

MORE THAN 'WHORE':
A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ON THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE MURDERS OF
SEX TRADE WORKERS IN EDMONTON, CANADA, 2001 - 2008

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Dedicated to the memory of Katie Ballantyne, Ginger Bellerose, Leanne Benwell, Samantha Berg, Edna Bernard, Delores Brower, Maggie Lee Burke, Shannon Collins, Charlene Gauld, Theresa Innes, Bonnie Lynn Jack, Debbie Lake, Ellie May Meyer, Melissa Munch, Corrie Ottenbreit, Monique Pitre, Rachel Quinney, Kelly Reilly, Chantel Robertson, and Brianna Torvalson.

Abstract

Twenty women linked with the sex trade in Edmonton, Canada went missing or were murdered between 2001 and 2008. In this study, I use Foucauldian and feminist theories, via discourse analysis, to examine the ways that Edmonton's newspapers (re)present these murders. My findings show that the newspapers' discourse deviantises these women, thereby minimising the tragedy of their disappearances and deaths. This deviantisation is deployed in three ways; by framing sex trade workers as criminally, medically, and morally deviant. Criminal deviance places sex trade workers firmly on the 'wrong' side of the law, making them undeserving of police protection; medical deviance implies that only women who are mentally ill in some way would take part in the sex trade, and, simultaneously, hyperbolises the role of sex workers in the spread of venereal diseases. Finally, discourses of moral deviance place sex workers on the 'wrong' side of morality and femininity.

Preface

I lived in Edmonton, Alberta, during my years as an undergraduate student at the University of Alberta. It was an admittedly privileged experience, full of friends, intramural sports, frequent pub-crawls, and classes squeezed in when I found the time. But while I was ‘struggling’ with statistics and last minute term papers, one of my relatives was living in another large Canadian city, working in the sex trade and struggling just to stay alive. At the time, I did not make a connection between my personal experience, women’s oppression, sexual marginalisation, and public discourse; I was simply seeing my relative’s and my own situation as separate pieces in the puzzle of life. I understood the differences in our lives as little more than the consequences of individual choices; I *chose* university, she *chose* the streets.

However, as I was ‘studying’ and my relative was struggling, I began to see numerous newspaper reports on the murders or disappearances of sex trade workers (either in Edmonton or elsewhere in Canada). Headlines such as “Police ID body as hooker” (Cowan, Edmonton Sun, 2005, p. 3) and “Prostitutes ‘ideal victims’ for serial or violent offenders - experts” (Purdy, Edmonton Journal, 2003, p. A3) seized my attention and caused me to re-evaluate my understanding of the frequent violence faced by women working in the sex trade (and women in general). Between 2001 and 2006, while I was working on my bachelor’s degree, 16 sex workers were murdered or went missing in the Edmonton area alone, and that number rose to 20 by 2008. On top of this, there are at least another 12 women who were murdered or have disappeared since 1983, bringing the

total number to at least 32. What is perhaps more alarming is that of these 32 cases only *four* have been ‘solved’.

Although I was (and still am) deeply saddened and angered by such systemic violence, I did not, at the time, make a personal connection between my own situation and this broader public question of marginalised and forgotten women. C. Wright Mills wrote extensively on this facet of the sociological imagination; that a ‘personal trouble’ only becomes a ‘public issue’ if values of the greater public are threatened (1967). In other words, the loss of a few individual sex workers only affects their families and friends; the systemic violence faced by women in the sex trade does not matter until it is understood as a threat to the wider public. And so, with the guidance of some brilliant professors, I began to understand (my and) my relative’s situation as more than the result of individual choice, but instead, as a reflection of familial relationships, systemic violence, and discursive power.

Now, as I look back on it, I realise that one of those missing women could have been my family member, but whether that was the case or not, each one of those women *was* the family member of someone, and therefore their murders and disappearances *should* spark public outrage. These ‘disappeared’ and murdered women are more than sex trade workers; they are sisters, mothers, daughters, cousins, and friends; they are fellow *humans*, and it is for them that I write this paper.

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It is an honour for me to thank my parents, Percy and Heather Larter, who have stood by me, encouraged me, and offered their loving support not only during this process, but throughout my entire life. Thank you, Mom and Dad, thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Problem

Over 30 women linked with the sex trade¹ in Edmonton have gone missing or been murdered in the past 25 years, with twenty of these events occurring since the year 2001. The frequency and seriousness of this phenomenon raises the questions, “why are women working in the sex trade the targets of such violence?” and “how are these crimes being presented to the general population?”

This question of how violence against sex trade workers can be understood through discursive (re)presentations is the focus of this study. As will be developed more fully later on, this is a crucial focus because the way that we speak about social events both reflects and shapes our values and practices. In this study, situated in a Westernised, specifically Canadian context, I will focus on the ways local newspapers speak about, and (re)present, the murders of these women so as to unpack social values and practices relating to sexuality, race, gender, and power. The media has a vital role in shaping what the wider public learns about these murders, and in how these murders are entered into public discourse. As Michel Foucault writes, discourses are “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (1972, p. 49). As newspapers report on the murders

¹ Due to the wide and permeable definition of sex work, for the purposes of this research I will be limiting my scope to adult female sex workers who explicitly sell sexual acts involving bodily contact with clients in exchange for money. Furthermore, I will be using the terms ‘sex trade workers’, ‘sex workers’, and ‘sex trade’ in place of prostitutes and prostitution. I have chosen these terms because I feel that they emphasise the occupational and economic aspects of the work as opposed to focussing on the personal qualities of the women working in the trade. However, when citing or referring to sources that use alternative terminology, such as prostitute, whore, hooking, and so on, I will retain the authors’ original word choice.

and disappearances of sex trade workers, they are able to influence and shape the general public's understanding of the situation. Conversely, these discourses draw on common pools of knowledge, reflecting public attitudes and norms. Therefore, as intimated previously, the focus of this study will be to examine the discourses used in framing the lost women in terms of gender, sexuality, race, and socioeconomic status. Print media, specifically Edmonton based newspapers, the Edmonton Sun and the Edmonton Journal, will be my focus for this discourse-based investigation.

Why does it matter that twenty women sex trade workers have been murdered in or gone missing from Edmonton over the last eight years? Why should we care? Because this situation is a reflection of our society; it represents the lack of respect for women, and exemplifies the violence that women, regardless of occupation, face on a daily basis. It is a marker of the rampant misogyny that exists in our social world. Furthermore, because women working in the sex trade represent some of the most socially powerless people, their murders can be seen as the violent demonstration of social inequality. If they can disappear or be murdered, with little attention paid to the tragic loss of a valuable human life, then sex workers really are as unimportant as many moral entrepreneurs would have us believe. If their sexuality is to be controlled through violence, then all women face the same potential threat. Sex trade workers stand as a telling example of the consequences that exist for women who transgress social expectations; consequences like dehumanisation, marginalisation, deviantisation, and, of course, violence. Likewise, the ways that the media represents such women also speaks volumes about dichotomies such as good/bad, pure/impure, clean/dirty, virgin/whore. These dichotomies firmly place sex

workers on the ‘wrong’ side of morality and femininity, and therefore on the side of the deviant. As Alexander writes, “[in] every century, on every continent, in every country, societies use...measures to control women who dare to step outside the normative role of virgin daughter/chaste wife” (1997, p. 92). The matter of controlling women’s bodies and activities is not a modern notion; rather, it is an historically developed matter of social policy that is adapted to fit current social expectations and moral norms (see Abramowitz, 1996). Such dichotomous moralism divides women amongst themselves, framing some as good and others as bad, some as deserving of protection and others as undeserving. This divisiveness not only pits citizens against each other, but it also reinforces the marginalisation of women working in the sex trade. In my study, I will examine these divisions in order to better understand how media (re)presentations police not only the ‘fallen’ women, but all women. In the following sections I will outline the historical, political, and social backgrounds of policing both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ women’s sexuality, beginning with a discussion of Foucauldian theory on sexuality, and then moving to a more empirical discussion of Canadian legal and judicial responses to sex work.

A [Brief] History of Sexuality

The marginalisation of sex workers is embedded in discourse that reflects the regulation and policing of sexuality in general. In other words, the way we speak about these things both reflects the way we act towards, and, conversely, are shaped by them. In Foucauldian theory, because discourse is a recursive process, we in turn mold and shape discourse in much the same way it molds and shapes us (Bartky, 1988). It is clear that discourse shapes both our behaviour and our sexuality, and while we police others, we

also police ourselves. These “technologies of the self”, as described by Michel Foucault, are the methods and techniques through which humans constitute themselves (1977). In his book, “The History of Sexuality”, Michel Foucault describes the multiple ways in which sex and sexuality have been put into discourse and subsequently policed (1978). Historically, one of the primary ways this has been done, he explains, is through confession. This process began with what he refers to as the “Christian Pastoral”; the use of confession to put sexuality through an “endless mill of speech” (ibid, p. 21). This was seen as a fundamental duty of members of the Church and it included everything from “[t]he forbidding of certain words, the decency of expressions, all the censorings of vocabulary” to the telling of “...not only consummated acts, but sensual touchings, all impure gazes, all obscene remarks...all consenting thoughts” (ibid). Anything and everything to do with sex was to be admitted to and opened up for the purpose of self-examination and penance. Over time, this constant process of speaking about sex resulted in multiple discourses, and led to the establishment of confession in all areas of life, not just within the Church. This shift to a secular form of confession led to sex becoming a police matter by the eighteenth century. Foucault explains:

Sex was not something one simply judged; it was a thing administered. It was the nature of public potential; it called for management procedures; it had to be taken charge of by analytic discourses.
(1978, p. 24)

This “new” sexuality was not something to be controlled through silence and taboo, but through discourses within the public and private spheres that could be monitored and regulated. Foucault offers the emergence of demography as an example of a “technique of power” (ibid, p. 25) that was developed to control the sexuality of the

population through discourse. Population became seen in terms of labour power, economic production, and wealth, and this had implications for who could/should have access to different sexualities.

Governments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a 'people', but with a 'population,' with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables: birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illnesses, patterns of diet and habitation (ibid). Population became an economic and political issue that was centered upon sex. "[T]his was the first time that a society had affirmed, in a constant way, that its future and its fortune were tied...to the manner in which each individual made use of [her] sex" (ibid, p. 26). As a result of this discovered 'link' between a country's population and its fortune, an endeavor was undertaken to expel all forms of sexuality that did not feed into the mainstream economy. Foucault explains that this resulted in a multiplication of "legal sanctions against minor perversions", in sexual irregularity being "annexed to mental illness", and in an overhaul to the definitions of what was and was not normal in terms of sexual development and sexual behaviour (ibid, p. 36). While it would seem that sex work undeniably operates to feed the economy, it was not seen favourably because it feeds the wrong type of economy - an illicit and illegal one, and it does so through unapproved expression and practices of sexuality.

Sex trade workers, in fact any women found to be engaged in 'illicit' sexual acts or to be enjoying sex 'too much', were quickly classified as medically deviant, or nymphomaniacs, and were often subsequently hospitalised and 'treated'. Historically, this

treatment could involve a clitoridectomy, as ‘over-sexed’ women were thought to possess an over-active clitoris (Sheehan, 1997). Over time, the use of clitoridectomies receded as ‘treatment’ shifted toward social sanctions along the lines of marginalisation and discrimination. Thus, in order to supervise and survey this prohibited sexuality, new forms of power had to be exercised. In the case of sex workers this happened through “a new specification of individuals” which worked to give names to illicit sexualities (such as homosexuals, zoophiles, and, of course, ‘prostitutes’) (ibid, p. 43). These new specifications became more than just a name or a category, they became totalising identities. No longer did a woman just happen to work in the sex trade, her identity was now centred on her occupation, in effect, she *became* a prostitute. All other roles that a woman engaged in sex work held in her life; that of daughter, friend, partner, et cetera, became subservient, inconsequential even, compared to her role as a sex worker, to her *identification* as a sex worker.

Obviously bringing sexuality into the realm of multiple discourses is only the first step towards creating a socially pervasive definition of normal sex and acceptable sexuality. The actual policing of ‘normal’ is generally left up to the law, often placing sex in “...a binary system: licit and illicit, permitted and forbidden” (ibid, p. 83) that leaves no room for variance. “To deal with sex, power employs nothing more than a law of prohibition” (ibid, p. 84), thus censoring that which is not permissible. But, as Foucault explains, in order to be successful and publicly endured, power in modernity must not appear to be too pervasive. “[P]ower is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own

mechanisms” (ibid, p. 86). This means that power cannot be exercised only through the law, out in the open where it can be seen and felt; power must find more subtle ways of influencing a population’s sexuality through socialisation and normalisation. For Foucault, ‘normalisation’ is the means by which both ‘normal’ and ‘not-normal’ citizens are categorised and policed:

[T]he new methods of power...[are] not ensured by right but by technique, not by law but by normalization, not by punishment but by control, methods that are employed on all levels and in forms that go beyond the state and its apparatus. (ibid, p. 89)

Although new juridical and policing mechanisms came into play in the policing of female sexuality, other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, criminology, and indeed, the media, all contributed to the normalisation practices. As a result of these multiple forces of power, power can no longer be seen as an arm of the state controlling the lives of its citizens, as Foucault notes:

Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the *name* that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society.

(ibid, p. 93, emphasis mine)

Furthermore, the capacity to ‘name’ such ‘complex strategical situations’, to categorise, and normalise, occurs through discourse and through new disciplines, such as those noted above, whose existence depends on the normalisation practice. And the media *depends* on these binaries to sell its message(s) to the already disciplined public, to citizens who are already ready to accept the ‘news’ stories as ‘truth’.

This leads to one of the key points Foucault makes concerning power, namely that power is not something that a person or a structure acquires or holds; rather, power is something that is exercised in relation to others. Power becomes a whole network of relations, with countless nodes, that is always changing and being deployed in new and different ways. Power is fluid, and therefore there is not a single 'truth' of sexuality; sexual discourse is inextricably linked to relations of power which are always changing, and thus sexual discourse is always changing, thereby making a static truth of sexuality impossible to define.

Sexuality, particularly 'normal' sexuality, is historically created, with there being no fundamental truth about such normality across times or locations. As Foucault writes:

Sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover. It is the name that can be given to a historical construct: not a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp, but a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power.
(ibid, p. 105-106)

Nevertheless, the disciplinary role of discourse remains constant: to police, to categorise, to define. Thus, yesterday's 'sexual deviants' become today's 'drug-addicted, criminal prostitutes', or 'homosexuals', or 'fetishists'. However, some of these 'categories' (and I use that term in the Foucauldian sense) are able to move beyond their once-deviant sexuality, while others are not. Homosexuality, for example, is slowly becoming understood as a mainstream 'type' of sexuality, while fetishists and sex workers remain

firmly in the realm of the deviantised (see pp. 13-28 below for further discussion).

Foucault goes on to explain that:

We...are in a society of “sex”, or rather a society “with a sexuality”:
the mechanisms of power are addressed to the body, to life, to what causes
it to proliferate, to what reinforces the species, its stamina, its ability to
dominate or its capacity for being used. (ibid, p. 147)

The body and its sexuality have become central to the circulation of power; and this power over the body is deployed through social discourse at every level and in every part of society. Power, discourse, and sexuality are inextricably linked in a civilisation that places emphasis on bodies, and on the political role of social reproduction in producing a new generation of docile bodies. For women working in the sex trade, who are making ‘exchange value’² of their bodies in unapproved ways, the personal and social consequences for such digressions are far reaching and often severe; consequences that, in the case of my study, are often a matter of life and death. Keeping this in mind, my research seeks to answer questions about the implications of discourses on sexuality. How do sexual discourses construct sex workers as deviant (or not)? What understandings of sexuality are presented in the news discourse? Is it always negative? Or is there room for a more positive understanding of such ‘illicit’ sexuality? Are there discursive implications that sex trade workers somehow ‘ask’ for violence by exercising the ‘wrong type’ of sexuality? In the following sections I will make linkages between the dangers that sex workers are exposed to and the discursive practices that force sex

² I recognise the Marxist implication of the term ‘exchange value’, but I am simply paraphrasing. I realise that Foucault was by no means a Marxist, nor am I.

workers on the one hand into the margins while on the other hand withholding the protections afforded to 'decent' citizens.

The Deviantisation of Sex Trade Workers

With the successful defining and policing of appropriate sexuality, the act of working in the sex trade comes to be seen as inherently 'wrong' and 'immoral' and sex workers are subsequently deviantised. In short, they become seen as wrong and immoral, as well. But what does this policing actually look like, and how does it affect the lives of sex trade workers on a daily basis? I argue that this deviantisation has been deployed primarily in four distinct, though at times overlapping, discursive forms: through the development of laws concerning the sex trade and those working in it, through the medicalisation of sex workers at both the individual and group level, through moral panics relating to the perceived social effects of the sex trade, and finally, through the media, which largely operates to disseminate the products of the three other forms of deviantisation to the public at large. In combination, these criminal, medical and moral deviantisations have been central to the development of the sex worker stigma. With a reach that spreads from the family unit to the government as a whole, these methods of deviantisation leave sex workers with no room to move beyond such stigmatisation and life in the margins of society.

Criminal Deviance

Laws concerning sex work change and develop over time, but the intent always stays the same; to control the sex trade and sex trade workers (Larsen, 2000; Brock,

1998; Sansfaçon, 1984). As Deborah Brock writes, in discussing Canadian law, despite changes to the laws throughout history, the purpose of legislation regarding prostitution is always to “...keep [the trade] as invisible as possible” (1998, p. 7). It is important to note that the laws rarely, if ever, do anything to address why women enter the sex trade in the first place, or ask how to improve the working lives of sex workers. Rather, they serve to further oppress working class women who are limited in viable occupational choices (ibid).

Up until 1972, legislation concerning prostitution in Canada treated sex work as a form of vagrancy under section 164.1 (c) of the Criminal Code (Brock, 1998, p. 27). Known more widely as “Vag. C”, the law stated that;

[E]veryone commits vagrancy who, being a common prostitute or nightwalker is found in a public place and does not, when required, give a good account of herself.” (ibid)

Besides the obviously sexist language of the code in the assumption that such workers were always women, Vag. C made a clear attempt to control the bodies of sex trade workers by requiring them to ‘give a good account’ of themselves at any time in a way that would not be required of a ‘normal’ citizen. Sex workers were thus framed as sub-human, or at least as sub-adult, unable to be trusted and therefore to be limited in their freedoms.

Furthermore, the law raised questions concerning what makes a person a ‘common prostitute’, and who gets the power to apply such labels. Even if we were to assume that only women who chose to self-identify as sex trade workers were charged

under Vag. C (which was certainly not the case); this law had the effect of “criminalizing a woman’s status as a prostitute, rather than the activity of engaging in prostitution” (Larsen, 2000, p. 54). In other words, and as Foucault might predict, Vag. C did not make deviant the act of sex work, rather it made deviant the sex worker herself. In the eyes of the law, simply being identified as a sex trade worker was criminally deviant, whether or not a woman was conducting business. This new political policy was not, however, accepted by everyone; many women’s rights groups lobbied against this legislation. As a result of the Second Wave Women’s Movement, which critiqued flaws evident in the Vag. C legislation and other sexist government policies, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) was formed in 1967 to investigate the effects of the law on women in general, which included a focus on the sex trade in particular (Larsen, 2000; Brock, 1998).

Following the report submitted by the RCSW in 1970, Bill C49 was drawn up to replace Vag. C. Unable (and unwilling?) to move away from the criminalisation of sex work because “...of a concerned lobbying campaign by police and other groups who felt that prostitution had become an endemic problem in large urban centres” (Larsen, 2000, p. 57), Bill C49 instead shifted the focus from the act of sex to solicitation in general. Essentially, Bill C49 (now Section 213 of the Criminal Code of Canada) makes it illegal to solicit for the purpose of prostitution. While it does not make sex work itself illegal, it does make the stage of sex worker/client contracting illegal. More importantly, for the purposes of this thesis, it continues to label prostitution as a deviant activity. Though it may be argued that Bill C49 is an improvement over Vag. C because it no longer

criminalises the sex worker herself³ (at least not explicitly), it does make it more difficult for her to conduct her business in the open, thus forcing sex trade workers to move into more dangerous areas, such as back alleys or the fringes of town and increasing their vulnerability to violence. As Nick Larsen explains, the enactment of Bill C49 coincided with “...increased numbers of assaults against prostitutes and several unsolved murders of prostitutes” (2000, p. 59). By clearly marking the activities of sex trade workers as criminal and removing them from the public arena of ‘decent’ society, such legislation develops and supports existing social opinions that sex trade workers are deviant; “...it implies that the individual prostitute is responsible for prostitution, rather than society as a whole” (Brock, 1998, p. 8).

What is perhaps most disturbing about laws relating to the sex trade is their unequal application and enforcement. As Daniel Sansfaçon explains, “...while female street prostitution remains by far the most common target of police activity, practices and priorities vary from one police force to another” (1984, p. 25). While Sansfaçon’s *Report on Prostitution in Canada* was written two decades ago, it remains ‘current’ in that street-based sex work continues to be one of the major focuses of police activity, whether it targets sex workers or their clients (Duchesne, 1997, Edmonton Police Commission, 1999).

Two of the main arguments supporting the heavy-handed control of (street) sex work are the belief that it bothers most ‘decent’ or ‘moral’ citizens, and that it leads to the

³ While there is a small percentage of men working in the sex trade, because of this study’s focus on women victims, I have chosen to use gender-specific language.

growth and development of other types of crime (ibid, p. 130, 133). As Richard Symanski eloquently states, “...it [is] believed that prostitution [is] the gigantic trade that [holds] the underworld together and nurture[s] all other forms of violence and criminality” (1981, p. 107). As demonstrated above, many of these ideas about the deviance of sex trade workers are products of a system of law that singles out and persecutes women working in the sex trade. This system includes laws that imply that women are incapable of consenting to an economically beneficial occupation, laws that are applied to women only, and laws that assume that sex trade workers are not deserving of respect or recognition despite providing a service that is in demand. Tragically, as a result of this deviantisation, “[s]ocieties tolerate...blatantly discriminatory, random, and corrupt use (or non-use) of the law because they define prostitutes as outside of the common law, *entitled to no human rights protections*” (Alexander, 1997, p. 92, emphasis mine). For example, in the United States, laws relating to sex work remain in effect despite the removal or ignoring of nearly all other laws relating to sexual activity between consenting adults (ibid). Or in Germany, laws prevent sex trade workers from obtaining health insurance “even as they are required to submit to regular STD examinations” (ibid). The point is that by being framed as criminally deviant, sex trade workers are not provided with the same rights as other citizens, and are denied the respect and protection by the law from violence that every person, regardless of occupation, deserves.

Legal discourses, then, are a vital point of the entry for the public idea of sex workers as deviants. In my research I examine how these legal discourses are presented in news articles. Are there specific comments made about the non-legal status of the sex

trade? Are these comments directed at sex work in general, or at sex workers individually? Is there a discursive double standard in framing the women as criminal and not their clients (solicitation is, after all, illegal for both parties involved)?

Medical Deviance

The medical deviantisation of sex trade workers can best be understood as being deployed through two distinct disciplinary discourses: one of mental illness or psychological deviance, and one of physical illness or health deviance. Each of these operates to construct sex workers as abnormal or subhuman and thus deserving of their deviantised social position.

Psychological deviance involves the framing of the individual sex trade worker as mentally unfit or abnormal in some way as compared to the general population. The assumption here is that no “‘normal’ adults could decide to do such a thing and that if they reached this point they must be irremediably lost” (Sansfaçon, 1984, p. 124). While some people might argue that sex workers are not ‘irremediably lost’, there is a widespread belief that some form of intervention is necessary to ‘save’ sex workers from the lives they are leading, and that this intervention should come from the medical community in the form of therapy or counseling. As William Ramp explains, paraphrasing the work of Michel Foucault, “...sexuality has become at once a legitimate object of inquiry, and an object of surveillance and control by professionals and state agencies” (Ramp, 2000, p. 41). In other words, “...’sexuality’ has come to be taken as a privileged point of entry by which psychologists [and we could add social workers and

public health officials] can understand human persons and their social lives” (ibid). The most important point here is that in the eyes of psychologists and psychiatrists, understanding sex work is about understanding the individual. These explanations include little to no focus on the greater social forces that might lead women (and men) into the sex trade to begin with. Medical discourse that links mental illness to sex workers pathologises sex trade workers on an individual level while eluding an analysis of the social. Sylvie Frigon explains this development by taking a more historical view of the policing of female deviance;

With the advent of the “degenerate woman” in the early twentieth century, “the basis of crime no longer lay in sin...but in an aberration or abnormality of the individual’s constitution...In the case of female criminality this new medical and psychiatric interpretation was more intricately bound to moral reasoning. The female offenders, of course, were the antithesis of ideal femininity. In order to achieve this ‘ideal femininity’ women will, in some way or another, suffer the regulations of their bodies and minds. (1996, p. 80)

Though Frigon is discussing female criminality in general, her analysis can be applied to sex trade workers specifically. The ‘sexually promiscuous’ sex trade worker fails to live up to normative ideals of femininity that require women to be chaste, well-behaved, and domestically centred. Of course, from the point of view of the medical community, this ‘failure’ cannot possibly be a sign of the restrictive nature of the construct of femininity or the economic inequality of women; it can only be a sign of a defective and morally-deformed personhood. Thus, sex work is most often framed as an individual addiction or compulsion, a sign of childhood sexual abuse, or a marker of anti-social tendencies (McLaughlin, 1991; Brock, 1998; Alexander, 1997).

Besides medicine's deviantisation of sex trade workers on a psychological level, the framing of sex workers as a perceived threat to public health also contributes to categorising them as deviant. It is arguable that this health deviance causes greater public panic than does the psychological deviance, because in this discourse sex workers are seen as putting the general public's health at risk rather than simply endangering themselves. In her book, "Whores in History: Prostitution in Western Society", Nickie Roberts points to the Contagious Diseases Acts (CDAs), first passed in Britain in 1864, as one of the earliest examples of legislation designed to deal with the perceived health risks posed by sex workers (Roberts, 1992, p. 246). The CDAs were intended to protect the health of men in the army and navy, and called for the "...compulsory examination of prostitute women in British naval ports and garrison towns" (ibid). As Roberts explains, "[v]eneral diseases were widespread at all levels of 19th-century society, and as a 'deviant' group engaged in the commerce of sex, whores were blamed for their spread" (ibid, p. 247). This blame has changed little over the past one-hundred and fifty years, as sex trade workers continue to be scapegoated for the spread of a wide gamut of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). In fact, in many countries where sex work has been legalised, sex trade workers continue to be subject to mandatory medical examinations, although their clients are not; this includes Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States (Nevada) (Alexander, 1997). And though we might be tempted to think that Canada would never enact a policy that runs so counter to basic human rights, Sansfaçon informs us that "...up to the mid-1970s in Quebec, [public health] legislation was used to make it compulsory for all arrested prostitutes to be given a medical

examination, which was conducted at police headquarters by the staff doctor” (1984, p. 144-145).

What is most frustrating about such legislation is that, besides violating a person’s right to privacy, it does nothing to screen the health statuses of clients. Considering that medicine has well-established that STIs are most easily transferred from males to females and not the other way around (Sheon, 2008), it seems that if anyone is to be screened it should be the predominantly *male* clients. This re-emphasises the issue of deviantisation; because it is the sex trade workers who are constructed as particularly deviant, it is they who are faced with attempts to control their bodies and actions. As Brock explains, “[t]he body of the sex-trade worker was...identified as the site of the offense against public decency and therefore the site of regulation” (1998, p. 34). It is worth noting that contrary to this perceived threat of pollution by sex trade workers, studies have shown that the rate of venereal disease spread from sex workers to clients (and thus to the general population) is just 3%, and it is actually high school and college aged youth who account for 75% of sexually transmitted infections (Almodovar, 1994, p. 224). Nevertheless, “[s]ince the late fifteenth century syphilis epidemic, government officials have been defining female prostitutes as ‘vectors’ for the transmission of diseases to clients (and clients’ wives and children)” (Alexander, 1997, p. 86), and so the perception that sex trade workers are transmitters of disease is firmly rooted in social consciousness.

Although medical deviantisation, through the deployment of discursive practices relating to mental illness and physical illness, purports to be rooted in scientific and medical fact, it relies heavily on both the legislated criminalisation of the individual sex

trade worker and her body, and on the moral standards reinforced by widely accepted social norms and expectations. This again relates to the sexual double standard, and leads me to question if medical deviantisation is presented in articles covering the murders of sex trade workers? In other words, do any articles imply that the victims were mentally ill? Or that they were vectors of disease? Do such statements then insinuate that sex workers are somehow at fault for their own victimisation? I now turn to such moralised deviance to better understand the marginalised and stigmatised place of sex trade workers within western societies.

Moral Deviance

Perhaps the most sinister deviantisation of sex trade workers takes place through the definition, interpretation, and application of moral norms. These moral expectations, based largely on a sexual double standard that restricts women far more than it does men (Synnott, 1993), have their roots in the history of sex work. As Larsen explains, in ancient Babylonia all unmarried women were “required to prostitute themselves to the first man who approached them in certain designated religious temples” (2000, p. 52). While this policy was certainly not free from abuses and oppression (namely the idea that women were sexual property), it did mean that sex work did not carry the same deviant identity that it does today.

Larsen explains that it was the rise of Christianity throughout most of Europe that added a moral dimension and stigma to the sex trade (ibid, p. 53). This new stigma led to the ostracising and marginalising of sex trade workers; a stigma that would continue to

grow and gain force throughout the Protestant revolution and the rise of medicalisation that came with modernity. For example, “[in] the moral crusades of the late 19th and early 20th centuries...the whore became the scapegoat for a new wave of anti-sexual hysteria” (Roberts, 1992, p. 246). This hysteria, born from Victorian values of propriety and repression and Protestant ideals of purity and the work ethic, helped to reinforce the idea that the regulation of sex trade workers was a matter of moral regulation; that, as Foucault would have it, sexuality was a form of truth about an individual (1978). It would seem, based on the acceptance of these moral regulations that we, as a society, are unable to fathom that any normal adult would choose to work in the sex trade; and this disbelief that has led to the development of a forced/voluntary dichotomy. Sex trade workers are categorised as either ‘forced’ workers (those who have been forced into the trade against their will), or as ‘voluntary’ workers (those who enter the trade of their own volition). Svati Shah points to one major problem with this division, noting that much of the debate surrounding sex work “...centres on the distinction between ‘forced’ versus ‘voluntary’ sex work, as if all the problems and conditions of participating in prostitution begin and end with the moment of recruitment or entry into the trade” (2005, p. 316). She makes an excellent point; by focusing on the point of entry, issues that affect women throughout their working lives, including violence, oppression and marginalisation, are not given the full attention that they deserve. Furthermore, there is a moral effect to such a division. Sex workers who fall into the ‘forced’ category are absolved of all responsibility and agency; they are viewed as helpless victims of another person’s crimes (i.e.: their pimps or families of origin). On the other hand, women who work in the trade voluntarily are

doubly stigmatised; once for being a sex trade worker, and again for doing so of their own free will. This value judgment is placed on sex workers because so many people believe it is immoral to sell one's body (Almodovar, 1994, p. 222). Continuing with this line of thinking, not only is the act of prostitution considered immoral, the women who perform the act are considered immoral as well, so that the judgment is not just about the act being deviant, it is about the sex workers *themselves* being deviant.

Finally, there is a third moral feature, beyond the historical background and forced/voluntary dichotomy of sex work. This occurs via the purported threat that sex work poses to modern social values of community safety and familial relationships. In terms of community safety, this is played out through the conflation between sex work and other forms of 'crime'. As mentioned earlier, there is a widespread belief that the sex trade is the lynchpin tying together and encouraging many other types of crime. Paraphrasing the reports of police officers, Sansfaçon writes, "...officers also express the opinion that street prostitution must be controlled because it is the form [of sex work] most likely to increase criminality" (1984, p 132). Or, in another police-derived statement, "[p]olice claim[ed] that prostitution-related businesses were being used to finance more serious types of crime, for example, drug distribution" (Brock, 1998, p. 33). The implication that sex work is related to crimes such as drug use, theft, and physical violence is used to create a moral panic regarding the sex trade and to further deviantise sex trade workers in the eyes of the general public. As a result, sex work comes to be seen "...as a threat to the quality of life, rather than a reflection of it" (Brock, 1998, p. 56).

Being a threat to the public's quality of life (which problematically assumes that all citizens share the same quality of life in the first place) is further constructed as a threat to family values. Thus, "...sex workers are...treated as immoral, corrupting influences on the ideals of marriage and family" (Shah, 2005, p. 308). Along with blame for disintegrating social values and encouraging sexual impropriety, sex trade workers are charged with luring husbands away from their wives and families. Julia O'Connell Davidson explains this in relation to masturbation (another form of deviant sexuality), stating that both sex work and self-pleasuring;

...represent a threat to the heterosexual family unit: 'While masturbation threatened to take sexual desire and pleasure inward, away from the family, prostitution took it outward'...The problem with masturbation and prostitution is essentially quantitative: doing it alone and doing it with lots of other people rather than doing it in pairs. (2002, p. 95)

In other words, beyond all issues of criminality and medicine, sex work is deviant because it is a threat to our modern normative, nuclear family life, a threat to our morality. McLaughlin explains that, "[p]rostitution [is] dangerous for its participants, the community, and the social order" (1991, p. 258).

My first question concerning these morality issues is, as always, how does this play out in news discourses? For example, do news discourses present the women both as morally deviant for being involved in illicit sexuality and as morally sound in their lives outside of sex work? Are there discursive links made between sex work and other types of crime? Finally, are these women presented as inside of or a threat to 'normal' family life?

Deviance and the Media

Drawing on these criminal, medical, and moral constructions of female sexuality, the media shapes and directs public discourse by deploying certain information in carefully structured and limited ways to the general public. Unfortunately, and despite the media's self-proclaimed objectivity, much of the reporting on sex trade workers is done with a sharply negative slant and a generous amount of 'spin'. In their research on newspaper articles relating to 50 sex trade workers murdered in or gone missing from Vancouver between 1983 and 2001, Yasmin Jiwani and Mary Lynn Young point out the prejudice and discrimination against sex workers that ran throughout the media's coverage (2006). "Violence against sex workers, who are generally regarded as society's 'others,' tends to cast them as...blameworthy - blaming them for being in the wrong place and doing the wrong kind of work" (ibid, p. 901). They point out that a recurring theme in the media is to emphasise that the murdered and missing women were mostly "Aboriginal, drug-addicted sex-trade workers" (ibid, p. 902) as if that meant that they somehow 'deserved' such violence, that as long as a person was not any of those things she/he would not have to worry about facing a similar fate, or that such a loss is not crucial to society at large because these are not women of worth. Lisa McLaughlin makes the same point in her discussion of media portrayals when she writes, "the [media] implication is that the prostitute has invited her own death, that she is in a sense her own victim, because 'that's what bad girls get'" (1991, p. 253).

Along with victim blaming, the media also determines what stories get covered. Janelle Fawkes, President of the Scarlet Alliance, reports that:

Several sex workers say that they feel used by politicians, feminists and the media. They think that sex workers are only listened to and being paid attention to if they say the correct things, i.e. that they find prostitution appalling, that they are victims, that they have stopped selling sex and will never go back, and that they are grateful to the current prostitution policy and the policy makers. (2005, p. 22)

Sex workers, or those otherwise involved in the trade, who have anything positive to report about their experiences are excluded from the discussion because such information would run counter to the image the media is intent on producing; the image that not only is sex work deviant and immoral, but that those involved in it are immoral (or at the very least, morally weak) as well, and that it is not just an occupation, it is an identity. Jiwani and Young take up this point when they mention that the only time a more positive light is shed on the media coverage of the missing women is to emphasise their roles as mothers, daughters, and sisters. This description serves two functions:

On the one hand, it makes these women more like 'us.' It rescues them from a place of degeneracy to a zone of normality. On the other hand, it conforms to the dominant hegemonic values, in that the only women who can be rescued or are worth saving are mothers, daughters and sisters - women like us. (Jiwani and Young, 2006, p. 904)

The media has the ability to influence public opinions on the sex trade, and by emphasising either the negative aspects (drug use, poverty, violence) or the positive (familial ties, hopes, dreams) it is at least partly responsible for shaping the public's understanding of these murders and disappearances.

Conclusion

Sex workers face real risks on a daily basis; legal risk, physical risk, and human risk; legal and medical discourses contribute heavily to these. In terms of the current

justice system, Glenn Betteridge explains, “[i]n the Canadian discussion and debate about how to solve the so-called ‘problem’ of prostitution (and in particular street-based prostitution), sex workers’ perspectives and experiences have *rarely* been taken into account” (2006, p. 2, emphasis in original). Laws that make solicitation for the purpose of prostitution illegal (Section 213 of the Criminal Code of Canada), “drive people into hiding and into unsafe places and situations” (ibid, p. 4). Betteridge refers to research that shows that:

[T]he enforcement of the communicating section [213]...displaces street-based prostitution from centrally located...neighbourhoods to industrial or remote neighbourhoods where sex workers have few people to turn to for help if prospective clients...become aggressive or violent.
(2006, p. 10)

Therefore, not only does criminalisation of sex work increase sex workers’ risks in terms of arrest and incarceration, it also increases their physical risks as it alienates them from police protection. For example, the 1985 report from the Canadian Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution stated that girls and women in the sex trade had a mortality rate forty times higher than that of the national average (Prostitution, 1985, p. 350). Similarly, a study of the sex trade in five different countries reported that 62% of sex trade workers had been raped and 73% had been physically assaulted while working in the trade (Farley, M. et al., 1998). Compared to Canadian statistics showing that one in four women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime (Brickman, J., Briere, J., 1984), it is undeniable that sex trade workers face a significantly higher rate of violence than non-sex working women.

I argue that there are two major reasons for the differences in rates of violence; the first is that the marginalisation and dehumanisation of sex trade workers gives men ‘permission’ to take advantage of, and abuse, sex trade workers. The second reason, tied closely to the first, is that because engaging in sex work is illegal, women experiencing violence cannot go to the police without the risk of implicating themselves in illegal activity. Such legal structures contribute to discourse that frames sex workers as responsible for their own victimisation, discourse that sees sex workers as ‘deserving’ of what they get or, at the very least, positioned not to expect the legal and social protections available (in theory) to non-deviant, good women. Furthermore, because deals between sex workers and clients must be made quickly and in ‘dark alleys’ to avoid police detection, sex workers have less time to assess a client, and are more desperate to accept any client that comes along, regardless of whether or not he seems ‘safe’. These rushed transactions, spurred on by the marginalisation created, in part, by the legal system, place sex workers in positions of greater risk of violence, poverty, and adverse physical outcomes. These adverse outcomes are not necessarily violent or extreme, it may be that they simply make the worker sick, or unable to do her job. For example, “[s]ex workers...[give] evidence that their ability to use condoms is limited when they face challenges of extreme poverty and risk of violence” (Betteridge, 2006, p. 14). This decreased ability to use condoms increases a sex worker’s likelihood of contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI). In a complete circle of policing, medical discourse is then more likely to view sex workers as transmitters of STIs, thereby further increasing the marginalisation and stigma of sex workers. For example, Hallgrimsdottir, Phillips,

and Benoit cite numerous media headlines that draw on this medical discourse, such as, “AIDS-infected prostitute still working”, “CRD can’t curb AIDS hooker”, “AIDS-carrying hooker risks two-year penalty”, and “HIV woman barred from city core” (2006, p. 271). These headings, and this discourse, only serve to reduce a sex trade worker from being a full member of the community to being a threat to public health and safety, and once again a vector requiring punishment rather than a recipient who should be protected from disease.

Medical and legal discourses diminish the status of sex trade workers and deprive them of their basic human rights. For example, Section 212 of the Criminal Code of Canada, which makes ‘living off the avails’ of prostitution illegal, infringes on sex workers’ basic right to freedom of association and criminalises sex workers’ personal relationships. Further, “a sex worker’s elderly aunt, boyfriend, or baby-sitter can be arrested for pimping” simply because the sex worker uses her earnings to help support them, her family members” (LeMoncheck, 1997, p. 116). Similarly, discourse that assumes all sex workers are carriers of STIs infringes on sex workers’ right to privacy and arguably discourages sex workers from accessing health care for fear of exposure and judgement. Only by arguing for the rights of sex trade workers can there be hope for change; as Betteridge states, “[t]he idea that someone might choose prostitution as a profession or as a way of earning income is controversial. However, we recognise prostitution as a valid choice and the agency of sex workers to make their own choices because doing so is respectful of their human rights” (Betteridge, 2006, p. 6).

The absence of recognition for sex workers' basic rights is not only an issue in legal and medical discourse, it is also a systemic issue in media discourse. In recognising such patterns of dehumanisation across law, medicine, and media, I have attempted to address the effects of these interdisciplinary discourses on sex workers' vulnerability to violence. My intent with this research is to point out and to speculate on the effects of such dehumanising and dismissive absences and presences in the media coverage of the missing and murdered sex trade workers of Edmonton. By doing so, perhaps a greater understanding of the rights and needs of sex trade workers, women who *are* and *should be* treated as worthwhile members of the greater community, can become a focal point of future legislative, medical, and media discourse.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Foucauldian and feminist theories both identify the body as the site of power, both point to the local and intimate operations of powers rather than focusing exclusively on the supreme power of the state. Both bring to the fore the crucial role of discourse in its capacity to produce and sustain hegemonic power and emphasise the challenges contained within marginalised and/or unrecognised discourses. (Mills, 1992, p. 276)

After considering the literature discussed in the first chapter, and reflecting on my first-hand experiences with the media coverage of the murders of sex trade workers, I decided to undertake a research project grounded in Foucauldian and Feminist theories, deployed through discourse analysis. Michel Foucault, a theorist central to the development of poststructuralism, wrote that analysis should focus on ‘regimes of practices.’, in other words, “...what is said and what is done, rules imposed and reasons given, the planned and taken for granted”, instead of focusing on institutions or ideologies directly (1991, p. 75). Feminist theory, particularly Standpoint theory, similarly, is based on “starting off research from women’s concerns and practices in everyday life rather than from the concerns of...institutions and disciplines” (Harding, 2007, p. 48). In other words, there is an emphasis in these methods on studying everyday lives and everyday interactions; in studying the constitution of subjects and the relations of power and knowledge.

Utilising discourse analysis, with its emphasis on the operation of power through discourse, in combination with feminist theory, enabled me to effectively unpack and

understand discursive practices surrounding the murders of sex trade workers in Edmonton, Canada. Discursive practices are the social demonstrations of the ‘rules of formation’; the particular sets of statements, and the rules for the construction of objects, subject positions, concepts, and strategies, that are “constituted by combinations of prior discursive and non-discursive elements” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 41). In other words, in the case of the Edmonton murders, the way that the women are spoken about (‘discursively constituted’) effects the way that their murders are understood and managed, which in turn effects the way that the women are spoken about, and so on, in an endless cycle. Discursive practices, then, are the social actions that constitute, and are constituted by, rules of discourse.

Discourse Analysis

I chose to use discourse analysis in this project because of the power of language and media in shaping people’s lived experiences (Gamson et al., 1992; Fairclough, 1995a; Wandel, 2001). Paterson states, “[c]oncerns have been raised internationally about the role of the media in influencing public opinion and by implication, social policy...” (2006, p. 294). And as Fairclough (1995a) writes, “the substantively linguistic and discursive nature of the power of the media is one good argument [for the analysis of mass media]” (p. 2). Thus, in my approach, the focus of inquiry is not the actual murders of sex trade workers, but rather, the discourses surrounding the murders. Critical discourse analysis, as described by Fairclough (2003):

...oscillat[es] between a focus on specific texts and a focus on what I call the 'order of discourse', the relatively durable structuring and networking of social practices. Critical discourse analysis is concerned with continuity and changes at this more abstract, more structural, level, as well as with what happens in particular texts. (p. 3)

Along these lines, I focus on eight years' worth of newspaper coverage, ranging from the beginning of 2001 to the end of 2008. As I argue below, this length of time is long enough to allow me to see "continuity and change" in the discourse relating to women, violence, risk, and marginalisation, while still being of a manageable size.

Critical discourse analysis was chosen because I wanted to examine the meanings and effects, both implicit and explicit, of media representations. As Paterson explains, citing Michel Foucault, "discourse analysis...provides...a means to examine the 'constitution of knowledges, discourse, domains of objects, etc.'" (2006, p. 295). By conducting a discourse analysis of newspaper reports, I am able to examine what is being said about the murders, the victims, and the circumstances, along with being able to deconstruct the meanings *behind* the discourses and what is being constructed in terms of what 'the public' can or should know and think about the murders and the kinds of women who are likely to experience this type of victimisation.

Ian Parker explains, "when discourse analysts read texts they are continually putting what they read into quotation marks: 'Why was this said, and not that? Why these words, and where do the connotations of the words fit with different ways of talking about the world?'" (2004, p. 252). Discourse analysis is more than simply looking at what is being said or written; it is about questioning why some things are spoken about

while others are not, why a certain vocabulary is used and another is not, and why some people have the opportunity to speak while others do not. These ‘absences’ and ‘presences’, so to speak, are revealed through discourse (or lack thereof) relating to the often impoverished and racialised position of sex trade workers, the voices chosen to speak on behalf of the lost women (police, family, friends, ‘experts’), and so on. Critical discourse analysis is also ideally suited to expose and speculate on the silence surrounding social problems that can lead women into sex work, and it can also offer a critique of individualised narratives about why sex workers end up ‘in the trade’. By offering up individualised explanations for women’s involvement in sex work, as well as for the violence inflicted on them by men like Thomas Svekla, as I will discuss later, news discourse denies the presence of the systemic social problems of racism, poverty, and violence against women.

These kinds of presences and absences are the patterns I examine in my critical discourse analysis of the newspaper articles. In describing critical discourse analysis, Fairclough (1995a) argues:

Analysis of the language of media texts...can illuminate three sets of questions about media output:

1. How is the world (events, relationships, etc.) *represented*?
2. What *identities* are set up for those involved in the programme or story (reporters, audiences, ‘third parties’ referred to or interviewed)?
3. What *relationships* are set up between those involved (e.g. reporter-audience, expert-audience or politician-audience relationships)?

(p. 5, emphasis mine)

By applying these analytic concepts, I interrogate these texts along a number of lines. For example, how are the murders of sex trade workers *represented*, in other words, are the

women seen as victims? As deserving of their fate? As in need of rescue? How are the *identities* of sex trade workers, as well as women, men, police, clients, and murderers constructed and framed? What sort of *relationships* are constructed between the reporter/general public and women working in the sex trade? Between sex workers and their clients? Are they relationships of safety and risk? Of authority and margin? Of citizen and non-citizen? I argue that sex trade workers, perceived to be a homogenous, deviant group, are often constructed as victims implicated in their own deaths, as ‘lost’ women who lived on the margins of society who could not be rescued from themselves or from their tragic ends.

By deconstructing the language used in newspaper reports, “critical discourse analysis provides ways of *challenging systems of knowledge and power* by interrogating and contextualising dominant discourses” (Carroll, 2004, p. 225, emphasis in original). And as Parker writes, “discourse analytic research should go beyond...the identification of discourses, and consider the role of institutions and power (2004, p. 252). Thus, the decisions newspaper reporters and editors make surrounding language, coverage, and perspective reflect the power operating in the news media and beyond. It is not just a matter of what the newspapers decide to print, it is a matter of deep-seated ways of knowing, thinking, and doing in the social world. The media, by tapping in to this knowledge shapes, and is shaped by, broader discourses of social concepts.

Finally, because of Michel Foucault’s extensive influence in the field of discourse analysis, and because of his emphasis on discourse and power relations, I have conducted my discourse analysis through a specifically Foucauldian (and feminist) lens.

This lens allows for a more focused analysis of the interplay of power, discourse, and gender within the newspaper reports, offering a richer understanding of the impact of media discourse in the lives (and deaths) of women working in the sex trade.

Foucauldian Theory

Foucauldian theory is suitable to my work because it is not interested in uncovering the “‘true’ nature of the problems that underlie truth games: rather, the focus remains on the effects of those truth games, and on how truth games work to effect social and moral regulation” (Malacrida, 2003, p. 45). If ‘truth’ is constructed, and Foucault and other post-structuralists would argue that it is, then there is no real ‘truth’ about the murders of sex trade workers, and therefore there can (and will) be competing discourses on the topic that produce varying effects. In other words, discourses that operate to blame sex workers for being involved in the ‘wrong’ kind of work are no more ‘true’ than discourses that frame sex workers as ‘innocent victims’, or those that remind us of the familial relationships of the murdered women versus those that construct sex workers as ‘already lost’. The only differences are that some people have greater means to deploy these discourses (in this case news reporters), as opposed to groups with comparatively little opportunity to spread their points of view, and that some groups’ claims may resonate more effectively because they reflect common norms. As a result of this unequal access to discursive power, some discourses will be picked up by a wider audience, while others will remain marginal at best.

A poststructuralist ontology such as this is central to my view that there is no single truth, that varying discursive practices produce varying versions of ‘truth’; but, while this perspective offers room for competing and otherwise marginalised discourses, it is often criticised for focusing on discursive practices to the point of dismissing real human subjects. Many of these critiques come from feminist standpoint theorists who place particular emphasis on subjecthood and marginalised peoples (Hartsock, 1990, Fraser, 1989). As Nancy Hartsock writes, “poststructuralist theories such as those put forward by Michel Foucault fail to provide a theory of power for women” (1990, p. 158). She goes on to ask, “[w]hy is it that just at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced [women, minority groups, etc.] begin to demand the right to name ourselves, to act as subjects rather than objects of history, that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes problematic?” (ibid, p. 163). Here Hartsock is referring to the oft mentioned critique of Foucault that he fails to offer any real room for resistance because he sees the subject as fully constituted by discourse and relations of power. This failure to study the social world from the perspective of marginalised groups who, because of their position, are better able to recognise the operation of power in every day life is perhaps the most commonly cited disagreement that feminist standpoint theorists have with Foucauldian theory. However, many other feminists, including myself, would disagree with such a critique, and would argue instead that Foucault’s focus on the role of discourse, and on relations of power, leaves *more* room for resistance for marginalised citizens (as discussed below). Furthermore, standpoint feminism, arguably, tends towards

essentialism and the idea that a woman's perspective, while situated, will also be shared and enduring, and that all women because of their positionality, will see and experience similar things. Such an idea is contrary to my research, where divisions amongst good/bad and deserving/fallen women are clearly operating.

Feminist Theory

Feminist theorists who utilise Foucault's work see no problem with his concept of subjecthood constituting (and being constituted by) discourse and relations of power (Mills, 1992; Butler, 1993). Foucault's analogy of power being net-like, because power comes from nowhere and everywhere at once, means that all subjects 'have' power, and are thus able to resist. As Sara Mills explains;

...Foucault's notion of power and discourse entails the notion of resistance; the structures lay out for women a range of behaviour patterns concerning sexuality, morality, relation with others, which are there to be contested (they are after all only discourses), or complied with. Since discourse is something you do, it is an interaction, a relation of power, rather than something which you receive, which is imposed on you; it is possible to work against it. (1992, p. 277)

This feminist take on Foucault is the one that I draw on in my own research. If each subject has access to discursive power then there *is* room for resistance. Certainly not everyone has the same degree of power in developing or disseminating discourse, but discursive power is understood as being fluid and transitive. Again, this can be seen in the production of multiple, and often times competing, discourses concerning the murders of sex trade workers. For example, my decision to separate strictly 'news' articles from

'human interest' articles that include the voices of family members, draws on the production of competing discourses and recognises the power of such voices from the margins. Sex worker organisations, such as the Prostitution Awareness and Action Foundation of Edmonton (PAAFE), publish pamphlets and web pages that operate to dispel the myths concerning the sex trade and sex trade workers, and are, in turn, frequently cited by the media in the newspaper reports. Furthermore, editorial articles and letters-to-the-editor provide opportunities to citizens-at-large to disagree with news reports, thus demonstrating subjects' resistance to dominant discourses.

Beyond its understanding of the subject in relation to Foucauldian theory, feminist theory is useful for my research project for a number of reasons. Firstly, because the victims have exclusively been women, and because violence against women has been a core concern of feminist theory and action, I feel it is vital to consider the role(s) that gender plays in these crimes. How is the media coverage affected by the sex and gender of the victims, and what role(s) might sex and gender play in the motivation behind these crimes? Letherby (2003) emphasises the "need to investigate and theorise the social world from the perspective of women" (p. 44), an argument that can be found in the works of many feminist theorists, including Nancy Hartsock (1998). Because the lives of women "differ structurally from men's" (Hartsock, 1998, p. 107), it is only through studying the world of women from a feminist perspective that we can gain an accurate understanding of women's experiences.

Secondly, Dorothy Smith argues that by applying a feminist perspective in our writing and research we gain the ability to analyse power as it operates in the everyday lives of women (1987). Thus, by using a feminist analysis, I am better able to see gendered power relations as they operate in the policing and controlling of women's lives. I argue that these relations are expressed in news discourse through victim blaming, rescue language, the implicit and explicit division between bad women (sex workers) and good women (not sex workers). In turn, these discursive descriptions are most effectively understood in terms of how they might/do affect *all* women's lives by employing a feminist perspective. Victim blaming places women at fault for their own victimisation. Being engaged in the 'wrong' kind of work, being a part of the 'wrong' social class, and being involved in the 'wrong' type of sexuality are just three examples of how sex trade workers might be blamed for the violence enacted against them, and in turn how women who have *not* been victims of such violence can be sure to avoid a similar experience. Similarly, rescue language, that is, discourse that frames sex workers as being in need of help or requiring some sort of intervention, re-creates sex workers as helpless, hapless women incapable of making the 'right' choices on their own. Again, this can then be understood by all women that we require assistance in making choices 'for our own good', that we are incapable of exercising responsible agency, or that all of us are 'at risk' of making similar 'bad choices' regarding our lives and sexuality.

As Lazar notes, feminist analysis emphasises "the need to theorise and analyse the particularly insidious and oppressive nature of gender as an omni-relevant category in

most social practices” (Lazar, 2005, p. 3). Lazar refers to this method as “distinctly ‘feminist politics of articulation’” (ibid). A feminist perspective is of particular importance not only because all of the murder victims in my research are women, but also because women have been “largely ignored in traditional approaches to knowledge” (Westkott, 1990, p. 59).

Along with women, many other ‘minority groups’ have also been ignored in traditional research, and feminist theory is not developed solely for women but instead takes intersectionality into account; it is a body of theory that can be applied to studying the lives of all marginalised groups. Thus, along with my focus on gender in the discourse, I feel it is also important to consider the implications of race. I examined discursive issues of race because a disproportionate number of the victims have been aboriginal women (in a city of predominantly white citizens). As Jiwani and Young discovered in their discourse analysis of the presentation of sex trade workers in *The Vancouver Sun*, “Aboriginal women in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside oscillate between invisibility and hypervisibility; invisible as victims of violence and hypervisible as deviant bodies” (2006, p. 899). This conflation of race with sexual ‘deviance’ has a long history, as discussed in Sander Gilman’s work, “The Hottentot and the Prostitute”. In this piece, Gilman follows the history of the constructed relation between the ‘steatopygia’ (protruding buttocks) of Hottentot women and their supposed hypersexuality (Gilman, S., 2008, p. 45). This conflation of race with deviant sexuality is also described in Sherene Razack’s writing on the murder of Pamela George, and relates

to the hypersexualisation of Aboriginal women directly. Here, Razack writes, “newspaper records of the 19th century indicate that there was a near universal conflation of Aboriginal woman and prostitute and an accompanying belief that when they encountered violence, Aboriginal women simply got what they deserved” (2005, p. 270) While one would like to think that we have come a long way from the 19th century in terms of race relations, I still felt it necessary to examine what differences might be present in newspaper reports on white victims compared to aboriginal victims. Would they receive the same amount of coverage? Who was more likely to receive front-page coverage? How would the discourses change as the race of the victims changes?

Discourse analysis stemming from a feminist standpoint perspective is very useful in this regard, as paying particular attention to the use of language will reveal subtle, but important, differences. As Doane explains:

Through racial discourse, individuals and groups ‘frame’ racial issues as they strive for ideological and political advantage. In essence, racial discourse is a form of propaganda in which social actors employ rhetorical strategies in order to make ‘claims’ and promote a particular interpretation of a social issue. (2006, p. 256)

Because members of the dominant group have far greater access to media production, and are in the privileged position of having their voices heard, it is relatively easy for them to disseminate their claims about race. Doane writes, citing van Dijk, “[d]ominant groups enjoy disproportionate access to the vehicles of transmission for discourse, including government, educational institutions, and *the media*” (2006, p. 256, emphasis mine). For

this reason, it is clear that “[w]e *should* talk about discourse and power in the same breath” (Parker, 2004, p. 259, emphasis in original). Furthermore, as Stuart Hall explains:

...the media construct...a definition of what *race* is, what meaning the imagery of race carries, and what the ‘problem of race’ is understood to be. They help to classify out the world in terms of the categories of race. The media are not only a powerful source of ideas about race. They are also one place where these ideas are articulated, worked on, transformed and elaborated. (2000, p. 273, emphasis in original)

Through this research I explored what definitions of race are constructed and presented to the Edmonton public; did the *Journal* and the *Sun* present the murders of aboriginal women differently than the murders of white women? If so, how? In what ways? How, if at all, did they address race, and what are the implications of these absences and presences?

Reflexivity

In fitting with my feminist perspective, I needed to be critical of my position in relation to the research topic, and how my personal points of view might affect the research process, by taking a reflexive stance. Reflexivity "is the critical gaze turned toward the self [in the research process]" (Koch, 1998, p. 1184). This involves understanding "how [my] data analysis processes, and project as a whole, [are] influenced by [my] epistemological, ontological and theoretical assumptions as well as other personal, interpersonal, emotional, institutional and pragmatic influences" (Mauthner, N. and Doucet, A., 2003, p. 415). During the collection and analysis of data, this meant being aware of how my location(s) in the social world direct

and effect my actions and interpretations. As I mentioned in the opening vignette, as an Edmontonian with a familial connection to the sex trade, I have particular reasons for choosing this research project, and these reasons will undoubtedly be reflected throughout my work. However, the strength of a reflexive, feminist grounding is the open acknowledgement of a researcher's implications in her own research; there is no positivist expectation to maintain 'objectivity'. The point is to be self-aware, to recognise that my "reading and writing are done in actual locations at actual times and under definite material circumstances" (Smith, 1987, p. 108).

I took measures to ensure that my research was not clouded by my own situatedness, as a feminist, Edmontonian, and personally situated social actor, in the research problem by adhering to stringent data analysis and by being willing to consider alternative explanations. I also engaged in measures throughout the project to examine my own subjectivity in relation to the data collection and analysis; this included keeping a journal of my thoughts, reactions, and feelings towards the data, and referring to previously conducted research in similar fields to verify and support my findings. The strength of acknowledging one's situatedness and working *with it* is central to feminist epistemology. Furthermore, as Smith writes, "[f]rom different standpoints different aspects of the ruling apparatus...come into view" (1987, p. 107). Perhaps as an Edmontonian with an immediate and personal connection to the sex trade I am able to offer a unique and powerful understanding of the discourse under review.

The use of both Foucauldian and feminist theory, deployed through discourse analysis, will permit me to examine how discourse operates in specifically gendered and racialised ways, and to tie that analysis to broader discursive practices and (re)constructions. By employing a feminist perspective in my research, my aim is to draw attention to and critique the system(at)ic discursive marginalisation of women working in the sex trade. By utilising a (Foucauldian) discourse analytic grounding I am able to interpret and shed light on the deployment of particular news-based viewpoints that reflect and (re)create public discourse surrounding the deaths of these specific sex trade workers and the lives of sexual ‘deviants’ who work in the trade more broadly.

Sampling

The newspaper reports under consideration here concern the twenty murders and disappearances of sex trade workers from the Edmonton, Alberta area between the years 2001 and 2008. For my data I decided to focus specifically on newspapers as opposed to other media sources such as television, internet, or radio. I argue that there is a greater level of permanency to newspapers than to electronic media, in that the paper itself becomes a tangible cultural artifact. As a reader engages with a newspaper there is a certain level of immediacy and intimacy to the material, as opposed to, for example, watching a television news program from across the room, while cooking dinner, after a long day at work. Thus, newspapers, potentially, have the capacity to deeply impact people’s attitudes and beliefs because the printed text feels more real and therefore more

‘true’. Explaining this understanding of ‘news as truth’, Lennard Davis traced the emphatic, legalistic division between truth and falsehood to the development of *news* itself, in the eighteenth century (cited in Mills, 1997, p. 59). Furthermore, “Foucault demonstrates that this will to truth is supported by a range of institutions: educational establishments, publishing houses, legal institutions, libraries, and so on, to the point that it is almost impossible to question this obsession with the truth and the factual” (ibid, p. 60). As a result, citizens take for granted that the information they are presented with in news articles is true (because it could not be called *news* otherwise), and therefore willingly accept such truth claims.

There is also the matter of accessibility, in that newspapers are affordable (and are often free in coffee shops, for example). While not all citizens have a television or an internet connection, it seems likely that the majority of a population will come into contact with a newspaper on a fairly regular basis, if only the front page through the glass casing on a public newspaper box. Further, newspapers receive ‘double coverage’ as they are nearly permanently accessible when they are stored in municipal and provincial archives and in on-line, electronic databases. For example, the archives of the Alberta Legislature have records of the Edmonton Journal dating back to the paper’s inception in 1903.

Newspapers also offer extensive coverage of local issues. While a news story may only get one or two minutes of coverage on a television or radio news program, and only for one day (or a few if it is a particularly major event), a newspaper will often publish

multiple columns on a single story, from slightly different perspectives, including news and editorial coverage, and will continue to provide (at least minimal) coverage over a longer period of time. Again, it can be argued, because news is generally understood to be ‘true’, that repeated coverage of certain events reinforces the ‘truth’ of such occurrences. The more an idea or ‘fact’ is entered in to public discourse, the more it becomes reified.

The Texts

Based on the enduring quality of texts, I decided to use Edmonton’s two daily, locally based newspapers; *The Edmonton Journal*, and *The Edmonton Sun*. Both of these publications are available in a variety of locations throughout the Edmonton region (convenience stores, newspaper boxes, coffee shops, etc.), and both are published 363 days a year (the exceptions being January 1 and December 25) in paper and on-line versions. The costs of the two papers are also comparable, with the Journal costing approximately twenty-five dollars a month for daily home delivery, and the Sun costing approximately twenty-three dollars (at the time of this writing), therefore being available to readers in similar economic situations.

Choosing to focus on these two papers, instead of including others such as the *Globe and Mail* or the *National Post* made sense for a number of reasons. First of all, because the crimes are Edmonton based, it seemed likely that local papers would offer more substantial coverage than national papers. Secondly, because the Journal and the Sun are aiming to sell newspapers to the same demographic (i.e. Edmontonians), I

predicted that they would use similar discourses to report on local crimes to local readers. In other words, while a national paper would be aiming at a more general Canadian audience, and reporting on events that are happening hundreds or thousands of kilometres away, the Edmonton papers would be reporting on crimes that are occurring nearby, and that affect readers more directly. Finally, in the interest of material and manageability, I felt that eight years worth of two daily newspapers would provide a thorough and substantial sampling of the discourses surrounding the murders without being overwhelming.

The eight years that I chose to focus on (2001-2008) were also chosen for a variety of more substantive reasons. Part of the reason I chose this time period was out of personal interest; as I mentioned in my introduction, it was during much of this time that I lived in Edmonton and came into contact with the discourses on a regular basis. Secondly, with the arrest of Robert Pickton in connection with the multiple murders of sex trade workers in the Vancouver, British Columbia area in February 2002, I predicted that there would be significant changes in the discourse with an increase in coverage, and perhaps a more serious or respectful attitude towards the 'lost' women. By beginning a year prior to this event I hoped to be able to identify any significant changes in discourse that arose as a result of the broader media coverage of crimes against sex workers relating to the Pickton arrest and trial. Thirdly, with the arrest of Thomas Svekla for the Edmonton-based murder of Theresa Innes in May 2006 (and of Rachel Quinney in January 2007), I suspected that there might be further changes in the news discourse as

the Edmonton community arguably came to the realisation that they too might have a serial killer in their midst.

Collection

I began my data collection by looking up (on the news website, www.canada.com) the names of each of the women who had been murdered or gone missing in Edmonton, as well as the dates that their bodies were discovered. This turned out to be a relatively easy task as there was extensive news coverage at that particular time on the trial of Thomas Svekla, much of which included lists of all of the relevant murders and disappearances.

With this grim list⁴ I went to the library at the Alberta Legislature building in Edmonton, where archives of all provincial newspapers are stored, and requested microfilms of the Edmonton Journal and Edmonton Sun. I used the microfilm version of the newspapers because electronic and online archives covering the applicable time period proved to be a more difficult format to obtain. Once I had retrieved the microfilms, I narrowed down my search to editions of the newspapers published around the time of each murder or disappearance. For example, in the case of Kelly Dawn Reilly, whose body was discovered on January 27, 2001, I requested the microfilm of newspapers published from January 27 to February 27, 2001. Facing the task of searching through

⁴ See Appendix A, where I have included the full names of the women and the dates of each of their disappearances or discoveries. I have included this list in an attempt to make 'real' the large scale of these homicides. In essence, I am seeking to avoid the same kind of dehumanisation the media, for the most part, has been guilty of.

nearly six thousand newspapers (two papers published 363 days a year over the course of eight years works out to 5808 newspapers), I felt it would be less daunting to begin with a more specific set of dates. This first round of collection, spanning newspapers published from 2001 through 2008, took place over five days during the first week of April 2009, and yielded a total of 431 articles. I was actually surprised by this first round of collection because there were more articles found in the Edmonton Sun, 249, compared to 182 articles found in the Journal. This was unexpected because the Sun is known for its full coverage of sports related news, whereas the Journal is known for its coverage of city-based news (which I presumed would include local murders). As I will discuss more fully in the next chapter, I came to the conclusion that the Sun offered more coverage not only because it tends to have a slightly sensationalist spin (and reports of murders are certainly dramatic), but also because it offers a well-rounded, ‘human interest’ look at many of the lost women, including interviews with family and friends, whereas the Journal simply reported the discovery of the bodies and little else.

Finding the articles was simply a matter of scanning through each page of the paper. I focused most heavily on the ‘News’ section of the papers, which for the Sun is spread throughout each issue, and for the Journal is found in the ‘A’ and ‘B’ sections (titled ‘news’ and ‘city plus’, respectively), but I also scanned through the other sections such as the ‘Classifieds’ and ‘Lifestyle’ where I did find the occasional article. I will admit though, that I would only briefly survey the ‘Sports’, ‘Entertainment’, and ‘Homes’ sections (in which I never found a single article). Though I did not have any

particular words or terms in mind when I started, while scanning each page I often found myself drawn to headlines that included words like, 'body', 'slain', 'killer', and 'police'. I also looked for images of either the women or of crime scenes as a way of narrowing my search.

My second round of collection began in May, 2009. I returned to the Provincial Archives and began searching through the microfilms again. This time, though, instead of including only specific dates, I searched through every day of the year, working backwards from the end of 2008, for both the Edmonton Sun and the Edmonton Journal. Needless to say, this was time consuming work, and over the course of six eight-hour days, my research assistant and I only managed to make it through one year (2008) of the two newspapers. After spending so much time with this more thorough search, I realised that the additional articles (22, bringing the total sample size to 453) we were finding with this technique were rather few and far between and offered little, if any, material that was not already covered in the original data set. After consulting with my thesis supervisor, it was decided that my time would be more fruitfully spent organising and analysing the original data set than spent going through the seemingly endless newspapers that offered only repetitive information. So, in the end, my sample was made up of 453 newspaper articles, 261 from the Edmonton Sun and 192 from the Edmonton Journal, published between the beginning of 2001 and the end of 2008.

Analysis

To begin my analysis, I read all of the newspaper articles in order to get a general sense of what was being said (or not), who was doing the speaking (or not), and how the murders and disappearances were being framed. This first-step allowed me to develop a clearer sense of what categories and codes would be useful for a better understanding and interpretation of the material. Based on the Grounded Theory method⁵ developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), I applied their ‘Constant Comparative Method’, a method “concerned with generating and plausibly suggesting many categories, properties, and hypotheses about general problems” (p. 104) to develop coding categories based on my collected data, as opposed to categories based in pre-existing theories. The ‘Constant Comparative Method’ involves joint coding and analysis, and “...is designed to aid the analyst...in generating a theory that is integrated, consistent, plausible, [and] close to the data” (ibid, p. 103). While my aim is not to generate a theory, this method does allow me to establish categories that are specific to and precisely suited to my data. As opposed to positivist research that requires the development of a hypothesis *before* collection and analysis of the data, the method of Grounded Theory argues for the reverse; establishing a hypothesis (or in my case, categories for coding) *after* examining the data set.

To give an example of how such categories emerge, I will use my category of ‘Police Source’. As I read through the articles I noticed a distinct pattern of social groups

⁵ It is important to note that, while I used a method developed for Grounded Theory, I did not use Grounded Theory Methodology. I made no attempt to develop a new or unique theory from analysis of my data (as is the aim of Grounded Theory on the whole). My methodology remains firmly based in discourse analysis.

or individuals being called on to provide information pertaining to the missing and murdered women. From a law-based standpoint, it was clear that either the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or the Edmonton Police Service were quoted as a source of information in every single case, without exception. I slotted these incidents under the category ‘Police Source’. This category points to the legitimisation of some social actors (and, in turn, the delegitimisation of others). As Van Dijk explains, discourse analysis “tries to answer questions such as: Who is speaking, how often and how prominently, and about what are [they] allowed to give their opinions?” (1991, p. 151). By examining these ‘sourcing’ patterns, I was able to answer these questions, and to draw on such patterns as examples of discursive power in practice.

Along with an emerging focus on who is given the opportunity to speak (and who is not), I also analysed the discourses concerning the personhood of the women who were murdered or went missing. Codes such as ‘addiction’, ‘socioeconomic status’, and ‘blame’ made note of how the women were presented to the public. For example, ‘addiction’ might include a quotation from a family member stating that the victim was working to overcome her addiction, or a police quotation mentioning that the woman was previously arrested for possession of drugs. Another example of my codes would be ‘family’. In this category I coded for any mention of the woman’s family status and background, for example, if the article mentioned whether or not she had children, where she was from, if she came from a happy or abusive family of origin, and so on. I was also

able to cross-reference codes, so that I could see, for example, if police officers used more negative ‘character’ reference terminology than, say, advocacy groups.

Another important code that developed out of my preliminary reading of the data set was ‘race’. I kept track of when the race or ethnicity of a woman was mentioned (or not), and if the race was made known implicitly or explicitly. As I will explain in the next chapter, I was surprised at first to notice that race often went unmentioned, an unexpected finding considering the disproportionate number of First Nations women who had been murdered. This is one particular moment where Foucauldian analytic tools showed their strength; for Foucault, absences are as telling as presences in the discourse, as much discourse follows an ‘authorised vocabulary’ (Foucault, 1978, p. 4) In this instance, despite the ubiquitous presence of race in the murders themselves, the ‘authorised vocabulary’ concerning the victimisation of women was, as shall be seen, not seen as related to issues such as race, but instead took a more individualising approach, for example, instead blaming women for the ‘poor choices’.

Unfortunately, due to the news articles being in hardcopy form only, I was not able to make use of any electronic coding programs; instead, I coded by hand, entering the different codes and tracking their frequency on a self-designed spreadsheet on the computer. While this was an enormously time consuming process, it provided me with an opportunity to be more familiar with, and physically connected to, my data. Though the assistance of a computer program would certainly have been useful, and in the long run

transcribing each of the articles may have been faster, I am, on the whole, satisfied with the process I employed.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the methods for my research, as well as my epistemological, ontological, and methodological underpinnings. Again, my research has been based on both Foucauldian theory surrounding the importance of discourse in producing knowledge, as well as feminist theory's emphasis on studying marginalised groups in order to reveal the effects of gendered and racialised power in citizens' everyday lives. My aim in reporting my findings is to demonstrate the central role of discourse in producing 'truth' and knowledge, and to show that competing discourses create opportunities for resistance and change.

Chapter 3: Analysis of Patterns and Themes

As I gathered and coded my data, a number of discursive themes began to emerge. Demonstrated by the categories I mentioned earlier, I found patterns in the discourse concerning race, addiction, and family life. I also found an expected discursive struggle between the dehumanisation and (re)humanisation of sex trade workers, as well as frequent reference to the marginality of the women's lives and deaths. What I had not anticipated was a recurring theme of blame, whether aimed at the missing and murdered women or at another group. Also, I had expected to see a significant amount of discourse surrounding the occupational or economic status of sex work, and was surprised to find only a handful of such statements. Overall, the data provided a rich collection of discursive themes, some of which supported each other, and some of which occurred in contradiction. While the richest aspects of analysis come from combining findings and patterns found in multiple categories, for the sake of clarity, I have attempted to organise my analyses here based on the distinct themes. However, frequent mention is made of the overlap between categories, and I have shown, as much as possible, the links between the themes.

Race

The topic of race was more absent from the articles than I had anticipated, being present in only 68 of the 453 articles (15%), and only mentioned directly in 23 headlines.

However, when it was present, it was there in precisely the way I expected. Considering the disproportionate number of Aboriginal women who have been victims in these murder cases and disappearances (10 of 20 victims were specifically identified as being of Aboriginal descent) and Aboriginal women's disproportionate representation in the sex trade in general, the newspapers did little, particularly during the first years of the coverage, to address the obvious racial implications of the murders. In fact, there was no mention of race in the articles from 2001, and only one reference in 2002. However, when race *was* mentioned, an overwhelming amount of attention was paid to race as Aboriginal, First Nations, or Native, with very little mention of race in the cases of White or Métis victims, and absolutely no attention paid to any other racial 'groups'. For example, of the 23 headlines I found that included a specific mention of race, 19 referred to First Nations (or Aboriginal or Native) peoples while only 3 referred to Métis or Inuit peoples, and only 1 referred to White peoples. This 'invisibility of whiteness' is a recognised phenomenon in many disciplines, including sociology, and is succinctly explained in an article by Richard Dyer. He writes:

The sense of whites as non-raced is most evident in the absence of reference to whiteness in the habitual speech and writing of white people in the West. We (whites) will speak of, say, the blackness or Chineseness of friends, neighbours, colleagues, customers or clients, and it may be in the most genuinely friendly and accepting manner, but we don't mention the whiteness of the white people we know. (2001, p. 540)

Similarly, in the case of these newspaper articles, the reporters and editors habitually mentioned the race of Aboriginal victims, but did not point out the 'whiteness' of White victims. There is a privilege of 'invisibility' in being White, a privilege entailing that a

White woman's decision to work in the sex trade, and her subsequent disappearance or murder is not related to her race, and, more importantly, is not made to be representative of all White people. White people, while being framed as just 'people' (as opposed to 'Black' people, or 'Aboriginal' people), hold, simultaneously, the position of 'any' human, and a position of distinct individuality. Turning again to Dyer, he writes, "White identity is founded on compelling paradoxes...a notion of being at once a *sort* of race and *the human race*, an *individual* and a *universal subject*" (ibid, p. 544, emphasis mine).

It seems that in the discourse of these headlines, race only matters in the case of 'others'. For example, when (the single) mention was made of a murder victim being White, it was simply descriptive, as in, "Skull found is that of a white woman" (Loyie, 2003, p. B4), whereas references to a victim being Métis insinuated some sort of weakness or character flaw, as in, "Métis woman tried but failed to get off the street" (Audette, 2005, p. B1). Finally, references to a victim being Aboriginal even went so far as to position aboriginal people in general as whiners or complainers, as in the case of, "Racism behind weak response to girls' disappearance, native leader says" (Kennedy, 2008, p. A9), or as burdensome; "Money won't fix aboriginals' problems: While meaningful change is needed, throwing cash around won't solve anything" (Gunter, 2008, p. A14).

In addition to the 23 articles that had headlines concerning race, there were 45 other articles that made reference to race within the body of the text (for a total of 68 articles, or 15% of the data set). These 68 articles were fairly evenly split between the

two newspapers, with 38 in the Edmonton Journal, and 30 in the Edmonton Sun. In keeping with the pattern established by the headlines, the vast majority of racial references concerned the Aboriginal background of the victims, or were focused on Aboriginality more generally, serving to strengthen the discursive link between being an Aboriginal woman and 'being' a sex trade worker. For example, both newspapers had coverage of the growing concern over the frequency of the murders and disappearances of Aboriginal women across Canada. An article from the Edmonton Journal states that there are "unsolved murders of 110 aboriginal women across Western Canada," (Loyie, 2003, p. A3) and was followed by numerous articles in 2006 that made mention of the systemic victimisation of Aboriginal women, such as, "the Native Women's Association of Canada...estimates [that there] are at least 500 cases of murdered or missing aboriginal women over the last 20 years" (Lambert, 2006, p. A5). Similarly, coverage of race in the Edmonton Sun was centred on the increased threat of violence faced by Aboriginal women (again in silent comparison to White women). We see that White victims were afforded the privilege of invisibility in terms of race, while for First Nations women, race was central to their victimisation, and to their work in the sex trade. As the Edmonton Sun wrote, "what we know is that prostituted women are trafficked throughout Canada, in particular, Aboriginal women" (Bhardwaj, 2006, p. 7). Further, the Edmonton Sun wrote:

Both of [Thomas] Svekla's victims were Aboriginal prostitutes, a group that Muriel Stanley-Venne of the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women says is the most vulnerable of all. 'There is an underlying, insidious hatred toward aboriginal women,' she said. (Merritt, 2008, p. 3)

Overall, while both newspapers seemed to recognise a link between victimisation and race (specifically Aboriginality), little work was done to understand, unpack, or explain *why* First Nations women were at greater risk of victimisation than women of White, Métis, or other racial backgrounds, or why First Nations women are over-represented within the sex trade to begin with. This imbalanced and incomplete coverage of race was precisely what I expected to find in the data, coverage that worked to reinforce racially-charged assumptions regarding the sexualities of First Nations women.

Addiction

While explanations for the links between violence against women and race were left largely unexplored in the data set, the perceived link between sex work and drug addiction has become so naturalised in popular discourse that it was no surprise to find multiple references to the role of drugs and addiction in the lives of women working in the sex trade. While only 18 out of the 453 headlines wrote specifically about drug addiction (a mere 4%), there were 37 articles in the Edmonton Sun (out of a total of 261) that mentioned addiction and 42 in the Edmonton Journal (out of a total of 192), representing fourteen percent and twenty-two percent of the articles, respectively, or an average of 17.4% of articles overall (79 out of 453). While this does not at all represent a majority of the articles, it does mean that one in every five or six articles relating to the murders of sex trade workers in Edmonton made some mention of drug use and/or

addiction, further reinforcing and (re)creating the discursive link between sex work and drugs.

These connections were often contradictory, and were made either by stating that sex trade workers are ‘trapped’ in the sex trade due to drugs, or by outlining the women’s inability to end their addictions. In the case of women being ‘trapped’ by drugs, the drugs are presented as being at fault, while in the case of addiction, the implication is that the women are to blame for not being strong enough to break the habit. For example, one headline reads, “Drugs raise dangers for prostitutes” (Cowan, 2005 p. 17), implying that the drugs are to blame for putting sex workers in a position of vulnerability. Conversely, a headline reading, “37-year-old woman was too addicted to crack to give up high-risk lifestyle” (Loyie et al., 2006, p. A1) places the fault with the woman herself and her individualised weakness, not with the drugs. Either way, this pattern of focussing readers’ attention on drug use and addiction, rather than on the human violence involved in the murders or on broader issues of social inequality, continues throughout the articles.

Part of this emphasis on addiction also involved actually blaming drug addictions for the deaths (either directly or indirectly) of the women, rather than blaming the murderer. For example, one headline reads, “Hooker’s death blamed on evils of crystal meth” (Palmer & Cowan, 2005, p. 3), while another states, “Drug addiction led to her violent end” (Simons, 2008, p. B1). Alongside such headlines, the content of numerous news articles also placed the blame on drugs. Perhaps the most extreme example of this appeared in the *Edmonton Sun* in May 2008. The journalist writes, “[Rachel] Quinney

had so much cocaine in her system she may have died of an overdose” (Canadian Press, 2008, p. 7). While this may in fact have been the case, since the newspaper had previously reported that the medical examiner was unable to determine Rachel Quinney’s cause of death, it seems in actuality to be quite irrelevant considering that Quinney’s body was found in a rural field, undressed, and mutilated, a gruesome fact that both newspapers recounted in detail on more than one occasion. Whether or not it was cocaine that actually *ended* Quinney’s life physiologically, the violence she encountered at the end of her life is *at least* as culpable for her death as were the effects of drug addiction, and the fact of that violence was undermined by the insinuation that drug use (and by extension, Quinney’s irresponsible ‘choice’ to use drugs) rather than the murderer was the ‘real’ culprit.

Blame

Aside from the blame placed on drug use and addiction, the murders of sex trade workers were blamed on a number of sources other than the actual murderers. I found an unanticipated collection of discourse concerning who or what was to blame for the murders, often pointing to the women themselves, society as a whole, or johns and pimps.

When it came to blaming the women for their own deaths, participation in a ‘high-risk’ lifestyle was the most common explanation. Two headlines that epitomise this framing state, “Word on the stroll: dead women took bigger risks” (Sinnema, 2003, p. A3) and “Sex trade worker lived life that put her at risk” (Simons, 2008, p. B1). This

label of a 'high-risk' lifestyle was frequently used by police and attempted to 'explain away' the tragedy of the women's murders. It implies that because they lived 'unsafe' lives, it could almost be expected that they would die in a violent or tragic way. The work of Anthony Giddens can help to explain this pattern of blaming the women for their own fates. In his writings on modernity, Giddens argues that "[m]odernity is constituted in and through reflexively applied knowledge" (1990, p.39). As such, members of modern society should be able to "apply knowledge" to make rational choices; in this case, the knowledge is that working in the sex trade is dangerous and life-threatening, and the rational choice is to not participate in such work. However, what is not addressed in this blaming of the victim is the complexity of these women's lives. The 'choice' to work in the sex trade is not a simple or straight-forward one, it is, in fact, arguably often not a 'choice' at all, but the headlines fail to offer this more complicated understanding. Within the body of the articles there were numerous examples of the victims being blamed, each of which is positioned through modernity's lens of rational, individualised choices. Statements such as, "[n]o question, women who stay in prostitution will continue to put themselves in danger" (Sinnema, 2003, p. A1), and "[l]iving outside the law, on the fringes of society, and engaging in extremely high-risk activities should not merit a death sentence, but doing so is a choice" (Gordon, 2004, p. 17, my emphasis) firmly place the responsibility of 'choice', and thus any subsequent victimisation, on the women. Time and again the newspaper articles look to sex trade workers' perceived 'high-risk' lifestyle choices as the reason for the women being murdered or disappearing.

In the cases where the women were not being blamed for their own deaths, the blame was often directed at society at large. Some examples were as direct as, "...the law is killing sex trade workers" (Walby, 2005, p. A15), citing flaws in the Criminal Code as responsible for pushing the sex trade to the outskirts of the city, and therefore putting sex trade workers in a more vulnerable position. As a similar article explains:

...when it comes to blame, [Valerie] Scott [executive director of the Sex Professionals of Canada] said that Ottawa must also assume its share...Scott argues the law forces women to work alone and in dangerous conditions - and leaves them vulnerable to predators.

(MacIsaac, 2008, p. 4)

While this type of discourse was far less common than that which blamed the women themselves, it was undeniably present and offered an alternative, if minor, point of view.

Finally, there were also a handful of articles that directed the blame towards johns and pimps, pointing to the "exploitation of women by men" (Hodgins, 2002, p. A15) as the root of the problem. One such article wrote, "[a] word of advice to prostitutes: Do not get into a john's car until you have quickly taken down the guy's description, make of car and license number and given it to one of your friends. If all the girls did this, then no john would dare to try to hurt one of them" (Kozinski, 2005, p. 10). While this recommendation is perhaps meant to offer help to sex trade workers, it fails to recognise that the current laws make it very difficult for women to either work in pairs or to take the time to write down all that information. Furthermore, such a suggestion also supports the work of Giddens, suggesting that sex workers are responsible for the fates that befall them, and that any violence they experience is the result of their own poor choices and

lack of care. In other words, focussing on the individual omits any recognition of the presence of larger social problems.

Though the discourses concerning blame were not exactly balanced, I was surprised to see any struggle at all. And while the vast majority of ‘blame’ articles pointed to the missing and murdered women, as I expected would be the case, there was at least some attempt in the discourse to offer up alternative explanations. It is worth noting, though, that all attempts to shift the blame from the women themselves to another source were made by family members, friends, or sex worker advocates, and not by police or reporters. While I offer a more complete discussion of the struggle over and within the discourse between various groups in the following chapter, I will briefly mention here, as Nancy Fraser states in her important reworking of Foucault and Habermas (1989), that truth claims and needs talk differ depending on who is speaking. As Fraser explains, “...needs talk [and truth claims] appears as a site of struggle where groups with unequal discursive (and non-discursive) resources compete to establish as hegemonic their respective interpretations of legitimate social needs [and truth claims]” (ibid, p. 166). As can be seen in the data here, there is a struggle (uneven as it may be) for discursive dominance between those speakers who place the blame on the women, and those who place the blame elsewhere. This was, however, not the only example of competing discourse I came across during my research, though, fortunately, the next competition was a far more evenly balanced one.

(De)(Re)Humanisation

One of the most prevalent themes that came up in the data set was the struggle between discursive attempts to dehumanise the murdered women and attempts to (re)humanise them. On the one side, dehumanisation and ‘othering’ was done through framing the murdered and missing women (and sex trade workers in general) as somehow different than the ‘average’ person, as deviant and therefore a threat to ‘our’ way of life. On the other side, there were numerous human interest pieces and editorials that struggled to (re)humanise the women by drawing attention to their roles as daughters, sisters, mothers and friends, and to their lives outside of the sex trade.

Dehumanisation

In the first chapter I argued that sex trade workers are deviantised through moral, legal, and medical discourse (see pp. 9-22), and based on my findings, similar techniques are, in fact, used to dehumanise sex trade workers in the data collected and analysed for this study.

In terms of morality, there were a number of articles that alluded to the women coming from ‘dysfunctional’ families and to the women being ‘unfit’ mothers. One of the earliest articles, reporting on the death of Kelly Reilly in 2001, mentions that she failed “...to return from a night of prostitution and drugs in time to care for her five-year old girl” (Bergot, 2001, p. 12). The motherhood status of nearly all the women is mentioned at least once (14 of the 20 women were mothers), and frequently in a negative light. For example, in the case of Debbie Darlene Lake, the Edmonton Journal wrote:

Her mother says [Debbie's] problems started when [her] third child, a girl just one month old, was taken by Social Services in January 2000. Lake doesn't know why. Debbie told her they'd just smoked a joint when Children's Services arrived.
(Sinnema & Kleiss, 2004, p. B2)

Another example appears in the Edmonton Sun; “[o]nly six months ago, Rachel [Quinney] gave birth to a baby boy who’s now in the care of Children’s Services. She also has a one-year-old daughter who’s being raised by her family” (Holladay & Exner, 2004, p. 5). And again, in the case of Melissa Munch, the journalist writes, “[w]hen she came to Edmonton, [she] left a baby back in Calgary, not even a year old, and a five-year-old daughter” (Sinnema & Kleiss, 2004, p. B2). Each of these statements, representative of numerous others, suggests, sometimes with subtlety, sometimes without, that women involved in the sex trade are incapable of being ‘proper’ or ‘good’ mothers. In other words, along with failing as ‘good’ women in terms of maintaining a chaste sexuality, they have also failed as ‘real’ women by being inadequate mothers.

It is not only their reportedly deviant mothering that marks these women as different from ‘us’, or from the ‘ideal’, but also the fact that many of them come from purportedly dysfunctional families of origin. While it might be argued that all families are dysfunctional in one way or another, by bringing to light the ‘shortcomings’ of the families of sex trade workers, the newspaper discourses suggest that the murdered women were somehow less valued, not only as citizens, but also as family members. For example, Monique Pitre’s brother is quoted in the Edmonton Sun saying, “We weren’t in touch...So I didn’t even know she’d disappeared until a police officer came to my mom’s house to notify us they’d found her body” (MacIsaac, 2008, p. 5). Printed within the first

paragraph of an article outlining the life of Monique Pitre, the reader is left feeling that perhaps it is not quite so tragic that Pitre was murdered; after all, her family apparently did not even miss her. Similarly, in the case of Shannon Collins, we are told, “Collins, the mother of an 11-year-old boy, was last seen a year ago, but family only reported her missing Sept. 9” (Noel, 2008, p. 3). This reporting implies that if her family was able to go nine months without reporting her missing then maybe no one really cared that she was gone; maybe her life was less important than that of a woman who was not working in the sex trade, than that of a woman who came from a ‘better’ family, and whose relationships reflect those of more ‘normal’ citizens. By drawing attention to the women’s separation from their families, the implication is that they were not, and will not be, missed; the value of their lives is diminished.

Aside from dehumanising sex trade workers in terms of morality, the Edmonton Journal and Edmonton Sun also include othering discourse surrounding the illegality of the drug use that is so often assumed to go ‘hand-in-hand’ with the trade. For example, Rachel Quinney’s entrance into the sex trade is attributed to, “...her spiral into drug addiction” (Loyie & Kleiss, 2004, p. A17), as is Samantha Berg’s, who was reportedly, “...working as a prostitute to feed her drug addiction” (D’Aliesio, 2005, p. A1). Along with looking to drug (ab)use as an explanation for women entering the sex trade, the newspapers also make repeated reference to the women’s drug use more generally. In describing Bonnie Lynn Jack, the Edmonton Journal attempts to sum her up in one sentence, “[a] sex-trade worker, the mother of six was a crack-cocaine addict” (Cormier,

2007, p. A3). An almost identical description is given of Rachel Quinney, “[s]he was an addict, a sex-trade worker and a mom” (Kleiss, 2008, p. A1). In each of these instances, we can see how discourse is used to construct these women not as people who engage in certain actions (taking drugs or receiving compensation for sex) that perhaps many members of society engage in, but they are given the overarching identity or, first, sex worker then addict only then to be followed by the obviously incompatible identity of mother. Furthermore, such discourse also sets these women up as being outside of mainstream society; they are pariahs, and as such again put themselves in the position of not being counted as important. The framing of these quotes implies that these women are victims of such violence because of their own failings.

Going a step further towards complete dehumanisation, one journalist wrote, “[Danielle] Torvalson was a sex-trade worker and a drug addict, hooked on crack cocaine. You could call her number 16” (Simons, 2008, p. B1). Though I expected that during the course of my research I would find examples of the murdered women being dehumanised, I must admit that I never expected to find such an extreme example, a discursive act that outright suggested it would be acceptable to reduce Danielle Torvalson (and therefore the 15 women murdered before her) to little more than a number without any meaningful identity.

Finally, there were over twenty medical references that operated to dehumanise the murder victims, references made in terms of both mental and physical health. For example, in an article on the life of Kelly Reilly, she is quickly pathologised as other

when the journalist writes, “Reilly, a hyperactive child diagnosed at nine with attention deficit disorder, was lost to the streets by the age of 16” (Bergot, 2001, p. 12). Not only does this discursive act mark Reilly as a disobedient teenager, it also places her in the realm of medical deviance as a flawed child. It positions her as lost, no longer one of us, a non-person whose rights to a life free from violence are hence revoked. Reilly was not the only woman who was subject to such pathologisation; in an article describing Project KARE, a Royal Canadian Mounted Police task force dedicated to investigating the murders and disappearances of women living “high-risk” lifestyles in Alberta, the reporter writes, “[m]any of Project KARE’s files are grisly and disturbing. They tell tales of deeply troubled women...” (Hanon, 2008, p. 20). Though the author does not go on to explain exactly *how* the women were “deeply troubled”, the women have clearly been demarcated as somehow different from the norm, as other. In subtle ways, this description again focusses on the pathology of the women rather than on the violence of the perpetrator; the “grisly and disturbing” aspect of the files is not the abuser, but the abused.

Dehumanisation was also implemented, as anticipated, through reference to the women’s physical health (see p. 14-18). I found, not surprisingly, more than a few references to sex trade workers as carriers of disease. Kelly Reilly reportedly suffered from “both hepatitis C and HIV” (Gregoire, 2001, p. B1), and Theresa Merrie Innes was rumored to have AIDS (Purdy & Staples, 2007, p. A2). But along with these two women being pointed out specifically, there were other, more general references, that alluded to

the compromised health of women working in the trade. For example, one article in the Edmonton Journal described “...police enforcement as a form of preventative health care. The girls [sex trade workers], HIV positive or carrying hepatitis C, are addicted and scarred, physically and mentally” (McKeen, 2006, p. A1). The article goes on to argue that by keeping women in the sex trade under police surveillance, the women’s health can be monitored for their own sake, and for the sake of the larger public. It is particularly ironic that this discourse, couched in the language of protecting the women from the threat of disease, *ignores* the lack of protection that has been provided to keep these women safe from violence.

I would like to point out one more way that the murdered and missing women were dehumanised in this collection of news discourse. While it might seem more subtle than an outright suggestion that we just number the women, I would argue that it is also more pervasive and possibly more harmful. With each headline, the newspapers have a choice of how to label or name the women, the papers can choose to label the women according to their profession, according to their name, or in any number of other ways. In order to flush out headlines such as “body found” or “corpse discovered” that were published before the victim had been identified, I took into account only headlines *that made specific reference to already identified missing or murdered women*; in other words, only the headlines that *could have* used the victims’ actual names, but *chose* not to. This left me with 221 headlines in which I found 18 different terms used to name the women.

The most commonly used label in the Edmonton Journal, and the second most commonly used term in the Edmonton Sun (next to 'hooker'), was "woman" or "women". In the 221 applicable headlines, 'woman' appeared on 62 occasions, or twenty-eight percent of the time. By electing to describe the victims based on their gender, instead of using their names, the victims become less individualised and come to represent all women. Such labeling neutralises some of the personal tragedy involved in the loss of an individual life, and perhaps signals a warning to women in general that such fates await women who fail to achieve proper moral womanhood.

While "woman" can be seen as intimating generalisability to all women, the frequent use of labels like "prostitute", "sex trade worker", and "hooker" mark these crimes as occupationally-centred, and hence as crimes against a certain type of woman. It is no longer, for example, about Maggie Lee Burke or Leanne Benwell, the *individuals*, being murdered, it is about sex trade workers or "hookers" being murdered. These descriptions intimate that such workers, of course, will be victims by right of their moral choices and their profession; this is the story of 'yet another hooker' as the victim of violence. The implication is that had these women worked in a different profession they would not have been victimised. While such an assumption is perhaps correct, the different messages in the following two headlines make some more subtle hierarchies between 'good' and 'bad' women clear: "'I'm afraid to look': woman who lives near the killing fields fears she'll stumble across a corpse" (Hanon, 2005, p. A1) and "No escape from fear: Serial-killer has some hookers desperate to get off the streets" (Coolican, 2004,

p. 1). In the first example, the reader is presented with a woman who, despite living close to a location where multiple women have been murdered, is afraid only that she might *find* a body, not that she herself might be harmed. In the second case, we see the opposite, the “hookers” are afraid for their own lives, recognising that women in their profession are being targeted by a violent offender. The difference in these two articles draws a stark line of demarcation between ‘regular’ women and women working in the sex trade. The murders are framed not as the loss of several *individuals* or even *people*, but as the loss of some sex trade workers who do not exist as persons outside of their economic activities.

Fortunately, despite these numerous discursive attempts to dehumanise and other the murdered and missing women, the newspapers also recognised the popularity of human interest stories, and it was through these, as well as editorials, that some attempt was made to reclaim the women and to reframe them as valued members of society.

(Re)humanisation

Often appearing in the same issue, and frequently on the same page, as articles that dehumanised women working in the sex trade, were human interest stories that focused on the women’s lives outside of work. It was also not uncommon to find letters to the editor, written in defense of the murdered and missing women, appear in the newspapers just a few days after a particularly dehumanising news article. One such example that stands out particularly clearly was a letter to the editor that appeared in the Edmonton Journal just days after a front page headline was published, in bold print with all capital letters, “Dead prostitute identified” (Cormier et al., 2005, p. B1) The letter,

opening with the words, “Headline too harsh for tragic death” (McLean-Bourgeois, 2005, p. A18), was written in defense of Samantha Berg, the ‘identified prostitute’, reminding the Edmonton Journal, and its readers that, though she may have worked in the sex trade, Samantha was also someone’s daughter, sister, mother, and friend who had a life and dreams outside of her occupation. Perhaps more surprisingly, this letter was written not by someone who knew Samantha, but by a concerned citizen who simply wanted more balanced reporting and more human understanding. Nevertheless, as can be seen in this example, these types of articles tended to focus on one of two things, either the women’s relationships with family and friends, or the women’s individual characters and personalities.

Articles focusing on the missing and murdered women’s relationships outside of the sex trade tended to place emphasis on the grief of family and friends, or on the women’s positive relationships with their families. For example, an article in the Edmonton Journal began with, “Rachel Quinney will go home today, back to the arms of a grieving family that will always remember her as a happy little girl...” (Loyie & Kleiss, 2004, p. A1). And another, regarding Charlene Gauld, stated “[h]er family went through extraordinary lengths to try to help,’ said Cherrington [an outreach worker]...’In my 10 years working with youths, I’ve never seen a family work so hard. They never gave up on her” (Cormier & Farrell, 2005, p. A3). Statements like these show the women as valued and loved members of real families, as women who will be missed. Phrases such as, “an Edmonton family is mourning...” (Evans, 2001, p. 16), “...they were and are loved and

missed by our whole family...” (Bellerose, 2003, p. 5), “...we all have love in our hearts for her” (Loyie, 2006, p. B1), and “...a hole in all her family’s life that can never be filled...” (Merritt, 2008, p. 3), demonstrate just how loved the murdered women were. They prove that working in the sex trade does not mean that these women were no longer important to their families.

Along with highlighting how much the women were loved and will be missed by family and friends, there were many articles that included descriptions of what the women’s personalities were like, and what sort of hopes and dreams they had for themselves. Bonnie Lynn Jack “...was always joking and laughing. She was a beautiful person. Kind and soft-spoken” (Loyie et al., 2006, p. A12). Chantel Robertson was “...easy-going and generous, a girl who couldn’t live without her family and who dreamed of going to college” (Stolte et al., 2008, p. A1). Shannon Collins was, “...a lively, spunky girl who...loved life” (Drake, 2008, p. B7)⁶. With these descriptions each woman becomes more real, more human, and less othered. Furthermore, such narratives show that the women had lives not only outside of the sex trade, but also before it. We are reminded that Edna Bernard was once a “bouncing little girl” (Cormier & Audette, 2008, p. A2), and that Charlene Gauld had braces and worried about looking old (Cowan & Palmer, 2005, p. 5). One article that tried to show readers just how ‘normal’ Melissa Munch was, was a letter written by her mother. The letter began, “[i]magine if you can, an attractive young daughter having difficulty at school, struggling with self-esteem, yet

⁶ See Appendix B for descriptions of each of the women. I have included these descriptions in the hopes of doing more to (re)humanise each of them.

adventurous and fun-loving, experimenting with lifestyle risks - so far not that different from many teens..." (King, 2003, p. A1). With this brief opening sentence, Melissa's mother has discursively drawn a solid parallel between her daughter and many other teenage girls; no longer is Melissa only a sex trade worker, she has become a typical teenager, a regular person. She has been re-humanised.

Human interest stories are arguably the greatest tool that newspapers have to help bring the murdered women out of the realm of other. During the course of my research I remained skeptical about the newspapers' efforts to humanise the missing and murdered women, but as I looked back through my data, I was pleasantly surprised to see that approximately seventeen percent, or one in every 6, of the articles made some attempt to normalise sex trade workers. Whether it was by describing their hopes and dreams, speaking to their families, or simply using the women's names in a headline (instead of 'prostitute' or 'hooker'), there was a clear attempt made, at least some of the time, to (re)humanise and de-marginalise women working in the sex trade. It is important to point out, however, that this was typically done not by the reporters themselves, or by police sources or by 'ordinary' citizens, but by people who knew the women personally, or who had some personal link to the sex trade. While these discourses were far less frequent and do not, arguably, carry the same discursive weight as reports from legal and medical voices, they were undeniably present and offered at least a small measure of alternative understanding. Though the following chapter will deal more fully with 'voices' and

‘claims to truth’, it does not seem right to end here without at least mentioning this struggle for discursive power and ‘truth’.

Conclusion

This first section of analysis proved to be fruitful in confirming many of my predictions, and in revealing important themes that I had not anticipated. The coverage of race in the news articles largely coincided with my expectation that there would be added emphasis placed on the Aboriginal heritage of many of the women, as did the frequent references to drug use and addiction meet my expectations that a medical discourse would be used to construct overarching deviant identities for the women. I was surprised by the number of human interest articles that quoted family members in their attempts to (re)humanise their loved ones; expecting, rather, that the data would be completely dominated by dehumanising discourse. I was, sadly, not surprised by the blame so often being placed on the women themselves, or on addiction, instead of on the social conditions that left so many women vulnerable to abuse in the first place, or on the actual perpetrators of the violence.

In the following chapter, I will turn my attention to a more complete analysis of the competing claims to truth present throughout the data set. I will do this by focussing on the presences and absences of certain (groups of) voices, the use of front-page coverage to draw attention to the murders and disappearances, and the uses and implications of photographic imagery.

Chapter 4: Analysis of Physicality and Artifacts

Having analysed and synthesised the data in terms of discursive topics and thematic (re)presentations, I will now turn to an examination of the discursive patterns of voice and imagery. Drawing on the theories of Michel Foucault that point to the importance not only of expressed and authorised discourses, but also to discourses that are silenced (1978), I will bring attention to the unequal distribution of discursive power between the Edmonton-area police forces and the family and friends of the murdered and missing women presented in the popular media. From here I will move to a more visually-based analysis of the newspaper articles, both in terms of the photographs used to (re)present the crimes and the victims, and in terms of the placement of the articles and photographs in the newspapers in general. This includes the use of certain types of photographs, namely mug-shots, to represent the women, and the tendency to print these articles on certain pages within the newspapers. Finally, I will discuss the types of articles that tend to be found sharing a page with the articles on the murders and disappearances, to demonstrate the level of importance, or urgency, these crimes are given.

Who Speaks?

An overwhelming amount of information comes from Edmonton's two police forces, the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The Edmonton Journal cites a police source in an average of 49.5% of the articles in this data set, with a yearly percentage ranging from 24% of articles (in 2007) to

88% of articles (in 2002). Similarly, the Edmonton Sun cites a police source in an average of 45% of its articles, ranging from 21% of articles (in 2008) to 100% of articles (in 2002 and 2007). These figures demonstrate a clear dependence on police officers and police spokespersons for information relating to the murders and disappearances of sex trade workers. This dependency on police sources makes sense considering that it is the police who would be the first to ‘discover’ the murders, and who make the public statements regarding missing persons. However, a majority of the police citations fit a clear pattern of phrasing that does more than offer basic information about the crimes, instead constructing the murders as both isolated and occurring in isolation. Consider the following comments;

- “RCMP are asking for the public’s help in identifying a woman whose burned body was discovered Monday in a field east of Leduc” (Loyie, 2002, p. B5)
- “Mounties continue to investigate the suspicious death of a young woman whose body was found abandoned and frozen in a farmer’s field north of Sherwood Park” (Exner, 2003, p.3)
- “...a woman whose skeletal remains were discovered in an isolated, rugged area near Wetaskiwin earlier this week” (Rusnell, 2004, p. B3)
- “[a] woman’s body was found in a field south of Fort Saskatchewan on Tuesday afternoon...the woman’s identity wasn’t known on Tuesday, and police would say what condition her body was in” (Audette, 2006, p. A3)

These statements not only construct the murders as individualised cases without reference to the broader issue of recurring violence against female sex workers, but by stressing the physical isolation and abjectness of the discoveries, they also create an understanding of the women working in the sex trade as occupying the marginalised spaces of the other, not only in terms of a deviant morality, but in terms of actual spatial liminality. Further, the recurring pairing of police voices with the stories about these women's deaths is tantamount to a form of operant conditioning, whereby sex workers come to be seen as naturally belonging to the world of crime and law enforcement on the one hand, and violence and abandonment on the other. This use of police descriptions and discourse also pairs the women with the notion of terror and degradation; these are women whose lives, lived badly, have also ended horrifically. To put it another way, the frequent use of police reference, particularly in relation to the otherness of these women, and the marginalised locations of their violent deaths frames the women as abject; as existing outside the bounds of human dignity in both life *and* death.

Furthermore, when we compare how often these isolating police discourses are called upon with how often the 'reclaiming' voices of family members are cited, voices which attempt to reinstate the humanity of the women are actually cited in the discourse, the dehumanising effects of news discourse become even more pronounced. Compared to the 49.5% and 45% of articles that cite police sources in the Journal and Sun, respectively, family members are cited in a mere 17% of Journal articles and 23% of Sun articles, demonstrating a clear gap between what is considered legitimate or important information (the information provided by police officers) and what is not (the thoughts

and feelings of the families). Even more strikingly, if quotations from lawyers, judges, and the Prostitution Awareness and Action Foundation of Edmonton (run in conjunction with the EPS) are added to the number of police (or law and order) quotations, an average of 70% of news articles include at least one of these ‘legitimate’ groups as a source of information (75% in the Journal, 66% in the Sun). On the other hand, even if quotations from friends and advocates are added to those of family members, there is still only an average of 36% of articles that include references from at least one of these three groups (32% in the Journal, 40% in the Sun). While some of this discrepancy could be explained away by matters of simple accessibility (perhaps police officers are more available or willing to comment on the murders and disappearances than are family members or friends), it seems unlikely that this would account for the entire 34% difference. This discursive imbalance is easily demonstrated by drawing attention to the far greater number of articles that include a police description of the crime scene than the number of articles that include quotations from family members describing the impact of these crimes on their lives. This pattern implies that the crime itself is more important, or at least more newsworthy, than the actual human impact *of* the crime.

It is worth noting, however, that while both newspapers show a clear preference for police-based information, the Edmonton Sun demonstrates a comparatively more equal attempt to (re)construct the impact of the murders and disappearances on the women’s loved ones. This (relatively) more equal discursive representation is the result of the Edmonton Sun’s greater emphasis in general on any kind of human interest story than is to be found in the Edmonton Journal. Not only is this more human focus demonstrated

in terms of how often family members are quoted (versus police officers), it is also shown in the number of photographs used to represent the women and their families, and in the placement of articles within the newspapers in general (see page 81 for further discussion). This pattern fits with the public reputations of the two newspapers, namely that the Edmonton Sun has a heavier focus on entertainment and human interest stories, while the Journal emphasises business- and government-based news (Male, 2010)

There is, however, one year when *both* newspapers offer a greater number of familial than police references; 2008. The Sun references family members 35 times during this year, compared to 30 times for the police, while the Journal cites family members 20 times compared to just 14 police references. This is likely a result of the trial of Thomas Svekla (for the murders of Rachel Quinney and Theresa Innes) that began on 19 February, 2008 that ignited a storm of media coverage. Perhaps because the families prominently attended these trials, the media coverage turned more often to the family members of Quinney and Innes for information and input than to the police involved in the case. Setting the stage for this coverage, Rachel Quinney's sister-in-law was quoted at the start of the trial, saying;

...[t]hese are mothers, sisters, daughters, aunts, nieces, and they made a bad *choice* in life,' said Quinney's sister-in-law Charlotte Lajimodiere. 'But when you look at the social issues, it probably was the only choice some of them had''.

(MacIsaac, 2008, p. 4, emphasis mine)

Lajimodiere attempts to (re)humanise and reclaim her sister-in-law, and all other women working in the sex trade, by reminding the public that these women were (and are) beloved family members. Furthermore, by positioning her sister within the broader social

context, she reminds readers that it is *not necessarily a choice* to work in the trade, but rather, in many cases, it is simply a *choice of necessity*.

With the trial coming to a close in June of 2008, the newspapers continued to look to the women's families for an understanding of the human impact of such a crime, as demonstrated by the publication of the victim impact statement provided by Theresa Innes' son:

The son of slaying victim Theresa Innes tearfully recalled her yesterday as a loving mother who never forgot Christmas or birthdays, and lamented everything she was robbed of. 'She was not there to see me graduate. She will not be there to see me get married or see her first grandchild being born' said Michael Innes...'That was all taken away...those memories have been stolen away from her. Those dreams were taken from me. (Blais, 2008, p. 2)

Similarly, the impact of a not guilty verdict on the family of Rachel Quinney was captured in a published statement from Quinney's sister-in-law:

Quinney's family was devastated [by the not guilty verdict]. Rachel's mother, Delia Quinney, was on the verge of collapse as she left the courthouse. Sister-in-law Charlotte Lajimodiere said the decision was deeply disappointing to the family. 'I guess we are going to ask questions forever. It is a shock,' she said. (Kleiss, 2008, p. A1)

This increased use of family members as sources of information works to (re)humanise the murdered women, providing the public audience with a better understanding of how these crimes impact *real* families and cause *real* suffering. It becomes less about the voyeuristic detailing of the crimes and more about the tragic loss of human life. By publishing something as personal and intimate as Theresa Innes' son lamenting the loss not only of his mother but of a whole lifetime of past memories and future hopes, the

newspapers succeed in capturing both the life of Innes *beyond* her work in the sex trade, and the loss of her *beyond* the details of her violent death.

One reason, I speculate, that these two cases received more humanised coverage than the deaths of the other women is the occurrence of the trial. Of the twenty women murdered between 2001 and 2008, charges were only laid in 5 cases⁷, and the Svekla trial was by far the most publicised. Much of this added attention can be explained by Svekla being seen as the possible ‘serial killer’, by the outspokenness of the Quinney and Innes families, and by the timing of the trial in general.

While the trial of Richard Douglas for the murder of Ginger Lee Bellerose happened before that of Svekla, it received relatively little coverage within the newspapers and no front-page coverage at all, likely because it was viewed as an isolated incident. Svekla’s trial, on the other hand, because he was seen as being the possible ‘answer’ to the serial killer question, received extensive coverage⁸. By the time Svekla’s trial was underway, there was more public awareness of the violence faced by so many women working in the sex trade, and by First Nations women in particular. The “Stolen Sisters Awareness Walk” played a significant role in this awareness, with the 2nd annual march taking place during the trial (10 May, 2008). A Canada-wide event, created to raise awareness of the disproportionate number of missing and murdered First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women, the Edmonton portion of the walk was led by Delia Quinney, Rachel’s

⁷ Other than the conviction of Svekla for the murder of Theresa Innes, and the not-guilty verdict in the case of Rachel Quinney, Richard David Douglas was found guilty of second degree murder in the death of Ginger Lee Bellerose on 15 October 2005, Joseph Laboucan was charged with the murder of Ellie May Meyer in September 2008, and Matthew Todd Barrett pled guilty to the murder of Chantel Robertson in May 2009.

⁸ Though he was never officially charged, Svekla was a suspect in the deaths of Edna Bernard, Debbie Darlene Lake, Melissa Munch, Monique Pitre, and Katie Sylvia Ballantyne.

mother, and it received front-page coverage in the Edmonton Sun (Thomas, 2008, p.3). Finally, aside from the added media coverage provided by the trial, I speculate that Rachel Quinney and Theresa Innes received more humanising coverage than many of the other women because their families were more outspoken. As I mentioned above, part of the reason that police officers were quoted more often than family members is likely a matter of accessibility; police have a spokesperson dedicated to communicating with the media. In much the same way, Rachel Quinney's sister-in-law, Charlotte Lajimodiere, acted as the family spokesperson, sharing the family's thoughts and feelings surrounding Rachel's death, as did Michael Innes, Theresa's brother, for the Innes family. Unfortunately, following the conclusion of the trial, there was little else heard from Innes' or Quinney's family, while the dehumanising discourses of news reports (of subsequent murders and disappearances) continued unabated.

Cover Girls

News stories that make it on the cover of the newspaper are, arguably, stories that the newspaper editors deem as being of particular importance or interest to their readers, stories that will sell newspapers. These stories are often focussed on government activities, major sporting events, and serious or violent crimes. In the case of the murders and disappearances under examination here, such stories fall clearly into the category of 'violent crime'.

Over the course of eight years, between 2001 and 2008, the Journal and the Sun increased the frequency of front-page coverage for these 'news stories', though not

necessarily in a linear fashion. The Edmonton Journal, for example, had 5 front-page articles relating to the murders in 2003, compared to 13 cover articles in 2008; however, there was only one cover story in 2007. The Edmonton Sun was much the same, with 6 cover pages in 2003 compared to 10 in 2008, and with the same drop to just one cover in 2007. What this demonstrates is not that publicity and awareness of the serial murders increased steadily over time, instead, it shows that front page coverage of the systematic violence and abuse experienced by women working in the sex trade is dependent upon specific acts of homicide or disappearance. There was only one official disappearance and no reported murders in 2007, thus, there was only one cover page on the topic. In 2006, by comparison, there were more cover stories about the murders and disappearances (7 for the Journal and 5 for the Sun) reflecting both a great number of deaths (two), and the arrest of Thomas Svekla for the murders of Theresa Innes and Rachel Quinney.

It is worth noting that despite the murders of Kelly Dawn Reilly in 2001, and Edna Bernard in 2002, neither newspaper covered either story on the front page. It was not until 2003, with the murder of Monique Pitre, followed four days later by the murder of Melissa Munch, that the newspapers provided front-page coverage of the murders and disappearances of sex trade workers from Edmonton's streets. Interestingly, while the Edmonton Journal had the murders on the front page for only one day, under the headline, "Is there a link in prostitute slayings?" (Williams, 2003, p. A1), the Sun ran it on the cover for four days and went so far as to include the stark headline "SERIAL KILLER" (Connor, 2003, p. 1).



(Uncredited A, 2003, p. 1)⁹

This cover is momentous for being the first time that the media suggested the possibility that Edmonton sex trade workers might be the specific targets of one individual, an idea that was subsequently picked up by other media outlets and became, arguably, one of the central focuses of news stories (and letters to the editor) relating to the sex trade in the years to follow. It is important to remember that by early 2003, women working in Edmonton's sex trade had been targets of homicidal violence (to an extent far beyond that of the general public) for at least twenty years. By July of 2003, four women had been murdered over the course of six months (Pitre and Munch in January, Debbie Lake in April, Katie Ballantyne in July), and it was only at this point that both the Sun and Journal began to publish more frequent front-page stories concerning the crimes. Part of this increased attention on the possible serial killing of sex trade workers in Edmonton

⁹ Permission to reproduce this and the following images was granted by the Edmonton Journal and the Edmonton Sun, as applicable. Images and photographs may not be reproduced from this source.

may also have been prompted by the arrest of Robert Pickton in British Columbia, Canada, in February 2002, for the serial killing of sex trade workers from Vancouver's downtown eastside. It was widely argued that Vancouver-area police and RCMP failed to properly investigate the murders and disappearances of local women largely because the women worked in the sex trade. Perhaps the Edmonton-area newspapers, as well as police sources, were working to avoid the mistakes made by the Vancouver investigators.

Regardless of the publishers' motivations, the Edmonton Journal published four cover stories over the course of one week in July 2003, while the Sun published two, all of which covered the close occurrences of the year's four murders. It was not, however, until June 2004, following the murder of Rachel Quinney, that *both* newspapers mentioned the possibility of a serial killer. On 16 June 2004 the cover of the Edmonton Sun ran a headline on an all black cover, save for a small photo of Quinney, that read, "Cops fear local hookers may be the target of...SERIAL KILLER" (Cowan, 2004, p. 1). On the same day, using a similar headline, though in an entirely more subtle aesthetic, the Journal printed, "Police fear serial killer at work" (Loyie & El Akkad, 2004, p. A1).

These two covers (see following page) stand as paradigmatic examples of the two newspapers' distinct styles of reporting. The Sun frequently dedicated the majority of its front covers to a single story, and was liberal with the use of an 'all-caps' font style. The Journal, on the other hand, along with an absence of all-capital letter headlines, had smaller sized cover stories meaning that more stories shared the front page. While there is no arguing that the Sun's cover would certainly attract more attention than the Journal's,



(Uncredited B, 2004, p. 1)



(Supplied A, 2004, p. A1)

it is worth pointing out that newspapers used the same photo of Rachel Quinney and very similar wording for their headlines. A major difference between the two stories, however, is the by-line; while the Sun chose to use a quote from Delia Quinney, “People out there are savages’, says victim’s mom”, the Journal wrote, “Sex trade workers urged to be careful”. While the quote from the “victim’s mom” might, arguably, place Rachel Quinney in the sphere of ‘family member’ and ‘beloved daughter’, working to humanise her, the use of the word ‘savages’, aside from its historically racist implications, gives the cover story a sense of anger and outrage, and again references the abject aspects of Quinney’s death (and by implication, life). The Journal’s byline, on the other hand, while sending a message of caution, if not concern, also implies a certain amount of blame, in that, if sex trade workers are not careful enough, they might be found culpable in their own deaths. At the very least, the headlines imply that these women are responsible for

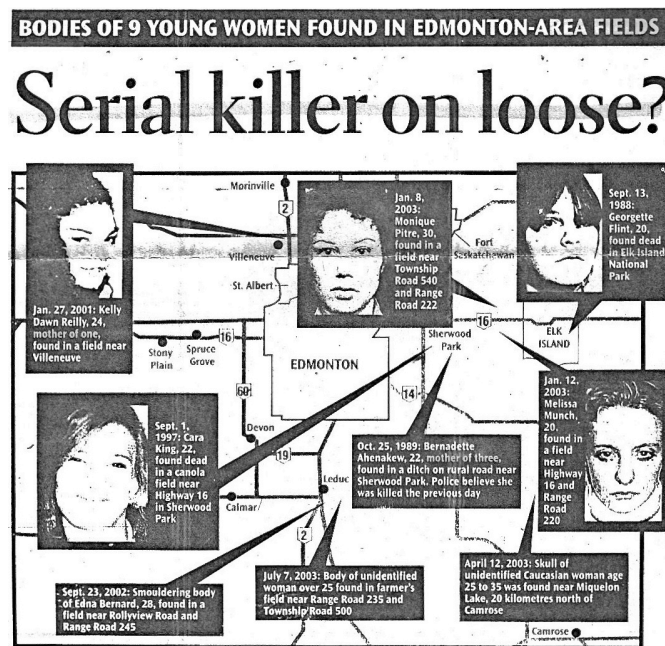
preventing their own deaths and capable of doing so - and by implication, this means that Quinney somehow behaved foolishly or irresponsibly in inviting her own murder.

Photographs

The use of attention-grabbing, eye-catching photographs is central to a newspaper's marketing, especially when it comes to the front page. It is simple logistics; images that attract attention and draw the reader in help to sell more newspapers. In the data, the most commonly used images are those of the victim (used on average 50% of the time in articles specifically relating to a murder or disappearance), followed by the crime scene (12.3%), and then police officers (11%). In addition to these three core image types, photographs of funerals or memorials, relatives and friends, and area maps are also used.

The average number of times, between the two newspapers, a photograph was published of each woman was 7, though the range was quite large, numbering anywhere from just one time (in the cases of Brianna Torvalson and Leanne Benwell) to as high as nineteen times (for Rachel Quinney). As mentioned on pages 81-83 above, Rachel Quinney (and Theresa Innes, whose photograph was printed 12 times) received more newspaper coverage as a result of the trial of Thomas Svekla, thus explaining why their photographs were published a number of times higher than average. Added coverage that cannot be explained by a high-profile criminal trial, however, is that given to Kelly Reilly (15 photographs) and Monique Pitre (16 photographs). The added coverage given to Reilly and Pitre can best be explained by the early dates of their deaths. Reilly was the first victim (in this timeline), and Monique was the third. Many of the later articles made

references to the earlier crimes and victims; for example, articles covering the death of Charlene Gauld in 2005 referred back to the similar deaths of women that had taken place between 2001 and 2004 (and, frequently, before 2000). There were a number of occasions, in the Edmonton Journal, where thumbnail images of the women were laid over a map of the Edmonton-area indicating where the women’s bodies had been found:



(Journal graphic, 2003, p. A1)

This particular image, though it includes deaths outside of the time frame under consideration here, accurately captures the use of thumbnail images of the murdered women in combination with area maps. This image, and others like it, allow the reader to place a ‘face’ to the crime, to identify an *actual* human, a *real* person, with the location of her death. On the other hand, the use of the map also clearly places the women *outside* of the city proper, *outside* of the municipal limits, and therefore in the realm of the rural, of the distant, of the *marginal*. Despite being called “Edmonton-area fields”, the ‘fields’ are

more accurately described as part of ‘rural (central) Alberta’, an area *outside* of the ‘Capital City’. This map, and others like it, operates in much the same way as the other news discourse to both dehumanise and (re)humanise the missing and murdered women of Edmonton’s sex trade (as discussed earlier in this and in the previous chapter). Similarly, the frequent publication of crime scene photographs also places the women (in both death *and* life) in areas outside of the city proper. As the image below exemplifies, the crime scene images are almost exclusively of barren farmer’s fields, free from any sign of habitation or development, and empty of everyone except crime scene investigators.



(Kaiser, 2008, p. A3)

The above image is typical of crime scene photographs published in both newspapers, showing a farmer’s field, often in the coldest, most desolate part of winter, inhabited by no one. There is no sign of city life, of urban development, of human interaction; even the investigators are spaced apart from one another, working ‘alone’ to find clues. This is a place *outside* of civilisation, outside of warmth and family, a place on the margins.

The struggle to both de- and re- humanise the women also plays out in the published images of the women themselves. There are two types of photographs of the victims; ‘police’ photographs and ‘family’ photographs. Police photographs tend to either *be* or *look like* mug shots; the woman appears unhappy, unwell, and generally haggard. Family photographs, on the other hand, show the woman looking happy, healthy, and much more salubrious by comparison. Contrary to what I expected to find, both newspapers were actually more likely to publish family-type images of the missing and murdered women, though not by a significant degree; the Edmonton Journal published 28 of these ‘nice’ photographs, compared to 27 ‘police’ images, while the Edmonton Sun published 48 and 39 respectively. What is worth discussing between these two fairly equally published types of images is the discursive implications carried by each type. Perhaps the easiest way to demonstrate, and then discuss, the differences is to use a pair of photographs as a concrete example, in this case, two images of Theresa Innes:



(Uncredited C, 2006, p. A1)



(Supplied B , 2006, p. B7)

The stark contrast between these two images makes it difficult to believe that they show the same person, but they do. The image on the left, the ‘police’ photograph, was first published, on the front cover of both the Sun and the Journal on 11 May 2006. Two days later, at the request of the Innes family, the second image was printed instead. This much more favourable photograph was actually supplied *by the family* out of a desire to see the Theresa they knew and loved more ‘accurately’ represented in the news discourse. Despite the family’s wishes, however, both newspapers continued to use the first image along with the second, almost interchangeably (the image on the left appeared 7 times in the two newspapers, the image on the right appeared 5). Of course, two photographs as disparate as these are hardly ‘interchangeable’; the discursive weight of the image on the left is far different than that of the image on the right. Harkening back to the work of Cesare Lombroso (1980), the first image of Innes implies criminal, abject, and victim. Her sad face, unkempt appearance, and the parallels between this image and a standard mugshot construct Innes as a criminal, an outsider. The second image, that of a wholesome, happy, yet somehow non-distinctive, Innes tells much less of a ‘story’, instead presenting Theresa as ‘the girl-next-door’, as anybody’s daughter. Though the image does little to give her an individual identity, it does operate to (re)humanise her.

Coincidentally enough, the Edmonton Sun ran an article on 11 December 2008 discussing the social effects of publishing mug shots. The article, headlined “Mugshots a hit with public, miss for privacy” refers to mug shots as “unflattering photos taken at a person’s most undignified moment” (Ho, p. 21). The article cites University of Alberta criminologist Bill Pitt, who explained that mug shots “...give people a sense of

empowerment to act as ‘de facto law enforcement agents’”, and that the fascination with mug shots is “...a natural extension of the curiosity and the desire of the public to protect themselves and to get involved, at arm’s length, in crime prevention”. In the case of Innes, publishing the police photograph was not done out of a law enforcement need for the public’s help in finding or apprehending her, but the ‘unflattering’ ramifications are much the same. The first image of Theresa, arguably, represents an entirely different person than the more favourable second image, particularly in the memories of her family and friends. Mike Innes, her brother, who supplied the second image to the media, did so out of a desire for Theresa to be held in people’s memory at a more positive time in her life. The fact that both newspapers continued to use the first image is hardly surprising, considering that the image is a far closer match to the discursively constructed ‘sad, unhealthy, desperate’ sex trade worker constructed for public understanding. The deviantised role of sex trade workers fits more ‘naturally’ with a deviantised image, with a mugshot, than with a smiling school photograph that could depict nearly anyone’s daughter/mother/sister. In short, the use of the mug shot means that women ‘like Theresa’ are vulnerable, but that ‘good’ women remain safe. The insertion of the family photo troubles such inferences, showing that Theresa was, at least at some point in her life, a ‘good’ woman, and still she experienced such horrific violence.

Surrounding Articles

In conjunction with the use of photographs and front page articles, the discursive power of a piece of news is also exercised through its proximity to other discursive

materials. By publishing articles covering the murders and disappearances of sex trade workers next to certain other types of articles, the newspaper editors (and layout designers) are able to imply relationships between the types of story being reported. After randomly sampling 364 neighbouring articles from the Edmonton Journal, and 217 from the Edmonton Sun (the Journal had significantly more adjacent articles due to the larger size of its pages), I separated the articles into eleven recognisable categories; general news, government, human interest, advertisements, crime or deviance, health, obituaries, letters to the editor, editorial or comment, sports, and other.

After categorising the data, I determined the three most common types of articles that were placed next to news stories about the missing and murdered women. The Edmonton Journal and the Edmonton Sun shared two out of three of these categories; general news and advertisements, but differed on the third. The Edmonton Journal was more likely to publish other human interest or ‘soft news’ stories next to the sex work articles, while the Edmonton Sun was more likely to publish other stories relating to crime and deviance.

General news stories, based on my categorisation, were those articles that were clearly ‘news’ but did not fit into any of the other categories, such as ‘government’, ‘crime or deviance’, or ‘human interest’. A few examples of such headlines should help make this clearer; “Database to cover all modes of travel” (Bronskill, 2003, p. A6), “Freak crash kills rider” (Dubinski, 2005, p. 3), and “Afghanistan headed for chaos” (Foot, 2007, p. A1). These headlines are obviously news stories, but do not specifically relate to any particular category, and, were I to create specific ‘travel’,

‘transportation’, and ‘foreign affairs’ categories, along with all the other myriad possibilities, the categorisation would have gotten out of hand, and would have been much less productive. Overall, these ‘general news’ stories made up 18% of adjacent stories in the Edmonton Sun, and 19% in the Journal.

It seems appropriate that both newspapers placed general news articles next to articles reporting on the missing and murdered women, as both types of stories are *news*. The tragic death of a citizen in a car accident is just as much news as the tragic death of a citizen at the hands of a (serial) killer. Placing these types of articles together implies that both are newsworthy, and both should be considered important (or at least interesting) to the average reader.

Advertisements, which accounted for 23.5% of the neighbouring Sun articles (the most common type), and 20% of the Journal articles (second to human interest pieces at 21%), were, obviously, advertisements for various goods, services, and sales at Edmonton area business. Many of these were clothing stores, car dealerships, and weight loss products. While it is hard to feel inspired to ‘cash in’ on a *summer sale* at a local clothing store after reading about the grisly murder of a local woman or the decomposition of a recently discovered body, I suppose the reader is meant to understand that advertisements help pay for the publication of the newspaper. At the same time, skeptics might point to the presence of *consumerism* in both the purchasing of new clothing and the hiring and killing of a sex trade worker; there is a discursive link created between the commodification of a product and the commodification of a human being. As mentioned earlier (p. 29), Fairclough points to the “order of discourse”, a “relatively durable

structuring and networking of social practices” that discourse analysts look to when analysing discursive relationships (2003). Thus, focusing on the ‘order of discourse’, in this case on the physical proximity between news articles and advertisements, reveals perceived and constructed discursive relationships, namely relationships of purchasing (economic) power, social status surrounding consumerism, and the disposability of goods, services, and, tragically, sex trade workers.

The other category of news article that made the top three for the Edmonton Journal is ‘human interest’. Twenty-one percent of the adjacent articles published in the Edmonton Journal were human interest pieces, articles that covered city events, such as “Students learning to be the brains behind future computer networks” (Holubitsky, 2001, p. B4), “Rowing on the river” (Bence, 2004, p. A1), and “Dog owners need training, too, if pets are to enjoy off-leash parks” (Mah, 2007, p. B3). This was the most common type of adjacent story found in the Journal (followed by advertisements at 20% and general news stories at 19%). The pairing of human interest pieces with articles on the murders and disappearances operates to minimise the tragedy of the crimes, while at the same time normalising the violence experienced by sex trade workers. In much the same way that placement next to advertisements trivialises the tragedy of a woman’s murder or disappearance, placement next to a sunny, smiling image of children rafting down the North Saskatchewan river makes an article about a murdered sex trade worker seem somewhat commonplace or ‘normal’. It is as though, just like it is ‘normal’ for children to play in water on a hot summer day, it is ‘normal’ for a sex trade worker to ‘turn up’ dead

in a farmer's field. To put it more simply, the deviantisation of sex trade workers is so pervasive that their murders are not only normalised, they are almost expected.

Finally, the other most common type of adjacent article in the Sun is 'crime and deviance'. These accounted for 20% of neighbouring articles, making them second only to 'general news' stories. A selection of headlines include, "Con on the lam may be armed" (Crimestoppers, 2002, p. 14), "House arrest for deadly driver" (Blais, 2005, p. 14), and "Cops on the hunt for sexual sicko" (Thompson, 2008, p. 4). By grouping stories of murdered sex trade workers in with crime-based news stories, the newspapers clearly relegate such crimes to the realm of the deviant, of the 'other'; and while this does not necessarily imply that the *victims* are deviant, it does imply that their deaths in some way are.

The news articles surrounding the stories of missing and murdered sex trade workers wield discursive power based on association. When an article about the state of Charlene Gauld's burned body, "Whoever torched hooker may be burned, too - cops" (Cowan, 2005, p. 5), is placed next to an article and picture of a man smoking a very large marijuana and hash joint titled, "Holy smokes", it is hard to deny the implied association of both drug use and deviant activity with the sex trade. The fact that 'hookers' are so often thought of synonymously with 'drug addicts' and 'deviants' is well established in popular discourse, and the pairing of two articles like these operates to reinforce such 'relationships' and strengthen such stereotypes. Furthermore, the tasteless combination of an article on the *burning* of Gauld's body with an article titled "Holy Smokes" is difficult to ignore, and leaves little to the reader's imagination.

Conclusion

This second section of analysis helped to flesh out some of the more physical aspects of the discursive data. The typical reporter's or editor's decision to seek the opinion of a police officer, rather than a family member, on the murder or disappearance of one of the victims demonstrates the imbalance of power between those who are authorised to speak and those who are not. And while both newspapers, particularly the Sun, did address the thoughts and feelings of family and friends of the victims, there remained a significant gap between the truth claims of the two groups of speakers. While police and reporters saw and spoke of these murders as being a result of the women's involvement in 'high-risk' activity, those who experienced the loss of a loved one experienced these violent crimes as a deep, personal tragedy. Furthermore, the family claim is about the women as people, as individuals with unique lives and identities, while the expert claim is about the women as statistics, victims, or fallen women. As Mclaughlin writes, "[p]rostitution is dangerous for its participants, the community, and the social order" (1991, p. 258). This is, arguably, a widely held way of understanding sex work and is largely a result of the deviantisation of sex trade workers, but what it does not address is the level of danger sex work poses to the workers' families. While one might argue that the community suffers because of the sex trade, it is also important to recognise that the families of these missing and murdered women suffer more, in a far more immediate and direct way. They live in constant danger of losing their loved ones, or experiencing familial tragedy. Unfortunately, this very real loss is not adequately addressed in these newspaper articles because of the diminished legitimacy of family

members voices. As Foucault explains, power is something that is exercised in relation to others (1972), and in this case, the legitimised voices of police officers and news reporters are able to exercise power over the ‘claims to truth’ of family members in a significant way.

The decision to grant the status of cover story in some cases, but not in others, also demonstrates the imbalance of discursive power. In this case, discourse (and discursive power) is not restricted to words and voices, it is expanded to include space, and location. As Foucault argued, discourse is net-like, coming from many directions and being exercised in many ways at once; it is not about who has power ‘over’ whom, rather, it is about one’s ability to exercise power *in relation* to others. In terms of placement within the newspaper, front-page stories carry more power than those that are printed toward the back of the news section. The murders of sex trade workers were not deserving of front page coverage, (in other words, did not carry enough discursive power), until it became a matter of a serial killer being on the loose on Edmonton city streets. Until the threat could be personally translated to the wider public, and therefore the general public should be worried, the crimes were far less likely to appear on the front cover of either newspaper.

Thirdly, the decision to publish police photographs versus family photographs of the victims was a struggle that played out between the newspapers and the families over the entire eight years. Both newspapers were quick to publish police photos, and only after specific requests from the families, particularly in the cases of Theresa Innes and Samantha Berg, were more positive images published, and still not exclusively. The

message carried to readers by a mugshot is a far more negative one than, say, the smiling, hopeful photograph of Bonnie Lynn Jack.

Finally, the proximity of these news stories to other articles demonstrated in at least 20% of all cases, a quality of ‘guilt by association’. By placing stories of deviance and crime next to reports on the murder or disappearance of these women, the newspaper discourse was able to imply a connection between the women and deviance. Whether or not the intent is to say “these women were deviants”, or “their killers are deviants” can not be speculated, however, the relationship between the two is discursively cemented in such pairings. On the other hand, placing a news story covering such a serious crime next to a light-hearted article on the fun of paddling down Edmonton’s North Saskatchewan River on a hot summer’s day significantly undermines the human and social tragedy of such a loss.

Clearly, location and presentation matters and this carries beyond the location of neighbouring articles to include the location of the stories in terms of actual page number, the use of photographic images, and the privilege of being placed on the front cover. This stage of analysis highlighted the importance of the physical expression of discursive power, and, in combination with importance of discursive language discussed in chapter three, offers greater insight into the relationship between discourse and power that this research seeks to examine.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Findings

The serial killings and multiple disappearances of sex trade workers from the streets of Edmonton over the past decade exemplify the very real consequences that exist for women who transgress ‘socially acceptable’ behaviours. These consequences, including dehumanisation, marginalisation, deviantisation, and violence, are (re)presented, reinforced, and reified in the newspaper reports that subsequently cover these homicides.

News coverage that frames sex trade workers as drug addicts, forgotten family members, and ‘lost’ women discursively (re)produces not only the *belief* that *sex work* is morally wrong, but also the ‘*truth*’ that sex workers *themselves* are deviant. As I demonstrated throughout the preceding pages, by emphasising the deviant activities and lifestyles of the murdered women (see ‘addiction’, p. 56, for example), media reports are able to shift blame and responsibility away from the unknown offenders (or society as a whole), and toward the *victims* of the crimes. This ‘redirection’ or ‘spin’ would not be possible if the readers of these news reports were not already ready to accept such truth claims. These ‘disciplined’ readers, as Foucault would have it, are accustomed to discursive acts that deviantise sex trade workers on legal, medical, and moral levels, all of which are demonstrated by my data.

When I began this research I had in mind a few questions regarding the criminal deviantisation of sex trade workers, such as; would there be specific comments made about the non-legal status of the sex trade; would these comments be directed at sex workers in general, or at individuals; would I find a double-standard in framing the women as criminal but not their clients; and would there be discursive links made between sex work and other types of crime?

I was surprised, at first, that I did not find any direct comments made on the illegal status of sex work. After conducting my analysis, though, I realised that this discursive absence is precisely the sort of silence Foucauldian theory both predicts and illuminates. To make direct mention of sex work being illegal would require too blatant a display of ‘power’, thus going against the Foucauldian theory that, in order to operate most effectively, power must “mask a substantial part of itself” (Foucault, 1978, p. 86). To simply say that the missing and murdered women *deserved* (or should have at least *expected*) to experience violence because they were involved in an illegal activity would be too obvious and, likely, less productive. What I did find, however, were seemingly countless examples of police officers being used as sources of information for the news articles, not only in terms of reporting on the criminality of a murder taking place, but as ‘witnesses’ to the character of the victims, and of women working in the trade in general. And while no direct mention of the illegal status of sex work was made, there were numerous links forged between sex work and other types of crime, most notably drug (ab)use. As I outlined in chapter three, one in every five articles in the Edmonton Journal, and one in every six articles in the Edmonton Sun, made reference to drug use or drug

addiction when reporting on the murders or disappearances of sex trade workers. The mention of drug abuse, combined with the use of police officers as sources of ‘legitimised’ information, reinforces the discursive link between sex trade workers, crime, and law enforcement.

Fortunately, my decision to use Foucauldian discourse analysis helped to reveal this dependency on “authorised discourses” (Foucault, 1978), bringing attention to the unequal distribution of power between the newspapers and police and the families, friends, and advocates of women working in the trade. Furthermore, Foucauldian theory helped me to unpack the meaning of discursive absences, not only the absence of discourse concerning the criminal status of the sex trade, but also the absence of discourse on the illegality of being a client. Ultimately, news discourse on the murders and disappearances of sex trade workers is exactly that; discourse about *sex trade workers* and little else. While there is mention of ‘their’ criminal use of drugs and ‘their’ decision to live a high-risk lifestyle, the reports do not attempt to draw connections between the illegal status of sex work and the violence these women have experienced because it is too complicated and too complicating. To broach the subject of the laws’ role in the violence sex workers experience is to call in to question the very voices that are, otherwise, ‘authorised’ to speak on this subject. If the discourse were to focus on the effects of the law in marginalising, isolating, and criminalising sex trade workers, thereby exponentially increasing sex trade workers likelihood of experiencing violence, ‘we’ would be forced to consider the possibility that it is not (only) illicit female sexuality and criminal activity that leads to these murders and disappearances, but rather, it is, at least

partly, the result of poorly constructed and unequally enforced legislation. Similarly, if the discourse were to focus on the illegality of being a sex trade client, rather than on sex trade workers' drug addictions and risky lifestyle choices, the discursive focus might, again, move away from a breach in proper femininity and female sexuality, and towards a focus on the flaws of socialised masculinity and male sexuality.

Foucault's theories have been decidedly helpful in understanding the operation of power in news discourse, particularly in regards to 'authorised discourses' and discursive silences. These theories have illuminated the role of police statements in (re)presenting the murders and disappearances of sex trade workers, and simultaneously shown that the absence of other discursive viewpoints is not a matter of accident, or of chance, but rather, is a silent demonstration of the operation of power through discourse.

One of the other authorised discourses at play in the newspaper reports, as I had predicted, was the use of medical references to deviantise sex trade workers. There were 22 medically-specific references in my data set (representing 4.9% of articles), and they occurred over the course of all eight years. While 4.9% may not seem like that many, it does equate to approximately one in every twenty articles making reference to either the psychological or physical (ill) health of sex workers. Considering these references as a group allowed me to answer the 'medical deviance' questions laid out at the beginning of my research (p. 18) with a firm 'yes', questions such as; do any articles imply that the victims were mentally ill; or that they were vectors of disease? Do such statements then insinuate that sex workers are somehow at fault for their own victimisation?

Kelly Reilly, for example, was pathologised as mentally ill when, in an article covering her murder, the reporter included (an unnecessary) mention of her childhood diagnosis with attention deficit disorder (Bergot, 2001, p. 12). As examined above (see p. 65) such discursive acts frame the individual sex trade worker as mentally abnormal in some way, and therefore as ‘other’. As Sansfaçon explains, the assumption here is that no “‘normal’ adults could decide to [work in the sex trade]” (1984, p. 124), in other words, Reilly only entered the trade because she was ‘mentally ill’, and thus incapable of making a more ‘appropriate’ or ‘normal’ decision. Similarly, another article refers to sex trade workers “becoming more mentally unstable...and more socially challenged” as they become more involved in the trade (King, 2003, p. A13), suggesting both that sex workers are “mentally unstable” even before they begin working and that such instability only intensifies the longer they stay in the trade.

Other references to sex trade workers mental (and physical) health are an attempt to explain the difficulties facing women working in the trade and stand as a plea for public understanding; for example, an article from the Edmonton Sun reads, “[data recently released by the Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Centres] said most prostitutes ‘have a history of childhood physical or sexual abuse,’ that ‘violence is a frequent occurrence in adult prostitution’ and that prostitutes exhibit ‘dissociative symptoms which often occur in conjunction with PTSD’” (Merritt, 2008, p. 28). While such an article attempts to explain, rather than blame, women’s involvement in the trade, it still casts sex trade workers as ‘other’, as ‘ill’, and thus not part of the ‘regular social order’. Furthermore, such ‘explanations’ exclude an examination of the social, focussing

instead on individual pathologies and psychoses to understand a woman's *individual* decision to work in the trade. As laid out by Foucault in "The History of Sexuality" (1978), this policing of sexuality has its roots in 'professionals' trying to control 'individual' behaviour through discursive power, whether that be in the form of religious confession, demographics, specifications of individuals, or otherwise.

Moving from psychological to physical health references, I found far more negative, blame-based examples. Perhaps the most extreme example was one written in an exposé covering the work of undercover police officers;

The two undercover police officers, Anne and Samantha, would turn heads in any crowd. On these streets, where the 'competition' is mostly diseased - mostly tooth-rotted, skin-scabbed, skeleton-framed or supersized - they are like sirens of myth, luring urban sailors to their demise. (McKeen, 2006, p. A1)

While this example does not point to AIDS, HIV or other venereal diseases directly, it certainly paints an image of sex workers as unhealthy and disease-ridden. There were, however, a number of other articles that *did* point specifically to sexually-transmitted diseases, such as "Svekla says he had heard that Innes had AIDS so had always stayed away from her" (Purdy and Staples, 2007, p. A2), and "Kraus [a police detective] views police enforcement as a form of preventative health care. The girls, HIV positive or carrying hepatitis C, are addicted and scarred, physically and mentally" (McKeen, 2006, p. A15). This final quotation is a particularly eloquent example of both psychological and physical deviantisation, addressing both the physiological and mental illnesses associated with women working in the sex trade. These examples, and the other discursively similar

articles, not only answered my questions regarding the use of medical-based deviantisation to other sex trade workers, they also stood as examples of the (re)creation of stereo-types that see sex trade workers as vectors of disease that threaten the general publics' safety and well-being. This perceived and created threat, however, does not take on a solely medical form; in fact, I argue, based on my findings, that the most common and wide-spread discourses used to 'other' sex trade workers are those that carry a more moralistic underpinning.

As I laid out in my introduction, a third type of discourse used to deviantise sex trade workers (re)creates the women as morally lacking. These 'moral shortcomings' become central to the news reports in an number of ways, sometimes through reference to drug addiction, sometimes through painting a portrait of a dysfunctional family background, and sometimes simply through blaming the women for living a 'high-risk' lifestyle. My first question concerning these morality issues was, as with the 'criminal' and 'medical' categories, how does this play out in the news discourse? For example, do news discourses present the women both as morally deviant for being involved in illicit sexuality and as morally sound in their lives outside of sex work? Are these women presented as inside of or a threat to 'normal' family life?

One of the harsher moral judgements that came up in my data set was a quote from an American police officer called in to speculate on the Edmonton serial killings, "Street prostitution has devolved,' says Det. Tom Jensen, who spent 19 years as a member of the Green River task force. 'There used to be a certain amount of class on the street. It's now only crack whores'." (Farrell, 2004, p. A2). This blunt statement, like so

many others, reiterates the discursive link between sex work and drug use, without any consideration for the social and psychological reasons as to why the two might go hand-in-hand. Furthermore, the derogatory use of the term “crack-whore” is part of a totalising identity that leaves little, if any, room for women working in the sex trade to be considered or understood outside of their economic activities; in other words, the judgment is not just about the act being deviant, it is about the sex workers *themselves* being deviant.

Even in articles that attempted to proffer social acceptance or hope for women working in the sex trade, there remained a certain amount of negative judgment. Certainly an improvement over statements that refer to working women as ‘crack-whores’, an articles that argues; “...with the proper help, these women can become contributing members of society” (Hodgins, 2002, p. A15) still insinuates that sex trade workers are currently failing as public citizens. “*These women*”, (because sex trade workers are understood to be a homogenous group), just need to be ‘saved’ by *us*, morally-upstanding productive citizens, and all the problems they face, such as violence, poverty, inequality, et cetera, will disappear from ‘these women’s’ lives.

Finally, there were some articles that managed to combine the criminal, medical, and moral deviantisation of sex trade workers into one swift statement, an example being an article published in the Edmonton Journal in 2003. The reporters, Sinnema and Kleiss wrote, “[h]er son was born with hepatitis C and cocaine in his blood. He was taken by Social Services” (pp. B2-B3). With this brief sentence the reporters have brought in legal deviance by mentioning both an illegal substance and Social Services, medical deviance

by mentioning hepatitis C, and moral deviance by mentioning that the woman passed on her illness and addiction to her newborn infant, who, for his own sake, had to be removed from her care. With a reach that spreads from the government to the family to the individual, such deviantising discourse leaves this particular woman, and by association all other sex trade workers, with no room to move beyond such stigmatisation and marginalisation.

My intent with this research has been to point out the multiple discourses at work in news reports covering the deaths and disappearances (and lives) of sex trade workers, discourses that create and are created by everyday language and ways of speaking. These discourses have the power to deviantise and dehumanise women working in the sex trade, and to shape the way the public views these serial killings and the sex trade in general. As one editorialist wrote, "...whether these women were killed by a single murderer or several doesn't alter the horror of the crimes." (Anonymous, 2003, A12), nor does it alter the way the public comes to understand these disappearances and homicides.

Future Research

Part of my original research plan was to include alternative discourses, such as those published by sex trade worker organisations, as comparative material to that published by the newspapers. I spent a significant amount of time seeking out organisations that commented on the Edmonton murders and disappearances, but, much to my frustration, came up rather empty-handed. The only group, based on my findings,

that commented to any significant degree of the crimes was the Prostitution Awareness and Action Foundation of Edmonton (PAAFE), but, due to its close ties to the Edmonton Police Service and the RCMP, the discourses it offered were hardly ‘alternative’ to those published in the newspapers. For example, both the newspapers and PAAFE frequently referenced the very same police officers, and one of the PAAFE spokespersons was a former police detective. The Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW) made a few comments of the murders, but none were any different than those (re)humanising comments provided by the women’s family and friends (and again, IAAW and the newspapers were often quoting the same people). Finally, there was a smattering of comments from online discussion groups, but not to any widespread degree (particularly in comparison to the circulation size of the newspapers), and most of these were actually just comments on recently published online newspaper articles. I did come across one “facebook” group dedicated to Shannon Collins, but it offered little more than a blanked statement calling for information regarding her murder.

I would suggest, as a result of my failure to find any significant alternative discourses, that future research might re-attempt this avenue, perhaps in conjunction with speaking directly to the families and friends regarding the loss of loved ones. Such a focus would not only provide a voice to those most directly affected by these murders and disappearance, but might, perhaps, simultaneously challenge more mainstream, widely available discourses.

My hope with this research has been to alter the way we read news reports and other discourses concerning the lives and deaths of sex trade workers. By doing so,

perhaps a greater understanding of the rights and needs of sex trade workers, women who *are* and *should be* treated as worthwhile members of the greater community, can become a focal point of future legislative, medical, moral, and media discourse.

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Appendix A

Names of the murdered and missing women and dates of the discovery of their bodies or the report of their disappearances.

Kelly Dawn Reilly	27 January, 2001	murdered, no charges laid
Ginger Lee Bellerose	25 April, 2001	murdered, Richard Douglas convicted October 2005
Edna Bernard	23 September, 2002	murdered, no charges laid
Monique Pitre	8 January, 2003	murdered, no charges laid
Melissa Munch	12 January, 2003	murdered, no charges laid
Debbie Darlene Lake	12 April, 2003	murdered, no charges laid
Katie Sylvia Ballantyne	7 July, 2003	murdered, no charges laid
Rachel Quinney	June, 2004	murdered, no conviction
Corrie Ottenbreit	20 January, 2005	missing since May 2004
Samantha Tayleen Berg	25 January, 2005	murdered, no charges laid
Charlene Gauld	18 April, 2005	murdered, no charges laid
Maggie Lee Burke	22 April, 2005	missing since December 2004
Ellie May Meyer	6 May, 2005	murdered, Joseph Laboucan charged September 2008
Delores Brower	20 October, 2005	missing since May 2005
Theresa Merrie Innes	May, 2006	murdered, Thomas Svekla convicted June 2008
Bonnie Lynn Jack	19 May, 2006	murdered, no charges laid
Leanne Lori Benwell	July, 2007	missing since April 2007
Brianna Danielle Torvalson	February, 2008	murdered, no charges laid
Shannon Maureen Collins	June, 2008	murdered, no charges laid
Chantel Brittany Robertson	30 June, 2008	murdered, Matthew Todd Barrett convicted May 2009

Appendix B - (Re)humanising descriptions of the women

Kelly Dawn Reilly was, "...independent, feisty, popular. The kind of girl who got just about everything she wanted" (Bergot, 2001, p. 12).

Ginger Lee Bellerose was, "a sweet young woman and a caring mother" (Blais, 2006, p. 7).

Edna Bernard was, "...just a good little girl, a good kid. [She had] a smile that would light up the dark" (Cormier & Audette, 2008, pp. A1, A3).

Monique Pitre was, "smart, caring and a good friend... She would give you anything she had to make you smile" (MacIsaac, 2008, p. 5).

Melissa Munch was, "...an attractive young daughter...adventurous and fun-loving" (Williams & Purdy, 2003, pp. A1, A13).

Debbie Darlene Lake "liked to dress up nice, she wanted nice clothes and nice things" (Cormier & Audette, 2008, pp. A1, A3)..

Katie Sylvia Ballantyne was, "...creative, fun-loving and a very strong and straightforward woman" (Cowan & Exner, 2003, p. 5).

Rachel Quinney was, "...a happy little girl with a sweet smile and a sweet tooth" (Loyie & Kleiss, 2004, p. A1).

Corrie Ottenbreit "...had a very Anne (of Green Gables) quality about her - a real zest for life" (Dubinski, 2005, p. 3).

Samantha Berg was, "...quiet, street-smart and [hard]-working..." (Cormier et al., 2005, p. A1).

Charlene Gauld had, "...a heart of gold and cared about everybody" (Palmer, 2005, p. 5).

Maggie Lee Burke was, "...a kind, caring woman..." (Palmer, 2005, p. 5).

Ellie May Meyer was, "...a caring individual who was an intelligent, warm, humorous person" (Clark, 2005, p. A19).

Delores Brower was, "a small, timid woman...[who] loved her family and [went] by the nickname 'Spider'" (McGinnis, 2006, p. 9).

Theresa Innes was, "...a fun-loving pal and devoted mother to her son" (Hanon, 2006, p. 5).

Bonnie Lynn Jack was, "...always joking and laughing. She was a beautiful person. Kind and soft-spoken" (Loyie et al., 2006, p. A1).

Leanne Lori Benwell was, "generous and [had a] loving spirit" (Kauth, 2008, p. 5).

Brianna Danielle Torvalson was "...a loving, caring, beautiful irreplaceable soul" (Merritt, 2008, p. 3).

Shannon Maureen Collins was, "...a lively, spunky girl who...loved life" (Drake, 2008, p. B7).

Chantel Robertson was "...easy-going and generous, a girl who couldn't live without her family and who dreamed of going to college" (Stolte et al., 2008, p. A1).

Appendix C - Sample Coding Table¹⁰

SUN	Police	STW	Gov't	Law	Citizen	Family	Friend	PAAFE	Advocate /Activist	Expert	Other
10-Jan-03	1				2						
10-Jan-03			1								2
13-Jan-03	1										
14-Jan-03	1				1						
15-Jan-03								1	1		1
16-Jan-03		1						1			
16-Jan-03	3	1							1		
17-Jan-03	1								1		
17-Jan-03						1					
17-Jan-03	1	2							2		
18-Jan-03	2	1				1			1		
18-Jan-03						1					
19-Jan-03	2		1			1		1	1		
21-Jan-03	2	1									
22-Jan-03	1	1									
12-Apr-03		1		1							
15-Apr-03	1										
17-Apr-03	1										
7-Jul-03	1				1						
8-Jul-03		1									
9-Jul-03	1				1						
10-Jul-03	1										1
11-Jul-03	2					1					
12-Jul-03	3										
15-Jul-03	1					3					
18-Jul-03	2		1								
18-Jul-03	1										
19-Nov-03	1	1				1		1			
TOTAL 2003	30	10	3	1	5	9	0	4	7	0	4

¹⁰ This is a sample of the coding system I developed while hand-coding my data. This particular chart records the speakers in each news article from the Edmonton Sun during 2003. There are multiple rows for some dates to represent the publication of more than one article on those days.