Catholic Nuns & Priests, Jewish Rabis, Muslim Mullahs, The Duggar Family, Sadie Robertson and the Robertson Duck Dynasty Family, Randy Wilson and the Wilson Family, virgin teen celebrities, as well as social leaders in purity groups (whether they are online or church group members). These individuals are pro-active in promoting the message of abstinence before marriage.

Individuals Opposing the Logic and Benefits of the Chastity and Virginity Movement:

Some individuals, involving numerous feminists, are opposed to the ideologies surrounding the Chastity and Virginity Movement. Some individuals, (including Valenti and Shechter) do not agree with one/women preserving sexual intercourse until marriage. Lack of personal freedom and rights as well as forced membership, have been viewed as negative

characteristics toward the Chastity and Virginity Movement. Birth control options (ex. condoms and the pill) and the sexual revolution has permitted women the opportunity to choose one's sexual lifestyle more freely without the worry of getting pregnant or getting an STD. Jessica Valenti, Therese Shechter, Lena Chen, and Hanne Blank, are just a few women that are cited throughout this paper that are against the Chastity and Virginity Movement. One must also acknowledge the fact that the Chastity and Virginity Movement have two opposing leadership forces, which are both in support of, and opposed to, female virginity as a social and cultural value. However, statistical research shows that 51% of females and 33% of United States of America Grade 12 students (individuals who are 17-18 years old) believe that sex was not right for a person their age (Tamkins, 2008: 211). Abstinence pledged celebrities (pop culture based) and political leaders promote a pure lifestyle to young adults in hopes that it will help eliminate teenage pregnancy, STDs, abortions, and sexual relations outside of marriage.

Social Constructionist Approaches to Women's Sexuality:

Social constructionism is a theory of knowledge in sociology involving communication. This theory examines the progress of jointly assembled understandings of the world. It assumes that understanding, significance, and meaning are developed not separately within the individual, but in coordination with other human beings. The prerequisites most important to the theory are: (a) the assumption that human beings rationalize their experience by creating a model of the social world and how it functions and (b) that language is the most essential system through which humans construct reality (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009: 893). Examining sexual terminology will allow for a better understanding on what literature has to say about the Chastity and Virginity Movement.

Sexual Terminology:

Valenti notes, the term “virgin” is difficult to define both socially and scientifically. However, the term “virgin” is most often associated with women (Valenti, 2009: 21). Consideration of this uniquely gender biased term, in both print and online formats, will allow me to juxtapose it with the neutral term “chaste” and establish them as separate identities that ultimately manifest in the *Cherry Bride*, even though both belong to the Chastity and Virginité Movement. To do this, I will examine both child and adult dictionaries that are available at the Ottawa Public Library, as both children and adults are patrons who use these collections to acquire information on human sexuality.

In the print format of the Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary for Children, they define chaste as “pure in thought and act: modest. Simple or plain in design” (Merriam-Webster Incorporated, 2010: 92) and virgin as “a person who has not had sexual intercourse. Not yet disturbed or changed by human activity” (Merriam-Webster Incorporated, 2010: 605). Here we can see that both chaste and virgin describe an individual who is “untouched”; that is, they have not engaged in any manner of sexual contact as they are “pure” in the objective sense. However, Wordsmyth defines chaste as “not having committed fornication or adultery; morally pure; without obscenity” and virgin as “one who has never had sexual intercourse, an unmarried woman, esp. one who has taken a vow of chastity for religious reasons, simple or refined in style; not ornate; Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ ” (Wordsmyth.com: 2015). It is important to note that, while Merriam-Webster and Wordsmyth agree that purity is essential to chastity, only Wordsmyth explicitly links gender and religion to the term virgin. Such an interpretation can complicate the reader’s understanding of these terms and create confusion around the definition of what constitutes sexual intercourse. Individuals define sexual intercourse in numerous ways.

In the documentary *How to Lose Your Virginity*, Therese Shechter explored how teens and young adults defined the word virgin. There was a lot of confusion as to what makes a person a virgin. Some believed that oral sex was considered sexual intercourse; therefore one is no longer a virgin if (s) he engaged in the act. Others believed that masturbation or using a tampon no longer makes an individual a virgin (Shechter: 2013). The term technical virgin comes into play here.

Technical Virgin is a term used to describe a contemporary interpretation of what it means to be a virgin. Shechter defines it as an individual who has engaged in sexual activity such as oral or anal sex, but not vaginal intercourse (Shechter: 2013). Here individuals still consider themselves virginal within these parameters which, in turn causes confusion regarding what it means to be chaste. In Canada and the United States, social and cultural beliefs are expressed over and over again on television, the internet, social media, and magazines that females are the ones who should maintain a virginal status until marriage. It is okay for men to have sexual intercourse prior to marriage but women are to remain pure until the wedding night. North American social and cultural values express that remaining a virgin has contraceptive and social benefits for females, as it will help reduce the spread of STDs and lower out of marriage pregnancy rates (Shechter: 2013). Females, unlike males, are defined based on their sexuality as they are to remain virginal in order to satisfy the social status quo. This notion is stressed even further due to the fact that the definition of virgin is linked exclusively to female sexuality. As we can now see, there is a double standard when it comes to the interpretation of virginity as it specifically targets women and not men. And to that end, if a woman engages in vaginal intercourse prior to marriage, she breaches the boundaries of this gendered term and potentially diminishes her worth as a companion/wife. This will be discussed further detail in the next subsection of this paper.

The vocabulary virgin, virginity, pure, purity, choice, choose, decision, decide, chaste, chastity, modest, and modesty are all terms to describe the female Chastity and Virginity Movement in North America. It is troubling that educational materials such as dictionaries, both print and online format, portray a virgin as a moral, valued, female standard of living. The term virgin is a female trend, which allows us to get a better understanding on how virgin and virginity enforces patriarchal implications towards females. The North American cultural norm is that females are supposed to uphold their virginity, as the term virgin is solely a female way of living. Yet we need to also acknowledge the fact that North American females may also have redemption over oneself and their body if they choose freely to partake in this social abstinence movement. The key concepts used in this paper are: sex, sexual intercourse, moral, pure, purity, chaste, chastity, virgin, virginity.

The relationship between the term “sex” and the concept of “virginity” enforces the perspective of patriarchy as it ensures children have been fathered by a specific man (ie. The women’s husband, as she was virginal prior to her wedding night, therefore her child is legitimately her husband’s child). The term “sex” relates to the concept of virginity as some “sex” activities will not result in a pregnancy (for example oral sex) causing for less of a concern. Technical Virgin is a key concept used throughout this paper to represent meaning to the Chastity and Virginity Movement as a social movement.

Technical Virgin:

Recently, many media outlets have focused their attention on female sexuality and virginity. Government policies, abstinence-only sex educational programs, religious leaders, political representatives, and chaste/virgin teen celebrity icons have promoted an interest in female sexuality. Television shows, magazines, documentaries, movies, and song lyrics identify

(non) acceptable (sexual) behaviours for women. These behavioural messages have spread across North America, attracting and forcing females to pledge their virginity until marriage in accordance with a considerably contradictory patriarchal agenda. To this end, Valenti's book *The Purity Myth: How America's Obsession with Virginity is Hurting Young Women*, notes that it was difficult to find a medical definition of virginity even when looking in the Harvard University Medical Library; ergo, the elusive nature of this definition obfuscates and thereby complicates interpretations and manifestations of virginal conduct. In 2008, Bersamin, Fisher, Walker, Hill, and Grube performed a case study to examine and understand how adolescents define a range of sexual behaviours in terms of virginity and abstinence. In their findings, the researchers note that almost all adolescents studied (99.5%) considered vaginal intercourse as having sex (Bersamin, Fisher, Walker, Hill and Grube, 2007: 182). Researchers also noticed that 83.5% of teenagers studied believed that a teenager was still a virgin if he or she participated in genital touching, and 70.6% of teenagers believed that girls and boys retained their virginity if they participated in oral sex. 16.1% consider that a teenager was still a virgin if he or she engaged in anal sex (Bersamin, Fisher, Walker, Hill and Grube, 2007: 184). Essentially the majority of subjects indicate that if they participated in either vaginal or anal sex they inherently compromise their purity as virgins and therefore lose their virginal status. However, they can engage in other forms of sexual contact including kissing, petting, and oral sex, as these behaviours do not constitute a violation of their virginal status. What is important to note is that vaginal sex is almost unanimously agreed upon as being critical in the determining one's virginal status, whereas the "purity" of other forms of sexual practice appear to be decided – to some degree – at the personal level. This fluctuating interpretation of what it means to be virginal is precisely what complicates women's ability to navigate their social/sexual identities in terms of

collectively consented (or inferred upon) sexual practices; in doing so, that is, by (un)successfully navigating this tenuous dynamic, they become the Technical Virgin or *Cherry Bride*.

USA Today and New York Times explain technical virginity is simply “part of teens’ equation, and “many girls see [oral sex] as a means of avoiding pregnancy, STIs, and of preserving their virginity” (in Uecker, Angotti, Regnerus, 2008: 1200). This allows me to illustrate the difference between the Chastity and Virginity Movement. When I speak of the Chastity and Virginity Movement, I speak of individuals who have not engaged in vaginal intercourse. These individuals may have engaged in genital touching, masturbation or oral sex or may be chaste in the purest sense. The Chastity and Virginity Movement can be observed as a lifestyle that influences a woman’s sexual choices. To this end, Carroll and Ratner studied social movements in British Columbia. Both authors recognize that the task of a social movement is to “disorganize consent and organize dissent” (Carroll, Ratner, 1996: 601). When examining the Chastity and Virginity Movement and its influences on female sexuality, we can see how sexual liberation as well as individual choice of participation in this movement can disorganize consent and organize dissent. By disorganizing consent and organizing dissent, women who freely choose to participate in the Chastity and Virginity Movement empower themselves as they actively making their own decisions about their behaviours and sexual identity. North American females are choosing to engage in this Movement for numerous reasons: to refrain from pregnancy, to gain acceptance, to be seen as pure, and to be considered marriage material. Berneau’s book *Virgins* examines underlying considerations connected to the concept of what it means to be virginal. She links virginity with the notion of truth, explaining that “virginity is aligned with wholeness and innocence; it comes to stand for truth. Unlike other women she

(*virgin*) can be trusted, for her heart and motives are as yet untouched by sinfulness and duplicity” (Bernau, 2007: 86). Here we can see women’s worth as a human being based on the notion of truth that reflects on her virginal status. According to Berneau, if a woman has engaged in vaginal sex, she cannot truly be trusted, as she has become impure and dishonest and as a result devalued as a marital commodity. In short, she advocates that a woman’s retaining her virginity is paramount in order to be seen as honest, virtuous, and valuable.

Feminist Perspectives on Female Virginity and Sexuality:

Throughout numerous generations, society has continuously discussed the topic of sex. What is acceptable sexually? What isn’t acceptable sexually? People, including feminists, react to ideas of sexual freedom and of equality of the sexes; evolving the women’s movement. The Chastity and Virginity Movement can be described as a subsection of the women’s movement. Despite not being sexually active women, members’ part of the Chastity and Virginity Movement are ironically not threatened by the sexual realm, as they express diverse forms of sexual expression by remaining a virgin. Instead of assuming that sex is guilty until proven innocent, these virgin women assume that sex is fundamentally okay until proven bad. Their standards absorb the notion that sex is okay, that is if you are experiencing sexual intercourse in a committed, married, and heterosexual relationship. Unfortunately, this also creates the Chastity and Virginity Movement to take on a social, patriarchal, and heterosexual structure. In Deidre English, Amber Hollibaugh and Gayle Rubin article *Talking Sex: A Conversation on Sexuality and Feminism*, these three women discuss and illustrate how sexuality is based on male sexual pleasure and women repressing sexual pleasure; which inevitably involves patriarchal ideologies.

Historically during the Victorian era (beginning in 1837 and ending approximately in 1901), perceptions of sex involved the notion that sex itself is seen as dangerous and violent,

which therefore restricts female zones of sexual freedom. Deidre English brings forth that during the Victorian time, if a female participated in any form of sexuality, they would attract the unwanted male gaze and attract male predators. Leaders of sexual agency, often men/fathers/priests used intimidating messages that by having sex you may experience violence (English, Hollibaugh, Rubin, 1982: 45). This scare tactic places a patriarchal connotation that women are sexual objects for males' desires. English states:

One of the things women have been taught to help repress us sexually is that if you begin to deal with sexuality at all, if you begin to become explicit, then you will pay the price of unleashing and stimulating male violence. Once you permit yourself to be perceived as a sexual creature, then you become open territory, open prey. Actual sexual violence oppresses us. But the climate fear we live in also oppresses us horribly and makes us feel that we cannot afford to take any risks to discover our own sexuality and be experimental in any way (English, Hollibaugh, Rubin, 1982: 45).

In regards to distributing sexual expression, the Victorian Era model involves the good woman who is not sexual, and then there is the man who is sexual. For women sexual intercourse and sexual libido is something she doesn't want or has. "The good girl you know doesn't move. Her husband of course, is more of an animal, so he gets off" (English, Hollibaugh, Rubin, 1982: 46). This model imposes a moral discourse. During the Victorian Era, women who had sex out of wedlock became labeled as bad women. These females fell to the thought of now being undesirable, often forcing them into prostitution. This left these women to be excluded from the comforts of the home life and prospects, as well as the possibility of attaining a family. The women who were able to maintain their purity during the Victorian Era were part of the middle/upper classes (English, Hollibaugh, Rubin, 1982: 46). This moral discourse model scares women into being sexually repressed, and gives women the idea that sex itself is violent. Matrimonial romantic exchanges were the only ones deemed acceptable. Gayle Rubin (1982) states "But when we think about sex, we think that any social exchange of sex is bad other than a

romantic one. I don't think this is either a socialist or feminist idea. I think it's either a Christian or a Victorian one" (English, Hollibaugh, Rubin, 1982: 46). The notion of sex has no right to exist for itself; sex is good or bad only in terms of social relations. Both the Victorian Era citizens and today's chaste/pure evangelical followers express this knowledge and follows this code/pure lifestyle. Females who participate in the Chastity and Virginity Movement ideally go by the generic rule that sexual intercourse before marriage equals bad. If you are a visual individual, you may see and understand the following Female Sexual Ideology more clearly in the terms of mathematical equations:

Sex>Marriage=Bad

Marriage>Sex=Good

The sexual revolution that took place in the 1960's attempted to bring forth some more liberal expressions in regards to female sexuality. During this time women began having new sexual experiences prior to wedlock, while enjoying their new sexual freedoms. Women were having more sex for pleasure and that was not for the purpose of procreation. However today, North American society's Chastity and Virginity Movement is again taking on a moral discourse and following similar Victorian Era ideologies. That is repressing sexual gratification and needing to be pure for males' pleasure and in hopes of accessing stability through male companionship. The necessity to remain a virgin until marriage is promoted throughout different institutions such as the State, Church, schools, and home life which structures women's participation in sexual freedoms and creates sexually gendered spheres. Love has been the primary tool for women's sexual sphere and men's have evolved around the actual act of sexual intercourse. This of course segregates women's sexual fantasies to revolve around the notion of romance while men's sexual fantasies include access to sexually explicit material and the act of

sex itself, including masturbation. Here we can use feminist sexual theory and see how patriarchal leaders who enforce the notions for females to remain pure until marriage are using guilt by association. Numerous feminists including myself feel as though North American society needs to uncover more options of how to obtain an equal love life and equal sexual pleasures in heterosexual relationships in a safe and healthy way. With this being said, we need safer, respectful, consensual, non-sexist sexual images. A lot more of them.

The United States of America - Abstinence Only Sexual Health Education:

This research paper will consider North America (Canada and the United States of America) as a whole, but differentiate between each country's particular context. It will examine North American social and cultural practices and engagements with the (virginal) Cherry Bride/Technical Virgin and critique them on the basis of how they suppress female sexual identity and gratification.

In 2002, President George W. Bush's administration spent \$50 million on incorporating an abstinence only sexual health education program through the Federal Government of the United States of America. And in 2009, this educational program lost its support as the only sex-education young adults receive in both public and catholic high schools. In July 2009, Melissa McEwan from The Guardian newspaper wrote an article called "George W. Bush's sex education Failure" discussing the downfalls of abstinence only health education. This newspaper article explored the facts that abstinence only education actually does the opposite for teens sexual well-being. Rather than reducing teen pregnancies and individuals carrying STDs, it has increased both teen pregnancies and the spread of STDs (McEwan: 2009). McEwan reports that, "The data presented in this report indicates that many young persons in the United States engage in sexual risk behaviour and experience negative reproductive health outcomes" as a result of

insufficient information on contraception use and potentially harmful outcomes (McEwan: 2009). Despite Bush's attempts to promote modest and pure living for young adults, the sexual health educational curriculum illustrated to students actually backfired. Teens were left ill equipped when experiencing their first sexual encounters. Lack of sexual health information on safe sex contraceptive practices actually increased the teenage pregnancy rate because teens were not educated with basic contraceptive use such as condoms. Which they can pretty much be purchased at every gas station across North America.

Canada – Sexual Health Education in Ontario:

Unlike the United States, Canada has never had this type of legislation for sexual health education in either the public or catholic school boards. This is why it is important to compare both Canadian and American educational systems as they have similar features, yet apply different cultural and social practices throughout high school sex education classes.

The Ontario Canadian curriculum found in both the Ontario Public School Board and the Ontario Catholic District School Board are the same. However, since the Ontario Catholic District School Board follows the mandates of both the Health & Physical Education Curriculum as well as the Fully Alive program, Catholic schools have more stringent guidelines to teaching sexuality and human development. The Fully Alive program comes complete with a program book that provides teachers with more explicit instruction for how to discuss sexuality. Each theme in this book is complete with stories and examples which teachers may provide to their students. *The Fully Alive* program is largely guided by religious content and a focus on God. Guided by only one curriculum, teachers in the Ontario Public School Board do not have as many guidelines in teaching about sexuality and human development (Spengen: 2014). Sex education in Ontario dates back to more than 200 years, as far as the 1800s. The 1940s was the

first time formal sex education in schools was considered and addressed in Ontario schools (Follert: 2015). Interest was sparked by the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) during the Second World War and the rising rates of STIs. And in 1945, the Toronto Teachers' Council endorsed a report calling for sex education in elementary and high schools as well as adult night school courses (Follert: 2015). What should and shouldn't be taught regarding sexual health has been an on-going debate for years. In February 2015, the liberal Canadian Government introduced some big changes to the Ontario sex-education guidelines. This created quite an uproar where many parents threatened to pull their children from school over the province's new sexual health curriculum for the week they taught the program. Some of the objections from the parents come from religious groups who claim the curriculum doesn't align with their values while others felt that the teachings were homophobic (CBC News: 2015). The literature discussed in the sections above on the Chastity and Virginity Movement, often reflect evangelical sexual abstinence campaigns that persuade young individuals to pledge the abstinence until marriage. The majority of the literature expresses feminist perspectives that female sexuality is a gendered concept involving patriarchal undertones that benefit males' sexual wellbeing and ignoring female sexual freedom, gratification and expression.

Theoretical Framework:

Social constructionism guided this research in uncovering how women's sexuality is constructed on the notion of truth and how it reflects on her virginal status. Social constructionism is not one unitary perspective which is applied to a variety of disciplines, rather, many different versions have been designed and they are also comprised of different beliefs. Social constructionism allows for a close examination of the processes and practices which produce, maintain, and contribute to women's sexual identity. My research draws upon the social constructionist perspective put forth by Vivien Burr (2003) and Kenneth Gergen (1999).

One of the viewpoints of this theory is that "language and all other forms of representation gain their meaning from the ways in which they are used within relationships" (Gergen, 1999: 48). This signifies that the individual does not create meaning; meaning is instead created through relations and connections. We come into this world wherein there are already pre-existing groupings. Thus, "our ways of understanding the world do not come from objective reality but from other people" (Burr, 2003: 7). We can take this into context when examine and understanding how the Chastity and Virginitly Movement has been created through patriarchal connotations and institutions led primarily men (Church, Home, and Government).

Another ideology of this theory is that language itself characterizes social life. According to Burr (2003), "the goings-on between people in the course of their everyday lives are seen as the practices during which our shared versions of knowledge are constructed" (Burr, 2003: 4). Social life is shaped through language and interaction. This also means that we are active contributors in generating the future. We can develop the future by producing new meanings in new forms of language and new ways of interpreting the world. This means "challeng[ing] existing traditions of understanding, and offer[ing] new possibilities for action" (Gergen, 1999:

49). By using Feminist Theory, which aims to understand the nature of gender inequality, we can examine how women's sexual social roles, experiences, and interests are shaped and how women self-identity sexually and morally.

In the Chastity and Virginity Movement, women's bodies have been objectified throughout numerous abstinence-only teachings. These abstinence only sexual health curriculums are also gendered as their policies and outlook reflects primarily on female membership. Pure Freedom's abstinence-pledge group encourages women participants to "embrace God's plan for modesty and purity, through interactive teachings" (in Gardner, 2011: 10). Do you remember earlier I discussed one of the feminist theory thinkers Deidre English modest thinking notions for female sexuality from the Victorian Era; where females were to be considered a good girl if she just laid there (doesn't want or need sexual relations to be satisfied, but is available for men), whereas men are sexual beings and have the need, urge and right to get off? (English, Hollibaugh, Rubin, 1982: 43). Christian abstinence only groups often follow the same gendered thinking. The Pure-Freedom organization's website discusses the topics for both boys and girls as separate identities. Where topics covered for the boys include "masturbation, pornography, mental virginity, responsibility to protect a girl's emotions and envisioning a godly wife. In contrast, girl's sexual health materials cover such topics as self-esteem, modesty, emotional healing, refusal skills, and envisioning a godly husband" (in Gardner, 2011:10). Feminist theorists such as English, Hollibaugh, and Rubin help illustrate the gender inequality that occurs within the teachings of abstinence-pledge groups. Gender roles come into play for female sexuality. Women must repress sexual gratification, yet be available for male gratification, whenever or wherever your husband pleases. We must again reiterate that sexual gratification is to only occur in a married social context and it is the males' sexual pleasure as the

realm of power, control and of importance. Gender roles, are reiterated within the topics of discussions of abstinence-pledge groups as they separate participants teachings; through ideologies of gender roles of both males and females. Guided by this version of social constructionism and feminist theory, my research answers the following questions: Does a Virginitiy and Chastity Movement truly exist? Is there a female Virginitiy and Chastity Movement? If so, is it socially constructed for male pleasure? These are some of the questions addressed below.

Methodology:

For the purposes of this paper, qualitative study is the primary research tool used – which involve analysis and review of feminist theory literature, television shows, magazines, social media outlets, and case studies elicit how women’s (sexual) identity and choices are influenced. Qualitative methods of research allow for sociological understanding of government and social programs, which is beneficial to critiquing and understanding women’s ability to navigate their social/sexual identities.

Selecting Research Topic:

North America perceives and links female sexuality with maintaining one’s virginity. Issues of gender, power, and ideology have become more complex making female sexuality and virginity topics in regards to females’ personal/sexual freedoms and rights. Despite the patriarchal notion across North America that females will be viewed as good, moral beings if they maintain their virginity, we often do not find many women over eighteen who are still virgins. In July 2009, Cosmopolitan magazine informed readers that a survey of 13,000 college students, led by Stanford University, found that close to 80 percent have lost their virginity by graduation (Triffin, 2009: 130). Participants in the Stanford University survey note that 19% of women lost their virginity at the age of 16 while only 1% of women lost their virginity at 24 (Triffin, 2009: 132). Because of these earlier first time sexual acts, (where youth are encountering sexual intercourse before the age of authority – 18 years of age), the Chastity and Virginity Movement is a phenomenon that needs to be examined in order to better understand why women are losing as well as maintaining their virginity, as well as females sexual health and wellbeing. In order to better understand female sexuality as a patriarchal driven notion, I have chosen data from sources that reflect upon individuals who promote a chaste/virginal lifestyle to

females under and above the age of 18. I have used the popular cable television channel TLC (*The Learning Channel*) in my research paper as it has documentaries (*Purity Balls* and *Virgin Diaries*) and television shows (19 Kids & Counting featuring the Duggar family) that promote modest living to viewers of all ages.

Reasoning of Theories Used:

I have used discourse analysis when examining how media portrays female virginity and sexuality. When I examine the portrayal of female virginity in the media, I use feminist critical discourse analysis (CDA) to illustrate power and ideology while sustaining hierarchically gendered social orders. In Lazar's article *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Articulating a Feminist Discourse Praxis*, she explores how gender is a social relation that enters and constitutes all social relations and activities. The aim of feminist critical discourse is to examine gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations that are produced, sustained, negotiated and challenged in different contexts and communities (Lazar, 2007: 142). By using feminist critical discourse analysis, I explore how the Chastity and Virginity Movement sustains a patriarchal order reflecting how "relations of power that systematically privilege men as a social group, and disadvantage, exclude, and disempower women as a social group" (Lazar, 2007: 145). Gender is therefore a factor regarding the topic of sexuality; for female sexuality it is organized for male pleasure and consumption.

By using Feminist CDA, I also examine male biases embedded in disciplinary paradigms in regards to female sexuality and virginity. By utilizing a range of analytical techniques and methods, it has allowed me to provide an objective stance in regards to my research questions. I use numerous sources to help me illustrate how female virginity is socially constructed for male pleasure, making it both oppressive and empowering to some women.

Data Collection: Case Studies, Television Shows, Magazines, and Social Media:

I will use a variety of academic and social resources in order to understand how the Chastity and Virginity Movement affects North American women and their sexuality. I will use abstinence pledges, social media groups (such as Purity Ring Posse, Silver Ring Thing, True Love Waits, Pure Freedom) purity balls, purity rings, and purity clothing as primary sources when examining female sexuality/virginity. I will use encyclopedias, books, scholarly articles, internet/ social media websites (browsing search engines – ex. Google & Facebook), a documentary, television shows, and magazines as my secondary sources. Within these primary and secondary sources, I will explore how women who retain their virginity status can be both oppressive and empowering to females across North America. I also hope to illustrate how media controls women's sexual identity through patriarchal norms.

I began my primary search by probing social media websites, watching television shows and documentaries, and reading magazines that examine virginity and female sexuality. During this time, I was looking for who are the political and social leaders controlling women's sexuality and whether or not women choose and/or are being forced into maintain their virginity. In Christine J. Gardner's *Making Chastity Sexy* book, she discusses evangelical leaders offering abstinences as a viable alternative to promiscuity. Abstinence movement defines virginity in a manner that enhances the agency of teens, "it claims that virginity is a gift that teens have the agency to lose, find, take and give" (Gardner, 2011: 4). The context of actions, personal agency, and choice allows for American evangelicals leaders to offer individuals a positive focus on purity and emphasize that pleasing God has tangible benefits (Gardner, 2011: 20). In my findings section, I will discuss how religious (Evangelical) abstinence campaigns/groups also promote similar ideas presented by the reality show stars on TLC (The Wilson and Duggar Families).

For my secondary sources, I started my search using the University of Ottawa's Scholar's Portal database. When using the word *virginity* as a keyword for finding academic articles, 3235 published works appeared, 371 were of a sociological nature. Most of these sources involved a religious undertone where many articles portrayed European and Asian perspectives. When searching the Scholar Portal database using the keywords *Virginité North America*, no articles were retrievable. When searching using the terms *defining virginity*, only two different articles appeared. Again, we can see how difficult it is to define virginity in a social and sexual context as there has been little written on the subject of defining virginity. When searching the database using the terminology *virgin*, 46317 published works appeared. To narrow the search for my research topic I used *female virginity* as my primary keyword terms. When using these two terms, 68 published works appeared. What I did find surprising and must be noted, is the fact that, when I used the keywords *female virginity*, sexual assault and violence were often terms used to describe the 68 article titles. We can reflect further in the context of female sexuality/virginity by bring forth again feminists theory thinkers English, Hollibaugh and Rubin's article on female sexuality and that female sexuality does reflect on sexual violence against women. Fear is used to intimidate females in order to remain virginal until marriage and to repress female sexual desires and sexual gratification. By repressing sexual desires, females will then find a husband and will be protected from the unwanted, male, gaze of other males; because they are already the property of another man.

When examining the Ottawa Public Library online catalogue, 855 results appeared when the term *virgin* was placed in the keyword search engine. When examining the first 100 titles, 62 of the library catalogue results illustrate romance novels with book covers that portray a virgin woman being seduced by a male. These numerous erotic book covers and their book titles, depict

women as a commodity for men's sexual gratification. In Lucy Monroe's 2014, romance novel, *A Virgin for His Prize*, the book title provides evidence that virginity is a patriarchal notion as there is a link between female sexuality and male pleasure. Women are viewed as objects and are a commodity for men's enjoyment and sexual pleasure. Women view these negative sexual connotations every day, whether it is browsing magazines in a local bookstore or in pharmacy line up bays. This is significant as it represents a distortive image to women that they are an object/commodity to provide men (husbands only) with sexual gratification, where their own sexual desires are to be subdued. This is problematic, as it does not reciprocate dual sexual pleasure with your partner; it actually degrades women's sexual desires and pleasure completely and places them as taboo subjects. Monroe's book title and book cover is just one reading material that shows which individual actually holds power, authority, and control, over women's sexuality. It is men. Men as the power holders of female virginity creates further evidence promoting that there is a female Chastity and Virginity Movement and that it is patriarchal in connotation.

The articles I have chosen for this essay involve case studies carried out by numerous researchers. I use the information within these articles to illustrate how various cases reveal similar patterns and themes amongst women's sexuality and ideas of thinking towards female chastity and virginity. There are numerous advantages and disadvantages to using articles with case studies. Anne Edwards and Robin Talbot note four advantages of a case study. Case studies allow for the following four positive outlooks when examining a social movement. They reflect: 1- in-depth focus on shifting relationships, 2- captures complexities and allows for focus on the local understandings, 3- sense-making of participants in the case and an opportunity for the voices of participants to be heard, and lastly, 4- it provides readable data that bring research the

life and are true to the concerns and meanings under scrutiny (Edwards, Talbot, 1997: 56).

These valuable points have been taken into consideration for understanding my rationale for using case studies when discussing and examining women's sexuality and virginity in the context of how it reflects patriarchal notions for male gratification over females.

Limitations:

In this major research paper, I have experienced some limitations by using only first and secondary resources. By not conducting interviews or focus groups, I was not able to uncover relevant themes, which would have allowed for further exploration and elaboration. Case Studies and analysing primary and secondary sources were chosen as the next best methods due to time constraints with this major research project. However, by conducting interviews I would have gained a high degree of access into participants' perspectives regarding women's sexuality, virginity, and identity.

Findings:

Institutions that Participate in the Chastity and Virginity Social Movement:

Family/Home Life:

Purity ceremonies have been one of the primary ways females have participated/pledged to the Chastity and Virginity Movement. Purity ceremonies, which often involve a religious, evangelical overtone, have become the newest fad in controlling women's sexuality and virginity. In TLC's television network documentary *Purity Balls*, British journalist Dawn Porter examines Colorado Springs purity pledges. This one-hour documentary explored how some North American women choose, while other women are forced by familial pressure to take part in purity balls. A purity ball is an American formal dance event attended by fathers and their daughters, which promotes teenage girls to uphold their virginity until marriage by committing to purity pledges. Typically, daughters who attend a purity ball make a virginity pledge to remain sexually abstinent until marriage. Fathers who attend a purity ball make a promise to protect their young daughters' "purity of mind, body, and soul" (Wilson: 2007). The Wilson Family created this father-daughter abstinence pledge ball in promotion of females remaining virgins until marriage. Minister Randy Wilson describes on his website that

"The Father Daughter Purity Ball is a memorable ceremony for fathers to sign commitments to be responsible men of integrity in all areas of purity for their households. The commitment also includes their vow to protect their daughters in their choices for purity... Those females who take the pledge silently commit their life of purity to God by laying down a white rose at the cross" (Wilson: 2007).

The act of father's being in charge of their daughter's sexuality restrains women's control over their own personal choices, sexuality, freedoms, and identity. By using feminist CDA, we can critically analyze that women are portrayed as individuals who cannot be trusted as the keepers of their own sexuality/chastity/virginity. While this is taking place, the chastity pledges and

purity balls create women's sexuality and sexual identity as a commodity that is controlled by men (fathers).

These religious and symbolic acts illustrate how men (fathers and priests) construct women's sexuality by controlling their sexual liberty and integrity until they are married. Fathers control is manifested by pledging protection over their daughter's sexuality. This impact affects women's livelihood as they are seen as individuals who are unable to protect themselves from sexual predators. To this end, the father is taking on this role of (sexual) guardian until the woman is wed. After a woman who has pledged to become a member of the Chastity and Virginitly Movement marries, the role of sexual control is shifted from the bride's father to her new husband. This example explores how personal sexual liberation and sexual expression is taken away from women and given to the head of the household, the father, which is later transferred to the husband once she marries. The Chastity and Virginitly Movement devalue women's choices and control women through patriarchal notions of power over female sexuality. However, if women are aware of this control, one may explore their sexual integrity, individuality, and power by leaving the Chastity and Virginitly Movement to explore her sexuality on their own.

In TLC's *Purity Balls* documentary, Mr. Wilson produced the pledge that fathers bestow upon their daughters. It states:

I, (DAUGHTER'S NAME)'S FATHER, CHOOSE BEFORE GOD TO COVER MY DAUGHTER AS HER AUTHORITY AND PROTECTION IN THE AREA OF PURITY. I WILL BE PURE IN MY OWN LIFE AS A MAN, HUSBAND AND FATHER. I WILL BE A MAN OF INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY AS I LEAD, GUIDE AND PRAY OVER MY DAUGHTER AND MY FAMILY AS THE HIGH PRIEST IN MY HOME. THIS COVERING WILL BE USED BY GOD TO INFLUENCE GENERATIONS TO COME. (Wilson: 2007).

Here we can see that the father is the head of the house, as he will state he is the “high priest of the home.” This title creates an offensive connotation that females, including the wife and daughter(s), are subordinate beings and are unable to make rational decisions, reinforcing traditional gender roles. This pledge has overt implications that females need a male protector for decision making and guidance. For example, the terminology used within the pledge (ex. authority, protection, integrity, accountability, high priest) exemplifies male power and control over not only his daughter but his entire family, including his wife; his so called “partner.” The language used blatantly co-opts power from women and forces them into a familial, spiritual, sexual, silence. In Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, explores the idea of rationality while society views women as ornaments to society or property, which are to be traded in (her sexuality/virginity) for marriage. Wollstonecraft maintains the initiative that women are human beings deserving of the same fundamental rights as men (Wollstonecraft, 1982: 20). We can use Mary Wollstonecraft’s idea of rationality amongst females to further understand how the event of a father’s pledge over a daughter’s purity illustrates how females are seen as incapable of making rational decisions over their own sexuality while being presented as passive objects of the male gaze. Here knowledge and power can be understood as components to rational decision making within the Chastity and Virginity Movement over female sexuality. Males are to be seen as the rational and responsible individuals and are to be the ones responsible for molding females’ sexual choices, creating the Chastity and Virginity Movement to be patriarchal.

Numerous North American, men (fathers), both religious and non-religious, place virginity and celibacy as an ideal attribute for females to uphold until marriage. However, we must also acknowledge that some females choose this purity lifestyle as a source of

empowerment. In the documentary *Purity Balls*, one female teenager named Taylore, age 16, discusses her personal choice of taking the pledge to remain celibate until marriage. This personal lifestyle choice changes from patriarchal oppression over females and creates the Chastity and Virginity Movement to become politically powerful for females. Empowerment theory can provide guidance and support to women's sexual well-being. We must acknowledge that a notion of female sexuality, and the importance of upholding ones chastity/virginity, is a socially constructed concept. In the article *Recovering Empowerment: De-personalizing and Re-politicizing Adolescent Female Sexuality*, Laina Bay-Cheng discusses how "empowerment is popularly equated with individualized concepts of self-efficacy and agency" (Bay-Cheng, 2012: 713). In order for young women like Taylore to be empowered and make positive and healthy sexual choices on their own, young women need to be exposed to the opportunities to discover and understand diverse views and ideologies of female sexuality/virginity. A vital component to empowerment theory is offering a safe place/space for discussions on difficult subject matters, including female sexual well-being and sexual health information. By offering a place for young women to come together, and learn through discussion-based groups, young female teenagers can participate in talking rather than just receiving information enables individuals to feel like they have control over their body and inevitably become empowered females. This is a positive and critical aspect to female sexual well-being. By partaking in-group based discussions on female sexuality and virginity pledges, females like Taylore are able to build solidarity with others as well as gather actual influence and resources themselves rather than information and lifestyles bestowed upon them. As I discuss in other sections of this paper, which Bay-Cheng also recognizes in her article that "public policies curtails adolescent girls' access to sexual knowledge and services and consequently undermine their sexual health" (Bay-Cheng, 2012:

715). 16-year-old Taylore's reason to join the Chastity and Virginity Movement was due to her father's multiple sexual partners and lack of faithfulness in his intimate relationships. She feels that "sexual intercourse is a gift that should be shared with one person; one's husband" (Wilson: 2007). Taylore also expressed how she felt empowered with her decision, as she is the one in control of her own sexual wellbeing/her virginity.

Some North American families continue to repress women's sexuality by taking control of women's sexual liberation through enforcing participation in purity pledges. However, some young North American women, like Taylore, choose to uphold their virginity until marriage. This act of resistance not only empowers Taylore, but it can also be a source of protection to pregnancy and STDs (Bernau, 2007: 160). This act of resistance allows for chastity and virginity to become politically powerful as these identities construct a positive social distinctiveness.

Church:

Numerous religions, including Christianity, glorify female virginity. Several religions instruct women to remain virgins by worshipping the idea of sexual purity as a way to live, in order to remain pure and clean, which will later be rewarded with a husband. Purity and cleanliness are both valuable religious characteristics to obtain in order to be viewed as marriage material. Therefore, religions such as the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faiths establish virginal women as being superior, only if they remain a virgin until they are wed. The Church discusses fornication -- sex outside of marriage -- as a sin, and the Church has traditionally taught that it is a mortal sin. This teaching can be traced to St. Paul telling us that "fornicators" and other "unrighteous" "will not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9-10) (Catholic News Agency: 2015). In the Holy Bible, St. Paul continues to discuss how "The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married

cares about the things of the world -- how she may please her husband" (1 Cor 7:32-34) (Catholic News Agency: 2015). This belief is promoted onto its Catholic female followers, where sin of any kind, including fornication, deprives one of heaven. The church also proclaims the notion that if one remains chaste/virginal they dramatically increase their odds of having a lasting marriage. Based on analysis, evangelical sexual abstinence campaigns are hoping to create a culture to make chastity sexy (Gardner, 2011: 18). Recently, some evangelical abstinence campaign leaders and speakers attempt to illustrate a key characteristics of the individualistic what's-in-it-for-me approach to becoming a member in this social movement. They try to advertise the Chastity and Virginitly Movement as a promise for great sex, "promising great sex and future marriage as the reward for abstinence" (Gardner, 2011: 18). This delicately shifts the nature of evangelicalism away from sacrifice and suffering of being a virgin to self-gratification as a reward for holding out until marriage. This reasoning alone represents why women's sexuality deserves a place on a social justice agenda. Bay-Cheng argues that "for women without independent, direct access to sufficient resources, sexuality becomes a means of accessing them" (Bay-Cheng, 2012: 716). Inadequate or unequal resources reduce women's leverage in negotiating with a sexual partner. This places a notion that women are objects for men's affection, and a patriarchal advantage for men to be in control of women's sexuality and sexual gratification. With this being said, the Church instructs women to uphold their virginity in order to find a husband, who will in turn be a provider for you; both financially and sexually. Women's sexuality/virginity becomes a commodity for male pleasure and our bodies become objectified when women are not exposed and provided with sufficient resources and information. Women's sexuality is placed as an economic advantage and/or disadvantage depending on how much of an advantage she processes over her partner with resources and information acquired

prior to their relationship evolving. Women who have less economic privileges and resources may have to succumb to their sexuality in order to negotiate with their g, sexual partner, on whom she may depend on necessities like money, food, clothing, housing, or even transportation to a job - for example: her husband, the bread winner (Bay-Chen, 2012: 714).

Numerous studies suggest that if a couple has had sex before marriage, the duo is far more likely to get divorced. The divorce rate for couples who live together before marriage is nearly twice that of couples who do not cohabit (Catholic News Agency: 2015). Likewise, research by Robert Rector and Kirk Johnson show that experimenting with one or more sexual partners does not prepare one for being able to maintain a committed relationship – in fact, just the opposite (in Cleek, Pearson, 1985: 180). The Heritage Foundation researchers, found while analyzing the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth that “women who are 30 years of age or older, those who were monogamous (only one sexual partner in a lifetime), were by far most likely to still be in a stable relationship (80 percent)” (in Cleek, Pearson, 1985: 180). Having sex with just one extra partner dropped that probability to 54 percent. Two extra partners brought it down to 44 percent (in Cleek, Pearson, 1985: 180). As Heritage Foundation researcher Patrick Fagan noted, "Who would have thought that the price of sleeping with even one partner would lead to divorce for almost half of those who had only one extra tryst?" (Catholic News Agency: 2015). Both the Catholic Church and evangelical purity groups, including Purity Ring Thing use these guilt and scare tactics in order to entice membership. Here we can see how the Church uses shame while instructing and enforcing virginity onto women.

With such glorified notions of the virgin, the Chastity and Virginity Movement can be seen as disorganizing the view of females as sexual beings and organizing females into sexually pure beings. We must note who is in control of organizing and disorganizing these ideologies.

The Catholic Church, which is an organization that is governed by males, creates and stresses the importance of female virginity and chastity, emphasizing that living a pure lifestyle is valued and is seen as the respectable norm. Power is in the hands of males as they organize what is acceptable and what is not acceptable for female sexuality as well as how they promote this sexist message.

We must also be aware that, in some very strict orthodox faiths, women who have not remain chaste, or even just perspective thoughts that they have lost their virginity prior to marriage are often severely ostracized and punished (ie: beaten, raped, and stoned.) These violent acts occur against females all around the world, including yet less likely to occur in North America. However also all around the world, especially in North America, women are being subjected to an abundant amount of pressures to explore their own sexuality. These sexual pressures illustrated in social media, television, and magazines in turn complicate their role/identity within the Chastity and Virginity Movement. In Niklas Juth and Niels Lynoe's article *Zero Tolerance Against Patriarchal Norms? A Cross-sectional Study of Swedish Physicians' Attitudes towards Young Females Requesting Virginity Certificates or Hymen Restoration* reflect on how countries including Sweden are in great need to create professional guidelines and establish procedures for responding to the growing numbers of females requesting virginity certificates or hymen restoration due to honour-related threats (often familial based) (Juth, Lynoe, 2015: 215). Females across the world are instructed that their worth is based on their sexuality rather than their morals and values. This causes numerous women to feel the need repress their sexuality in order for acceptance and safety. Again, we can use female sexual theory and see that female sexuality involves violence against women.

Carroll and Ratner recognize identity politics and how power is held within social movements. In their article they state, “Within the identity politics, frame power resides in everyday human relations as agency, an attribute of people. Power is often attached to identity markers such as gender and race, as in the often-cited case of white males as the dominant group” (Carroll, Ratner, 1996: 608). With this ideology, identity markers and identity politics within the Chastity and Virginitude Movement can become clearer. Identity markers can be seen as Priests, male community leaders, and fathers who instruct their daughters to remain virginal; these authority figures educate their family members by using faith and religious sources. If women do not comply or disobey these practices, there can be consequences (where the Church illuminates the notion that your marriage will not sustain due to premarital sex (in Cleek, Pearson, 1985: 180). To this end, the Catholic Church, as an organization, has created a gendered framework around virginity and chastity in order to ensure these practices. This illustrates how religious institutions such as the Catholic Church are an important leading institution in social movements such as the Chastity and Virginitude Movement.

Schools:

The Chastity and Virginitude Movement is institutionalized, both through educational and religious organizations, which has enabled this particular association to become a cultural and organized social movement. This can begin to explain why the Chastity and Virginitude Movement is becoming quite successful in North America. Abstinence-only living is a driving factor in North American sexual health education. Both Canada and the United States educational institutions promote abstinence, yet in different context within their curriculum. It is important to note that neither the Health & Physical Education in the Ontario curriculum nor the Fully Alive program mandates or prevents discussion of premarital sex, sex for pleasure, divorce,

or sexual diversity. Teachers are simply expected to address the topics outlined within the curriculum and at the appropriate grade level in order to ensure their students meet the curriculum expectations (CBCNews: 2015). This means that teachers are individually responsible for choosing or developing appropriate and effective instructional strategies to help their students meet these expectations (Spengen, 2014:19). Like Canada, the US State Legislations also varies from state to state. Illinois State is one state that requires comprehensive sex education offered in grades 6 through 12 to include instruction on both abstinence and contraception use for the prevention of pregnancy and STDs (National Conference of State Legislations: 2015). Educational organizations serve the agenda of the Chastity and Virginty Movement as it preaches the importance for young women to maintain a virginal status. The Catholic Church and Catholic Educational School Boards are two organizations that work in coercion with the Chastity and Virginty Movement to establish it as a growing social movement. The \$50 million abstinence only education plan that Bush established, while no longer in place, is a clear indicator of how Government, the Church, and educational sectors have all worked side-by-side one another to create policies that affect women's sexuality in North America.

In 1996, the U.S. Congress passed a bill providing \$50 million of annual federal support to the states for the implementation of sexuality education programs whose "exclusive purpose" was to teach the "social psychological health gains" of sexual abstinence (Abramson, Pinkerton, 2002: 150). This action was taken even though at the time there was a lack of evidence that abstinence only programs prevent teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Out of 48 of George W. Bush's Administration Cabinet Members, only 9 of these policymakers were women (McEwan: 2009). As the majority of policymakers continue to be led by men, they create and promote the social psychological health gain of remaining a virgin through educational

programs for both male and female teenagers. Bush's administrative team associated female sexuality as an object for male pleasure as they only focused on women's consequences and how if one follows this abstinence only program and maintains their virginal status, they are relieving the negative connotations and drawbacks of being a teenage mother, who has had a child out of wedlock. Women internalize these male driven, biased, sexual implications, creating women to form a psychological negative opinion of themselves, where their self-worth is based solely on their sexuality and on being pure for their husbands' wedding night. We can analyze and see how Bush's abstinence only program has an underlying message that personal sexual gratification is not a priority for females; purity is. Bush's abstinence only education often left very little scientific background information to be discussed, and most frequently there was no in-depth scientific sex education on contraceptive use, the risk of spreading STD's and HIV, sexual pleasure and sexual partner respect (SEICUS: 2015). This again leaves women to experience sexual violence, a topic of concern for feminist theory on female sexuality. George W. Bush's *Title V of the Social Security Act* (see Appendix A), over generalizes its views. *Title V of the Social Security Act* did not actually provide high school students in their sexual education classes with scientific evidence to stand by. For example when stating in Section E how the Act will teach "that sexual activity outside of the context of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects" they did not use scientific statistics rather personal ideologies from policy makers (SEICUS: 2015).

Bush's the *Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage* program marked a significant shift in resources and information from pregnancy prevention to promoting abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage, at any age. This abstinence only education resulted in numerous young adults to be sexually unprepared for sexual encounters as "one in four young American

women have an STI” (Valenti, 2009: 39). This abstinence only sexual health education leaves a high risk for individuals to not use contraceptives, as they are unfamiliar with proper techniques and options available to them, especially during their first sexual experiences, which of course is potentially dangerous to one’s health and physical well-being. With this being said, abstinence only sexual health education also jeopardizes individuals, both male and female, to be or become sexually healthy adults. The educational framework creates, promotes, and expands the Chastity and Virginity Movement as a social movement in North America.

Government:

In 2009, then President, George W. Bush’s \$50 million strategies to promote abstinence only policies in United States high school curriculums lost its support. US Abstinence only policies directly govern and affect women’s sexuality. The US government establishes and imposes these dynamic policies. However, the policies often only reflect females to experience consequences of sexual activity. It portrays teenage pregnancy and being a teenage mother as a drawback to ones future. However, men’s drawbacks to losing one’s virginity are not exclaimed during sexual education. For example, why do the teachings not discuss what it is like for a teenage boy to help financially with child support? Bush lost his \$50 million governmental abstinence only education as it actually backfired when teens stated that they were not properly informed on contraceptive use, which in turn still lead to teenage pregnancy and STDs (Shechter: 2013). Though the teen birth rate has declined to its lowest levels since data collection began, the United States of American still has the highest teen birth rate in the industrialized world (National Conference of State Legislations: 2015). Roughly, one in four girls will become pregnant at least once by their 20th birthday (National Conference of State Legislations: 2015). This demonstrates how abstinence only sexual education places cultural and social values

predominantly on female virginity, where females are placed as the ones in charge of contraception use in order for pregnancy to not occur. Both the USA Government and the Catholic Church overlaps one another regarding moral and emotional structures and the need for young females to uphold their purity as they both discuss female consequences (for example, pregnancy out of wedlock, unable to find a companion, STDs). These moral and emotional structures provide evidence that the Chastity and Virginity Movement is a social movement. Paul Wilkinson discusses how collective action is aimed at achieving various goals. Paul Wilkinson states, “The most important problems human beings confront when faced with the collective actions of others, or with the desire to initiate collective actions, are essentially moral” (Wilkinson, 1971: 151). Here we can see how the Chastity and Virginity Movement involve both moral and emotional perspectives, which have been influenced by the USA Governmental and USA Educational sectors, not based on scientific evidence. This fear mongering drives leaders to sway others (in this particular case young females), to join the Chastity and Virginity Movement in order to be a pure woman who is worthy of marriage. The fear based ideology is that women will not find a partner if they are sexually active prior to marriage; therefore they are seen as unclean, dirty and damaged goods. Both of the Government doctrines place fear on females that they will not be wholesome if they engage in premarital sexual activity. This leads numerous North American women who have engaged in premarital sex to experience backlash and are punished by society as not being deemed worthy to become a bride. This is a destructive view as we only place the blame on women who engage in out of wedlock sexual intercourse. The popular 80s movie, *The Breakfast Club*, exemplifies this notion with its famous movie quote line that “It is a double edge sword. If you say you haven’t (*had sex*) you’re a prude. If you say you have (*had sex*) you’re a slut” (Shechter: 2013). The concept of virginity shapes people's lives in

a sex-obsessed culture, Government, home life, Church and educational spheres all try to socially construct virginity as a way to regulate female sexuality.

The Role of Popular Culture:

Pop culture is an easily accessible outlet for young adults to obtain news and information, including sexual health information. Music, modest clothing attire, gospel literature, jewelry, and chaste/virgin celebrities are just a few resources that are helping enable the Chastity and Virginity Movement to develop into a more contemporary social movement throughout North America. Pop culture is a driving force for this social movement.

The Chastity and Virginity Movement evolved into a social movement after George W. Bush created and promoted the abstinence only sexual health education program. Abstinence only education has enabled the USA Government, religious institutions and schools (in both Canada and USA) to emphasize political activities in order to promote virginity and chastity to young people of North America, especially promoting this sexual lifestyle to your females. Some of these political activities include purity conferences and purity balls where politicians, educational alumni, and both elite and celebrity public figures come together to promote virginity and pure lifestyles. Some individuals, mostly females, are brought forcefully as well as attend willingly to these popular events in order to be indoctrinated and conform to the patriarchal/virginal expectations of the Chastity and Virginity Movement. Today in North American society, the Chastity and Virginity Movement is geared heavily towards females and is mostly influenced and promoted throughout pop-culture. Before Jessica Simpson was married to Nick Lachey, her first husband, she promoted how she wore a purity ring in order to remind herself to remain pure and a virgin. Social media and the internet has allowed individuals to retrieve information more freely, allowing greater access to information that can help them

choose what is best for themselves regarding their body and sexuality. For example, observing celebrities that are wear purity rings and are following the Chastity and Virginitly Movement's norms and values (North American celibate celebrities include(d) Jessica Simpson, Jonas Brothers, Selena Gomez, The Duggars, and even Miley Cyrus -back in 2008). Popular virginitly symbols, such as religious purity conferences, purity rings, purity jewelry, purity balls, modest t-shirts and clothing attire, as well as online social media purity groups aid the Chastity and Virginitly Movement to encourage and cultivate a sense of belonging that reinforces participation and/or indoctrination that they are members of this growing social fad social movement.

Leadership in Social Movements:

In Morris and Staggenborg's article *Leadership in Social Movement*, they discuss how leaders examine, critique, dissemble, and reassemble the foundational elements of a social practice in order to disseminate a solution(s) to its followers (Morris, Staggenbor, 2002: 1). These solutions have the potential to instill a sense of agency for women. In this context of female sexuality it can also give self proclamation and empower them sexually. Morris and Staggenborg further define movement leaders as "strategic decision-makers who inspire and organize others to participate in social movements" (Morris, Staggenborg, 2002: 1). The Duggars are pop cultural leaders that promote and drive the Chastity and Virginitly Movement. In their TLC television series *19 Kids & Counting*, the four eldest daughters frequently speak about remaining chaste and pure. Jana, Jill, Jessa and Jinger Duggar co-wrote the non-fiction book *Growing Up Duggar: It's All About RELATIONSHIPS*. In this modest living resource promoted to females, they discuss how one can be pure, make suggestions as to how one can remain pure, safe ways to participate in chaste courtship, how to engage in modest living, and maintain the status of virgin; the "Cherry Bride/Technical Virgin."

The Duggar Family, are a devoted Baptist humble family that promotes following and living a modest lifestyle. The Duggar Family places strict rules on dating, courtship, and relationships for their children to follow in order to instill morals and values to their family members (which includes 19 children). Television shows, books and personal websites and blogs reflect The Duggar family's rules and regulations for living a modest lifestyle including the dos and don'ts when in a courtship relationship. Jim Bob Duggar (the father), instructs his female children to follow eight steps when courting. Their rules reflect a patriarchal domination as the man (father) is the head of the household and head over female sexuality. Jim Bob's first rule states: "Dad approves all courtships" (Betsch: 2014). These rules are not enforced and written for the male children in the family. These family doctrines hinder democratization of the social movement as it once again reflects men as policy leaders/makers while it is women who are to follow these rules and regulations. Kuala Lumpur's academic article discusses how "with the policies they sponsor, it can facilitate or hinder democratization" (Lumpar: 2007). This is illustrated by Michelle Duggar as she complies with her husband Jim Bob's commands over their daughters' sexuality. These female daughters are instructed to remain pure until they are married. During one of Michelle's question and answer clips on the Duggar's website she explains that once their daughters are married they are to be available at all times to their husband in order to procreate in God's name and to help sustain a happy marriage (Duggars: 2015). As Feminist Deidre English has stated earlier in this paper, men have urges and we must lie there and not move (English, Hollibaugh, Rubin: 1982, 45). Sexual gratification and contraception use for females is not of any importance for Michelle Duggar nor does she discuss such topics with her female children as it would interfere with Evangelical ideologies regarding female sexuality. Females are to be available for male sexual pleasure and to become mothers. Women are objects

of his affection and child bearers. That is the basic Evangelical ideology regarding female sexuality which hinders females, including the Duggar females' options to sexually express themselves and be sexually satisfied. With this all being said, having Jim Bob being the sole voice of what is acceptable and not acceptable female sexuality in the Duggar household is of course problematic as women need to be given a voice on what they believe is acceptable standards for membership in the Chastity and Virginitly Movement. The Duggars are a huge resource for the Chastity and Virginitly Movement as this family offers numerous leaders who follow and promote the Chastity and Virginitly Movement via books, conferences, website blogs, YouTube videos, social media outlets and television programs. What makes the Duggar family leaders in this social purity movement is that they follow a modest lifestyle and have a large platform from which to speak about their beliefs. By being in the limelight, through numerous media outlets including television shows, the Duggar family has a social platform which strengthens the value of the message of virginal sanctity as an ideal lifestyle, a vital component to the Chastity and Virginitly Movement.

As purity movement leaders, the four eldest Duggar daughters often discuss in their females only bible studies group, that women frequently confuse love with sensual desire; also known as lust. Therefore, they promote the purity ring as a symbol of chastity that assists them in maintaining their modest and pure lifestyle. First, the purity ring is a symbol of their commitment to keep themselves physically pure as they wait for their "soul mate" (Duggar, 2014: 114). Second, it symbolizes their desire to involve their parents in the decision making process to finding a spouse. Third, the purity ring reminds them to continuously police their sexual desires. Lastly, the fourth and most important purpose of a purity ring is to remind that God is the true matchmaker and we must be patient in waiting for god to bring that man into our

lives (Duggar, 2014: 114). The purity ring symbol creates a strain on women exploring their sexuality but it also allows for empirical evidence to illustrate that there is a Chastity and Virginty Movement. The purity ring also enforces patriarchal connotations that women are to uphold their virginty for their future husbands benefit. Where eventually the purity ring will be replaced with an engagement ring and later a wedding band.

Sadie Robertson, from the reality television show *Duck Dynasty*, is another young pop culture leadership figure that promotes the Chastity and Virginty Movement. Unlike the Duggar family, who promotes chastity, where no physical contact while courting/prior to marriage is allowed, Sadie Roberston promotes technical virginty/Cherry Bride. Sadie and her best friend Kolby Koloff have a weekly YouTube series called *The New Different*. These weekly podcasts hope to empower North American women to express their sexual identities while not compromising their virginal status by joining the virginty movement by being a modest and pure individual. Sadie Robertson often says, “Modest is the Hottest” (Roberston, Koloff: 2012). The girls go on to state how a woman’s “body is a temple” (Roberston, Koloff: 2012), and giving into temptation is sinful; however, participating in kissing, holding hands, and cuddling are acceptable expressions of their (sexual) identities. Sadie Robertson has also come out with a modest prom and clothing line called *Live Original* geared towards young women. She emphasizes how “modest is hottest” as a positive aspect of being a young member of the Chastity and Virginty Movement. By being modest, dressing conservatively (yet stylishly), and act accordingly, one gains respect and attention for the right reasons and in the right ways (Roberston, Koloff: 2012).

Unlike the pop culture leaders The Duggars and Sadie Robertson, religious leaders including Catholic priests, Jewish Rabbis, and Muslim Mullahs are privileged individuals who

get the opportunity to promote the Chastity and Virginitly Movement throughout the religious sectors. Politicians, government officials, and educational officiates, are all political influential beings who promote the Chastity and Virginitly Movement in the political sector. The Duggars promote chastity in the pop cultural sector while Sadie Robertson promotes technical virginitly in the pop cultural sector. By using feminist theory, we could explain even further that each of these groups of leaders' attempts to map purity and the importance of female virginal status in order for women to live modestly. And by living modestly they can veil themselves from the unwanted male gaze, and sexual violence. At the same time this places women again the idea of being an object for male consumption, a patriarchal notion that is involved in the linings of the Chastity and Virginitly Movement in North America.

In the Catholic faith, the Virgin Mary is the ultimate female leader to guide young female adults toward a chaste lifestyle. The Bible states: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" – 1 Timothy 4:12 (in Duggars, 2014: 109). According to the Church, this is a creditable and attainable state of being and is a guideline for women in order to promote an ideal and pure lifestyle. To this end, purity, chastity, modesty and virginitly are associated to female sexuality and encouraged by parents, educators, priests, and policy makers.

The ultimate leader of the Catholic faith is Pope Francis. He is the leader of a patriarchal institution who is responsible for the spiritual and moral conduct – purity – of the global Catholic community. In a 2013 interview, Pope Francis proclaimed:

"We cannot insist only on issues related to abortion, gay marriage and the use of contraceptive methods. This is not possible. I have not spoken much about these things, and I was reprimanded for that. But when we speak about these issues, we have to talk about them in a context. The teaching of the church, for that matter, is clear and I am a son of the church, but it is not necessary to talk about these issues all the time. The dogmatic and moral teachings of the church are not all equivalent... Proclamation in a

missionary style focuses on the essentials, on the necessary things: this is also what fascinates and attracts more... We have to find a new balance; otherwise even the moral edifice of the church is likely to fall like a house of cards, losing the freshness and fragrance of the Gospel. The proposal of the Gospel must be more simple, profound, radiant. It is from this proposition that the moral consequences then flow... A beautiful homily, a genuine sermon must begin with the first proclamation, with the proclamation of salvation. There is nothing more solid, deep and sure than this proclamation. Then you have to do catechesis. Then you can draw even a moral consequence” (Millegan: 2013).

Pope Francis drives the message of purity, chastity and virginity as an ultimate state of wellbeing. Being a leader in favour of the Chastity and Virginity Movement, Pope Francis acknowledges that society engages in premarital sexual acts, yet he promotes how the Church strives to illustrate a modest lifestyle for Catholics to follow. Pope Francis’ quote illustrates how the Church both does and does not want to discuss sexuality. However, religious individuals and followers of the Chastity and Virginity Movement want to gain access of the true meaning on how one can maintain a pure soul, which is to remain virginal. They accomplish this by following leaders from their faith. Sexuality in general has to be addressed, and questioned by both sexes. The Pope graciously states that one has to find balance with sensitive topics such as sexuality. We can take this into further context that one must gain adequate information for themselves and decide what is morally sound. At this time we must also acknowledge the fact that not all of us are the same and we all have opposing views on sexuality and what is acceptable or not. To that end, we must be respectful of other people’s sexual choices. Rather than being involved in other people’s decision making regarding their sexuality, we should find a new balance with morality. This would be an ideal view in regards to theories and ideologies on female sexuality and how the Chastity and Virginity Movement expands their thinking on membership status and promotion.

Virginity Culture:

In 1987, sociologist Robert Wuthnow's defined culture as the "symbolic expressive aspect of social behaviour" (in Johnston, Klandermans, 1995: 3). Values, artifacts, symbols, rituals, customs and beliefs are all elements of culture. Daily media images (through movies, song lyrics, TV shows, and magazines) instruct females on what is and is not sexually and socially acceptable. Media associates and promotes value to actions and symbols on what is good and what is wrong. The Holy Bible, is one symbol that explores value to ones actions. The Virgin Mary and Madonna- Whore dichotomy is portrayed globally, and not only in an Evangelical Christian based setting. We view this Good Girl/Bad Girl dichotomy all over the media whether it is in our favorite MTV reality show or Christian website. Failure to comply with the virgin culture's basic concept, to remain virginal until marriage, can result in consequences such as becoming devalued as a woman and potential spouse, as well as labeled (ex. Whore), which in turn threatens their future happiness and livelihood. Emphasizing the Madonna – Whore dichotomy helps reinforce a virgin culture that is imposed upon females. To this end, we can understand how the Chastity and Virginity Movement is a truly a social movement that takes on patriarchal overtone.

Virgin terminology and virginity symbols can both be associated to virginity culture in regards to how one may become influenced (through patriarchal notions), which inevitably shape individuals thoughts towards the Chastity and Virginity Movement. Johnston and Klandermans acknowledge how "that social movements are not just shaped by culture; they also shape and reshape it. Symbols, values, meanings, icons, and beliefs are adapted and molded to suit the movement's aims and frequently are injected into the broader culture via institutionalization and routinization" (Johnston, Klandermans, 1995: 9). North America's patriarchal ideology couples

neatly with the Chastity and Virginty Movement in that it applies tools such as chastity rings, purity balls, and purity clothing to reinforce the importance of being virginal as well as illustrate membership, which can also be seen and used as a branding/marketing tool.

Terminology is also an important factor when describing culture. North American society uses shame and guilt in order to attract and maintain females to be chaste and remain a virgin. The term “Slut-Shaming” is a new profound word that “degrade or mock a woman because she enjoys having sex, has sex a lot, or may even just be rumored to participate in sexual acts” (Johnston: 2014). This attack is based solely on women, where there is no term used for a man who engages in and/or enjoys sexual intercourse. A double standard occurs. They drill the notion that there are consequences when a female is viewed as a “slut.” Virginty culture within the Chastity and Virginty Movement uses resources like magazine articles, social media websites, and TV shows to illuminate ideas on how females can be considered a good person and this is by not engaging in premarital sexual activity and to remain pure. They do so by idolizing virgin pageant queens, virgin pop singers, and virgin religious leaders who have taken purity pledges. These individuals can therefore become tools of the movement’s political agenda creating a virginty culture. Purity leaders drive the social movement further by persuading females to remain chaste/virginal. Media uses these moral, pop celebrities and actors to influence others to follow their example. By doing so females are becoming defined sexually within the media rather than their morals, values, and beliefs. One thing we can draw a conclusion on is that virginty culture places a significant amount of energy and time on female sexuality and female membership. This has led for the Virginty Culture (a subculture of the Chastity and Virginty Movement), to be viewed as a patriarchal institution that benefits male sexual gratification in the expense of female sexual empowerment. Virginty terminology and purity symbols are both

important factors to examine when exploring the Chastity and Virginitly Movement as a social movement as it explores how these concepts take on gendered and patriarchal contexts when exploring female sexuality/virginitly.

Purity Symbols:

Throughout my research paper, I have attempted to illustrate that there is a Chastity and Virginitly Movement and it truly is a social movement. Recently, media has portrayed purity symbols (ex. Purity rings, necklaces, hats, t-shirts, buttons, purity balls, Etc.) in order to associate individuals membership to the Chastity and Virginitly Movement. The high culture North American pop band, *Jonas Brothers*, were one of the first celebrity virgin icons that were recognized globally as members of this purity social movement. These three brothers proudly wear purity rings on their left hand wedding fingers to illustrate and demonstrate modest and pure behavior. One of the brothers, Nick Jonas, is now married, and he has now removed his purity ring and has replaced it with a wedding band. This event has become an iconic symbol for virginitly culture; the graduating from a purity ring to a wedding band, the ultimate goal and reward. Feminists, like myself, proclaim that women are romanticized into this fairytale ending that by wearing a purity ring and remaining virginal will draw respect and ultimately you will be rewarded with a husband. Purity rings are just one of the new commodity products that express individuals taking part in the Chastity and Virginitly Movement. For females, purity rings are then to be replaced by engagement rings but females are not to forget their purity pledges as their purity ring is now moved to their right hand until they are married. Women use numerous informational tools, such as pop culture, purity symbols, and abstinence-pledge groups as avenues to get information on sexuality/remaining chaste and virginal.

Jessica Valenti's book *The Purity Myth*, she discusses to great lengths, through feminist perspectives, how female sexuality is conformed through patriarchal standards. She notes how both teen pop culture magazines and online shopping have succumbed to these patriarchal notions to restrict female sexual freedom, and instead brand and label virgins (so the world can see whom really are the good girls and who then are the bad girls; non-members in the Chastity and Virginitly Movement). These social media outlets now provide youth with clothing attire that represents they are members of the Chastity and Virginitly Movement. T-shirts that say, "I'm Tight Like Spandex," "Warning – Born Again Virgin," "Modest is the Hottest," "You Aint Getting None/I'm staying Abstinence," "I Don't Have boyfriends I have GOD," and "PURITY ROCKS!" (Zazzle.ca: 2009) are just a few slogans that have created a way for individuals to partake symbolically within the Chastity and Virginitly culture. One can partake in the Chastity and Virginitly Movement by wearing a pure/virginitly t-shirt while others can categorize one's sexuality by observing individuals wearing chaste clothing. Purity/modest clothing and purity jewelry have become not only virginitly symbols or a hot trend, but purity materials such as purity rings have also shaped virginitly into the capitalist marketplace. We can draw more conclusions that the Chastity and Virginitly Movements virginitly symbols are often geared towards females and female sexuality, which in the end society is then controlling female sexual freedoms and taking on a patriarchal stand over women in general.

Abstinence only sex education, evangelical purity groups, and purity balls present further virginitly symbols that involve patriarchal notions. Abstinence educators have used teaching tools such as gold rose pins, and a heart pendant in wrapped in a box as apparatuses to illustrate how if one/females loses their virginitly prior to marriage, they are less clean (losing pedals to purity) and are now not a complete, pure, package for their partners wedding night (Wilson: 2008).

During Purity Ball celebrations, some fathers give their chaste daughters a lock necklace and key. Where the daughter wears the lock necklace and the father keeps the key until she later gives the key/gift to her husband on their wedding night to represent her virginity and purity. These items illustrate how North America has attached symbols to virginity but gear these symbols towards females, the individuals who should be the ones representing membership in the Chastity and Virginity Movement; this of course is a patriarchal concept of the movement.

Discussion and Conclusion:

The Chastity and Virginity Movement as a Social Movement:

For decades feminist thinking has explored how women (in this instance North American women), are traditionally seen as/and instructed to be nurturers, mothers, and companions to their husbands. Sexual practice for women is often instructed in the realm of creating life with one's husband, where reproduction is glorified and is understood to be essential for women to be seen as good, moral and pure human beings. Male governance over women's sexual identity packages them either as moral or immoral beings. These social and gendered constructs serve to define women as (sexual) commodities for their future partners; where women are viewed as objects for male sexual desires/ husband's sexual consumption.

As males dominate many social institutions (in this case: Government, Home, School administration, and the Church), they can create, regulate, and inform (un)acceptable sexual behavior(s) as well as social and sexual practices for women. Women's sexual pleasure and sexual freedoms are often completely dismissed and are not considered when discussing female sexuality. Here traditional gender roles are reinstated as men are empowered by having control over women sexually. Social and religious institutions, including Evangelical purity groups, point to sexual intercourse as a privilege of marriage and should only be experienced between a husband and his wife. Abstinence campaigns and abstinence groups such as the Silver Ring Thing and True Love Waits are beginning to discuss the message that sex is great, but only in a marital context (Gardner, 2011: 21). I noted throughout my research paper that in the public sphere, males are the dominant voices for decision and policymaking. Not only do men in the public realm dominate women, but they also dictate women's sexual identity politics in their favour.

With this all being said, we are able to see that the Chastity and Virginitly Movement is fabricated and upheld by patriarchal cultural, structural, and symbolic institutions and ideologies.

This research paper examined the following three research questions: Does a Chastity and Virginitly and Movement truly exist? Is there a female Chastity and Virginitly Movement? If so, is it socially constructed for male pleasure? Women's virginitly and sexuality continues to be a discussed subject involving morals and values. Virginitly has evolved into a social subject which has led for female sexuality and female sexual gratification to be seen as taboo subjects. Both have evolved through ideologies and biases shifting female sexuality and gratification from private topics to subjects in the public realm. This paper also has examined how virginitly and women's sexuality is socially constructed and has been developed with a patriarchal framework. To that end a social movement was created; the Chastity and Virginitly Movement.

The Chastity and Virginitly Movement does allow for some members to eliminate themselves from dominant sexual discourse and become empowered, that is when the individual has the freedom to choose to participate or not in the Chastity and Virginitly Movement. A sense of community and agency is experienced by those who freely choose to participate in this social movement and follow their moral codes and standards. Social movements allows for those who are unhappy with their situations to organize their actions effectively, as a result it becomes an important part of society as it provides a forum for grievances and demands to be heard. The Chastity and Virginitly Movement has achieved great milestones as a social movement. It began as a patriarchal set of guidelines that controlled women's sexuality, but it has slowly evolved to become an option for some women to gain empowerment (ex. Taylore, age 16 in TLC's *Purity Balls* documentary). This has created a sense of community for the women participating in a

chaste/virginal lifestyle. In this case, the terms and ideologies of *Technical Virgin/Cherry Bride* are seen as a positive philosophy.

With this being said: how can more women demand, obtain, and control their own sexuality? We need more women in the forefront of this social movement and as policy makers over female health and sexual well-being. I also believe mothers, daughters and sexual agency will allow women to uphold their own sexuality and sexual virtue. Instead of re-imposing dominant patriarchal discourse over female sexuality and gratification, let women come together and create a sexual agency and discuss with numerous views and ideologies. Then let women use the information they have gathered and make the right decisions for themselves.

I remember when I was 15; I was given a book by mother called, *Don't Give IT Away!* Written by Ivanla Vanzant. It was all about self-awareness, self-affirmation, and upholding one's virginity. This workbook was geared towards female teenagers and aimed to help them understand how your body is your temple and that you are a powerful being based on one's own choices. The underlying message of this book for female teenagers is to save this first time sexual event, and when you do share it, share it with someone you care about and how the love you seek, is the love you are (Vanzant, 1999: 5). I still have this book at home and I was very fortunate to grow up in a household where sex, choice, contraception, and female sexual gratification were not taboo subjects and that they should be discussed, questioned, and explored. I am truly grateful that I have a mother that I can discuss my thoughts, views and dreams with. I am even more grateful that I have been able to discuss the topic of sex with my mother. Not many women are able to do so.

When my mother gave me this book, her lesson to me was "enjoy yourself." Over my high school and university years, stories and conversations with my female peers and female

friends, reiterated how masturbation was better than sex. Here we can draw analysis that males dominate female sexuality by implementing women to be submissive for male pleasure while hiding the message that females can be sexually gratified as well, including all by themselves and they do not need a male partner to achieve sexual pleasure/gratification. Nevertheless, choice and empowerment must also be recognized amongst the topic of female sexuality. Women are cherry-picking celibacy vows, membership in the Chastity and Virginity Movement, as well as sexual liberation in hopes of excluding themselves from the patriarchal dominate ideologies over female sexuality and the idea that female individuals are always available for male pleasure and consumption. Now some women are also choosing contraceptive practices and sexual liberty as devices against men's control over women's sexuality and virginity.

Further Research Needed:

During my time researching and writing this major research paper, I have come to the realization that sexual health information is geared towards female sexuality. Women are the ones who are instructed by main stream media and organizations to retain their virginity and protect their sexuality. By doing so, we have placed the responsibility of contraceptive and safe sex on women.

In 1999, while I was in the eighth grade, the Ontario Catholic School Board decided to implement the Human Papilloma Virus shots (HPV shot), to all grade eight female girls. The three round Gardasil shots were to be given to 13 and 14 year old female girls during their eighth educational year. These three shots are to help eliminate the spread of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) that have the HPV strain. The HPV infection also causes certain strains of cervical cancer. The Canadian Government and Educational sectors have come together in hopes of providing women with proper sexual health information. As a preventative

measure, the Canadian Government initiated the use of vaccinating teenage girls. Unfortunately the ideology of this phenomenon was that these HPV shots would actually promote female promiscuity, rather than place the influence on how these shots are a way to protect women from the spread of STDs. Once again we see how North American society watches over and regulates women's sexuality.

Times have evolved since my grade eight HPV shots. Recently CBC News reporters Stephanie Matteis and Marcy Cuttler discuss how HPV vaccine for boys may prevent cancer and actually save money. In Canada, The HPV vaccine is covered for girls to prevent cervical cancer. The vaccine also reduces anal cancer in both sexes as well as some cancers of the penis and oropharyngeal cancer (Matteis, Cuttler: 2015). By promoting males to also get the HPV shot, the positives of eliminating STDs and cancers in both sexes are greater, as the numbers of HPV carriers will decrease (Matteis, Cuttler: 2015). In the CBC News article, Dr. Lillian Siu states, "We don't know how to predict who will get the disease and anyone who is sexually active is at risk of developing such a cancer" (Matteis, Cuttler: 2015). By promoting the HPV shots to young teenage boys, North America is finally beginning to put the task and responsibility of contraceptive practices on both sexes. I also do wonder, to those who are born again virgins, are their memberships accepted in the virginity movement or are they casted out to the chastity movement? The same goes to homosexuals; are they still considered a virgin if they engage in same-sex sexual intercourse? Further research is needed as I was not able to discover any information or findings on these topics.

During my last few days of writing this major research paper, my mom became quite ill, requiring me to take some time off to drive her to her doctor for doctor appointments. While I was sitting in the waiting room, with both my mother and my one year old son (who was

conceived out of wedlock), I overheard a very upset, and scared young nineteen year old woman on the phone, as she was making arrangements to have an abortion. I felt very sad for this young woman, as she acknowledged the fact to the medical clinic staff that she couldn't keep the baby based on her economic status. After she got off the phone making her upcoming abortion appointment, I approached her with a box of Kleenex, and my work business card. All I said to her was, "I know this is kind of weird, but here is my business card. I'm a City of Ottawa librarian. If you ever need to just chat or get some information, please just give me a call." She thanked me profusely through her tears, and left with her immature boyfriend. When my mother finished her doctor's appointment and we all got into the car to leave, I cried. I spoke to my mom about how upset I was for this young woman. I wondered if and what contraceptives she used, what sexual education she has received, and what support does she have during this hard time. Despite growing up in a French/Italian, Catholic household, sexuality was a topic that could be discussed freely in our household. I thank my mother for being so open minded and educating me on female sexuality, sexual gratification, and how I can be safe if I so choose to have sexual intercourse. My home life enabled me to make safe and practical choices regarding my own sexuality, and I was in power and in control of my own sexual virtue. I was very fortunate to live in a matriarchal home and not one that involved patriarchal connotations on female sexuality.

Needless to say, I recommend that more research is needed on how teens, both young males and females, retrieve sexual health information and how do they make sexual health decisions. Case studies, interviews, surveys, and database search engine requests are all vital tools that could be used in attaining this information. Once knowledge based information is gathered on how young adults retrieve sexual health information, we can provide numerous resources and ways to promote sexual health information and contraceptive use to young adults

(both to males and females) in hopes of endorsing respect around sexuality, as well as helping to eliminate teenage pregnancy, and the spread of STDs in North America.

Concluding Remarks:

Unfortunately North American's desire for women to uphold the *Technical Virgin/Cherry Bride* status destroys the possibility of promoting communal sexual pleasure between partners; both for women in and out of wedlock relationships. It reinstates male dominance over female sexuality as women are instructed to repress sexual desire and activity in order to find a protecting husband who will take care of you. We may need to learn a lesson abroad from the Gerai community in Indonesia. In this society, the term "*sex*" refers to the exchange of fluids. The Gerai ideology of sexual intercourse stresses the mingling of similar bodily fluids "rather than the penetration of one body by another" (Helliwell, 2000: 804). Unlike North America, the Gerai community emphasizes the dual companionship in receiving sexual pleasure, where North America hyper-sexualizes women's sexuality in order for males to receive ultimate pleasure. By comparing and contrasting two different societies, we can see how women's sexuality, in North America, is socially constructed to please male partners through patriarchal norms.

This concept is often discussed by feminist theorists as it places women in a subordinate position socially, which often sacrifices female sexual satisfaction creating a degrading message that women are objects for male sexual fulfillment. Yet again, I believe that mother daughter sexual agency and female coalition will bring positive light on female sexuality and female gratification as well as eliminate the demeaning patriarchal connotations over female sexuality and virginity. Lastly, I must reiterate how the Chastity and Virginity Movement follows regulations of a social movement, where home, educational, Church, and Governmental leaders

of the Chastity and Virginity Movement use their resources in order to take action (to promote purity) with patriarchal connotations over female sexuality.

During my undergraduate degree, I became interested in the topic of women's sexuality, as I was the last one of my female friends to remain a virgin. At twenty-two I decided that I was in control, and in charge of my body and sexuality. I developed a sense of personal sexual worth and felt that I had ultimate and complete power over my own sexuality. At the age of twenty-two I freely chose to lose my virginity and to have sexual intercourse. I did not save it for a committed matrimonial relationship, but rather an event that took place with an individual that I felt I was still the one governing my body, my sexuality, and my desire for sexual gratification. I was sexually, mentally, and physically regulating my sexual virtue and of losing my virginity. Not only was I the one in control, which allowed for my first sexual intercourse experience to be a positive one, I also had the time to plan and practice safe contraception use.

North American women must come together and create a social agency to protect female sexuality from patriarchal ideologies. Mothers and daughters should discuss with one another how to be sexually satisfied, and that we are more than a "*Cherry Bride*" for men's sexual gratification. By eliminating women's sexual freedom it not only discourages sexual fantasies but it doesn't leave room for women to explore and learn what they like and do not like sexually.

Our own sexual gratification is also very important and we must educate one another to involve respect, and consent as features of female sexuality. I am very lucky that as a young woman, I had adequate sexual health knowledge and support from both my family and friends, which has enabled me to have a healthy and sexually gratifying sex life. I hope this major research paper may also educate young women to take it upon themselves to become informed on positive sexual health practices and contraceptives in order to become healthy, sexually, and

happy individuals, where men's opinions do not take precedence over their own sexuality and sexual gratification.

Appendix A: 2006 to 2009 George W. Bush administration - *Title V of the Social Security Act*

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|---|--|
| Section 510 (b) of Title V of the Social Security Act, P.L. 104–193 | |
| For the purposes of this section, the term “abstinence education” means an educational or motivational program which: | |
| A | has as its exclusive purpose teaching the social, psychological, and health gains to be realized by abstaining from sexual activity; |
| B | teaches abstinence from sexual activity outside marriage as the expected standard for all school-age children; |
| C | teaches that abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain way to avoid out-of-wedlock pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and other associated health problems; |
| D | teaches that a mutually faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage is the expected standard of sexual activity; |
| E | teaches that sexual activity outside of the context of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects; |
| F | teaches that bearing children out-of-wedlock is likely to have harmful consequences for the child, the child's parents, and society; |
| G | teaches young people how to reject sexual advances and how alcohol and drug use increase vulnerability to sexual advances, and |
| H | teaches the importance of attaining self-sufficiency before engaging in sexual activity. |

Megan Ladelpha
 3825472
 SOC7938 S
 Professor P. Couton
 Professor W. Scobie
 November 18th 2015

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