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Prostitute as Sex Worker: Feminist Theories Contextualized

Jane LeBrun

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in
The Department
of
Sociology and Anthropology

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Abstract

Prostitute as Sex Worker: Feminist Theories Contextualized

Jane LeBrun

Many feminist approaches to prostitution exist, all with the ultimate goal of eliminating gender inequality as a framework for their theories. Using data on street prostitution in Montreal and San Francisco collected by Frances Shaver and Martin Weinberg, the real lived experiences of sex workers are applied to three traditional feminist theories to test their validity. Limitations of the theories are identified by employing seven areas of examination. They are: 1) the history of the regulation of sexuality in western society; 2) the impact of the history of the regulation of prostitution in the West; 3) violence experienced on and off the job; 4) opportunities for other, more legitimate work; 5) whether or not prostitution is seen as a career; 6) sexual pleasure experienced on and off the job; and 7) sexual orientation. Postmodern Feminist Theory suggests a solution to these limitations. This involves an acknowledgment of the impact of the social context on the practice of prostitution as well as attention to the individual voices of sex workers including the voices of men. As a result, a redefinition of prostitution as sex work is proposed.

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Chapter 1 - Field of Inquiry

Ultimately, the purpose of this thesis is to show how we can come to see prostitution as sex work. The origins of this inquiry reside in a study conducted by Leonard Savitz and Lawrence Rosen, in 1988. They interviewed street prostitutes about their experiences of sexual pleasure comparing sexual interactions with clients and with lovers. In 1990 and 1991, Frances Shaver and Martin Weinberg replicated the 1988 work as part of a larger study investigating street prostitution in San Francisco and Montreal. The Shaver and Weinberg work has been scrutinized by a number of scholars who have used all or parts of the data in their post-graduate studies, and has formed the basis for this thesis. The Sociology and Anthropology Department of Concordia University to date has recorded two Masters Theses using this study. The Shaver and Weinberg data has also been the subject of journal articles, classroom lectures in CEGEPS and Universities, and presentations at conferences such as the annual Canadian Learned Studies Association Conference¹.

Questions arising from this study prompted Shaver and Weinberg to create another study on prostitution in Montreal in 1993 and in Toronto in 1994. It was while I was part of a research team interviewing street prostitutes for that very study that I became aware of the need for a shift in society's perception of prostitutes from that of victim or deviant to that of worker.

¹ Among many other presentations using this data, in June 1993, I was part of a team of researchers who presented selected findings from this study in Ottawa at the Learned Societies Congress.

It has been difficult to incorporate traditional Feminist Theory into this inquiry as it has not recognized the notion of prostitute as sex worker. While traditional Feminist Theory has its limitations in its views on prostitution, it would, on the whole, benefit from the inclusion of a Postmodern element in the examination of this very notion. Therefore, I propose the re-examination of some of the existing data of the 1990-1991 Shaver and Weinberg work through the lens of Feminist Theory. In this way, this thesis may offer another perspective to that data, while at the same time show how an inclusion of the Postmodern element to Feminist Theory may extend the traditional approach to the examination of prostitution.

1.1 Area of Empirical Examination

In order to get a clear snapshot of prostitution in present-day North America, I have chosen a twofold approach in this thesis. I will analyse data selected from the Shaver and Weinberg 1990-1991 study and apply them to some feminist theories' approaches to this topic. They are: Radical Feminism, Libertarian Feminism, Sex Worker Activist Feminism and Postmodern Feminism.

To get a broader perspective on any social issue, it is prudent to not only take a theoretical view, but also to ground the theory through an empirical analysis of that view. In this way, we can see how relevant the theory is to the actual lived experiences of those in question. That is why it is essential to employ the individual experiences of those examined in the discourses we create. It is impossible to fully understand any issue without including the voices of those directly involved. At the same time, it would be

difficult at best to do an empirical examination of all issues in prostitution that feminist theory discusses. I have chosen five specific areas of empirical examination which were explored in the Shaver and Weinberg study: 1) violence experienced on and off the job; 2) opportunities for other, more legitimate work; 3) whether or not prostitution is seen as a career; 4) sexual pleasure experienced on and off the job; and 5) sexual orientation.

1.2 Theoretical Framework of this Study

Feminist theories raise important questions about women, men, sex, power and ownership. The different feminisms which exist today emerged from the same core issues; a desire for the equal treatment of women and men, and thus the implicit need for women to regulate their own bodies. Throughout history the ebb and flow of interaction between genders has, time and again, revealed struggles around these very issues. Although the many perspectives of feminist thought have the same goals in mind, the paths to these ends are as varied as the people proposing them. The divergent nature of the experiences of these feminists has allowed for a range of priorities which have coloured and moulded the shape of their different written works. As a result, the original goals of feminist thought have often been lost or forgotten in the struggle to be heard in the multitude of voices.

My own interests lie in the practical application of these feminisms to the real lives of women and men today, more specifically, the women often referred to and the men more commonly overlooked by feminists: sex workers. Feminisms frequently examine the sex industry as an example of present day attitudes towards sex and gender

in their most extreme form. Because the sex industry in North America, namely pornography, prostitution, and erotic dancing, displays most clearly the commercialization and the commodification of sex, feminists often theorize about it using it as an identifier of the inequalities between women and men in our society when it comes to sex, power and ownership. In a way, it is a safe area of examination, because it is far enough removed from the average person's immediate life to be seen (and often condemned) without too much self-identification in the process. It is much easier to place judgment on the "other" presumably without examining not only our role in the creation of the conditions experienced by those others, but also the implications their experiences have on our own lives, than it is to examine our own behaviour and the impact of social influences on our own lives. However, it is not as simple as judging the "other". When examining any area of society, even the sex industry, we are looking at real people's lives, and our judgements based on these examinations have an impact on those lives. It is also important to recognize that the different areas we identify in society are not mutually exclusive. Just like we cannot truly understand what the elephant's foot is without seeing the whole elephant, we cannot understand the sex industry without knowing what role it plays in the whole of society. That is why it is imperative to consider the social context in which the sex industry exists today.

The issues that immediately influence the sex trade include present-day attitudes towards gender roles in sexual interaction, and the social stigma attached to prostitution, and more specifically, to the prostitute. In order to truly understand why we behave in a certain way, it is helpful to understand how we came to behave that way. Women and men play their assigned roles today because of generations of social evolution which

brought about commonly held attitudes and beliefs about appropriate behaviour. In order to shed light on present-day gendered sexual interaction, I have identified two additional areas of examination which can only be explored through an examination of existing literature; 1) a brief overview of the history of the regulation of sexuality in western society and 2) the impact of the history of regulation of prostitution in the West. These two areas of examination can inform and provide a context for the specific experiences of the sex workers interviewed in my thesis. As I will show through the inclusion of the Postmodern element to traditional Feminist Theory, the only way we can truly understand any social phenomenon is through a recognition of the impact of its social context.

1.3 Definition of Terms

1.3.1 Popular Definition

As discussed earlier, prostitution is an exaggerated example of how we perceive the two genders, and what expectations we have of them. Our expectations are so deeply implanted that they have even permeated our language. When we think of prostitution, we generally have set notions of what it looks like. We imagine dark street corners in seedy areas of a city, scantily clad women with garish make-up and comically high-heeled shoes. They are leaning into car windows, or grabbing at men passing by on the street. They are desperate, high on drugs and would do anything for money. Anything. Well, they do, don't they? They sell themselves for money, that's what it's all about, isn't it? In the following chapters, I will identify those stereotypes and evaluate whether

or not they are valid. I will also argue that societal biases about prostitution influence sex workers' perceptions of their work.

1.3.2 Formal Definition

The term prostitution is not even defined in the 1974 publication of the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. It only defines the term "prostitute". First, as a verb: "1: to offer indiscriminately for sexual intercourse esp. for money 2: to devote to corrupt or unworthy purposes." Then as a noun: "a woman who engages in promiscuous sexual intercourse esp. for pay"(p.558). In 1987, the Ninth Edition included the term "prostitution" for definition: "1: the act or practice of indulging in promiscuous sexual relations esp. for money 2: the state of being prostituted: Debasement." These definitions are questionable mainly because, although it is implied, the exchange factor is not formally noted. The individual debasing herself (according to these definitions, only women are prostitutes) is the only one noted in the act of prostitution. Who is she exchanging with? The client is not a consideration here. While there are two people engaging in the act of prostitution, somehow, the buyer is overlooked. Interestingly, there is no formal stigmatized term for the client. We call the provider of the sexual service a prostitute, but we do not have an equivalent term for the one requesting the service. Consider how differently we would view the act of prostitution if we were to call those looking to purchase sexual services "prostitutes", and those providing the services "workers" or "sellers". When considering other exchanges where one is buying and one is selling services, either neither have a title, or both do: doctor and patient,

performer and spectator, teacher and student, preacher and congregation. In prostitution, the responsibility for the act is carried by the seller, in our language, and in our attitudes. Historically, the regulation of prostitution has also focussed on the provider of the service (Roberts, 1993). Since the birth of “the oldest profession”, the woman selling sexual services has been either revered or despised, but in more recent times, she has more commonly been despised (Pheterson, 1996). When looking at prostitution historically, it becomes clear that those punished for the crime are the female providers of sex (Shaver, 1988).

1.4 Research Questions

Keeping all of this in mind, I propose the following research question: How well does existing Feminist Theory reflect the actual lived experiences of sex workers in Montreal and San Francisco?

In order to answer this question, this thesis will include the following: a brief overview of the social context of prostitution and of sexuality in the west, an examination of four trends of feminist theory and their approaches to prostitution, and an analysis of data on the five identified areas of empirical examination collected during a study conducted by Dr. Frances Shaver and Dr. Martin Weinberg in San Francisco in 1990 and Montreal in 1991. In total, I have employed seven areas of examination to see whether or not the theory reflects the actual lived experiences of sex workers. Finally, I hope to show in the concluding discussion the interplay between the data used in this thesis and Feminist Theory, which can only enhance our understanding of prostitution as

sex work, and where theory could become richer and more reflective of the reality of sex work by including the voices of the women and men they study.

Chapter 2- A Literary Examination of Prostitution

In this chapter I will explore the seven areas of examination through existing literature on the regulation of prostitution and sexuality in the West, as well as the four identified streams of Feminist Theory. The seven areas of examination will be numbered as follows: Social Context - 1) the history of the regulation of sex in western society; 2) the history of prostitution in the West; Empirical Examination - 3) violence experienced on and off the job; 4) opportunities for other, more legitimate work; 5) whether or not prostitution is seen as a career; 6) sexual pleasure experienced on and off the job; and 7) sexual orientation.

2.1 Introduction

Theoretical perspectives are not entities unto themselves. They are precipitated by experience and reflection and, it is to be hoped, they will continue to be developed in order to systematically clarify principles, facts and observations. To that end in this chapter an historical background on the regulation of sex and prostitution is an essential element providing a lens for viewing feminist theories on prostitution.

2.2 The Social Context of the Regulation of Sex

2.2.1 Area of Examination #1

In the Western world, sex and human sexuality have historically been loci for social control in the Western World. The application of moral standards to sexual activity has been a way in which the human body could be effectively regulated. Nickie Roberts' 1992 treatise on the history of prostitution clearly illustrates that as far back as the Stone Age, we can see that women were revered for their capacity to produce life, and goddess-religions sprung up in order to worship this creative force. Evidence of such religious activity is also present for ancient Egyptian cultures (Roberts, 1992: 3). The control and domination men had over women in the patriarchal cultures of Greece around 2000 BC was exemplified by the restrictions placed on their bodies. Women were considered to be property, and their bodies were not their own to regulate. First their fathers, and then their husbands dictated where they could and could not be seen, how they presented themselves in terms of dress, and who had sexual rights to them (Roberts, 1992: 14). Not surprisingly, then, women had no rights in the political arena, and could not own land. In prehistoric Rome, however, attitudes towards women were very different. Women were not cloistered in their homes, as in Greece, and the concept of marriage was relatively unknown. In fact, the attitude towards sex was more along the lines of free love, and not many restrictions were placed on the body in terms of sexuality (Roberts, 1992: 34).

After the dissolution of Roman power, chaos ensued, and the existing social structure collapsed. Christian doctrines during the Dark Ages were adopted and altered to

suit the needs of those in power, and people were subjected to rigorous and often cruel regulation of their bodies. A theory of duality existed: "...that of a world divided into opposing pairs, with women, the flesh and the senses identified as evil, and men, with their disembodied 'spirituality', identified as godlike - and never the twain should meet" (Roberts, 1992: 58). It was around this time that the notion of sex restricted to marriage, patterned on the ancient Greek practice, re-emerged, and then only for the purpose of procreation.

From this point forward, history reveals fluctuations in the regulation of sexuality. At times, even though the marriage ideal was maintained, it was not strictly enforced, and a more "laissez-faire" approach was taken to sexual behaviour. There were also occasions where morality, particularly sexual morality, was monitored with renewed vigour. From the 17th century onwards in America, we can see a great change in attitude towards morality and the regulation of sexuality as a means to differentiate between classes of people. In the late 1600s, sexual activity was monitored by the public, and was severely sanctioned if it fell outside the confines of marriage. It was not unusual for people to be sentenced to death for what we would consider today to be minor transgressions of the law, or even commonplace sexual practices (D'Emilio and Freedman, 1988). In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, sexuality started to change - industrialization allowed for less public moral scrutiny and more sexual freedom. People were encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. With industrialization, the pursuit of happiness became a political ideal, thus the emergence of the emphasis on individuality. In other words, pleasure became a goal, a new concept for the general populace. The notion of marriage for love as opposed to marriage as a contract between

families for economic gain began to take hold, bringing a whole new meaning to sex in marriage. It was no longer simply a duty, a tool for procreation, but a means for intimacy and bonding between the husband and wife. Sex for pleasure within the confines of a marriage not only became a possibility, but a desired effect (D'Emilio and Freedman, 1988: 41).

According to D'Emilio and Freedman (1988), the first wave of American feminism headed by radicals such as Susan B. Anthony, started in the late 19th century. This seemed to be a logical progression of the move away from seeing women as vessels for reproduction to women as active participants in the enjoyment of sex. In 1929, a landmark publication by Katherine Bemen Davis entitled 'Factors in the Sex Lives of Twenty-Two Hundred Women' brought sex, in an impersonal, scientific manner, into the public sphere for the first time. So now, women's sexual experiences were being catalogued and examined in a way that had never occurred before. With this new system of classification emerging, the scientific study of sex brought about the notion of labelling people based on their sexual behaviour: namely the new divisions of homosexual versus heterosexual interaction, the former being considered 'abnormal' for the first time.

"The middle class women who were coming of age in the early twentieth century were at a turning point. Forming their ties in an age when their society still validated female bonding, they also lived in an era when same-sex relationships came under sharp scrutiny. By the end of the century, European writers such as Krafft-Ebing were describing same-sex relationships in medical terms, as signs of mental and physical degeneration." (D'Emilio and Freedman, 1988: 193).

2.3 The Emergence of Prostitution

2.3.1 Area of Examination #2

From the earliest evidence of awareness of the link between sex and reproduction, prostitution has been part of human sexuality. However, the meanings laden in the words 'prostitute' and 'prostitution' have changed dramatically across time and space.

Archeologists have discovered stone carvings pointing to matrilineal societies circa 25,000 BC where women were revered for much more than just their reproductive capabilities. "In her three aspects of maiden, mother and crone, based on the three faces of the moon observed by Stone Age women, the Great Goddess was creator, preserver, and destroyer of all life" (Roberts: 1992: 2). Women were considered to be the "earthly incarnations" of the goddess creator, and some were set apart as a direct link to the Great Goddess. These shamanic priestesses bestowed Her blessings onto the people through their sexuality, the origination of the creative-force. The first prostitutes were seen as the closest possible way we could get to the Divine Creator.

In ancient Greece, women were the property of fathers and husbands. This was also a slave-owning society where both women and men were commodities in many ways, including through their sexuality. There were as many forms of prostitution as there were differences in sexual taste, and size of purse. Nickie Roberts (1992) tells us of a ruler around 6000 BC, named Solon who wanted to form a strategy of competition which would keep middle-class farmers pitted against one another to ensure they would not join forces to rise up against his reign.

“A crucial part of his strategy was the regulation of its family structures. Divided as they were into small nuclear family units, the men of the middle class were all in fierce competition with each other, hell-bent on accumulating property and wealth to hand on to their male offspring. Whereas in the old aristocratic order heirs were bred from an extended family unit that had included several wives and concubines, in the new middle-class families only one woman - the wife, could provide a legitimate heir” (Roberts, 1992: 14).

Essential to the maintenance of this new family unit was the strict regulation of the wife's sexuality, to ensure that the heirs were indeed their fathers' sons. So, “good” women remained sexually faithful to their husbands, providing them with heirs. However, this sexual restriction was not necessary for men; they needed a variety of outlets for their sexual desires. Thus arose the social construction of the whore as the “bad” woman who was not meant to produce heirs, but to provide sexual diversity for men. This notion of “good girl” versus “bad girl” would be revisited and renewed time and again in the future regulation of female sexuality (Roberts, 1992).

With the fluctuations of moral regulation of sexuality in general throughout history, came varying degrees of tolerance towards prostitution. With Roman times came the acceptance of prostitution as a necessity. At times, it was even considered to be a desired service which made a life in the sex trade alluring for many women. In fact, if women were registered as prostitutes, they did not have to marry, and thus many women, particularly those from middle and upper classes opted to register themselves as prostitutes to escape the often confining bonds of marriage (Roberts, 1992: 39).

During the Dark Ages, with bodies and sexuality being strictly regulated, prostitution was severely sanctioned. Although the services of prostitutes were often

sought both by the clergy and by the wealthy (at times, one and the same), they were publicly denounced and punished by those very groups. It was not uncommon for prostitutes to be flogged, stoned, burned, branded and mutilated for selling sexual services simply to subsist. Some women were put to death for prostitution. Serious attempts were made to completely obliterate prostitution, but even in times of extreme poverty and sexual repression, prostitution survived (Roberts, 1992).

In the Middle Ages there arose a new order: feudalism. With this came the creation of spread-out communities with common markets where groups from different regions could trade their wares. These markets became ideal for the sex trade to flourish. Thus grew a certain tolerance towards prostitution, which greatly disturbed the Roman Catholic church. While there were several efforts made to eliminate this newly resurging business, it was never fully successful. In fact, it was during the middle ages that an attempt to regulate the sex trade and earn profit from it was made by the local lords (Roberts, 1992: 78).

In North America by the late 19th century, the regulation of prostitution was modelled on two European systems: the continental and the English. The continental method consisted of the formal acknowledgement and control of prostitution by state authorities. While the English approach, on the other hand, mainly resorted to moral persuasion led by clergy, state intervention did occur under vagrancy laws and police harassment. Over the last century, each system of control has been partially applied to varying degrees in North America to counter balance the other (Valverde, 1991: 80-81).

Although Canada has officially acquired the English system, John P.S. McLaren's (1988) study of Canada's early prostitution laws points to its evolution as a moral

concern. Under Canadian law at the time of Confederation, the status of street prostitute was enough evidence for arrest, but the law was applied irregularly at the whim of police, especially when their control of the law was threatened (127-128). Throughout most of this century, however, other than the revocation of vagrancy laws applying to street sex workers in 1972 and several other alterations concerning the recognition of men as sex workers, prostitution has been regulated on the basis of the morals section of the 1913 Canadian Criminal Code (McLaren, 1988: 150).

Throughout history, fluctuations in attitudes towards prostitution have recurred again and again. In one era, prostitution was seen as evil and furious attempts to end its existence were made, to no avail. In the next age tolerance and even some level of acceptance of prostitution surged forth, and women could practice their trade with relatively little fear. However, the common thread of regulation of sexuality never disappeared. To be more specific, prostitutes' activities have always been regulated.

A very clear omission in the literature on the history of prostitution is the role of sexual orientation in the sex trade. An assumption is made that clients have been men, and prostitutes women, however, when looking at the history of sexuality in general, sexual activity was not reserved for couples of the opposite sex. In ancient Rome, where bodies were commodities, any slave, male or female, young or old, was a potential tool for sexual exploitation (Roberts, 1992: 36-40). In 18th century Europe, when the sex trade was in a period of tolerance and growth, reports exist of brothels housing both boys and girls for sexual liaison (Roberts: 1992: 158-161). Perhaps the heterosexual assumption in the history of prostitution is due to the identification of different sexual orientations as a relatively recent phenomena, and we are working with a present-day

heterosexual bias. However, the lack of acknowledgement of the existence of homosexual prostitution throughout history serves only to reinforce the stereotypes of a gender dichotomy in the sex trade.

2.4 Feminism and Prostitution

In the late nineteenth century, the growing visibility of prostitution incited a sexual reform movement. A very clear sexual double standard existed, whereby women were expected to maintain their sexual purity while men were free to satiate their sexual needs outside of marriage with prostitutes. This posed a threat to the existing social order, which was based on a strong nuclear family. It soon became clear that something was needed to unify people against the growing acceptance of prostitution and the separation of sex from love and intimacy, upon which the family unit was based (D'Emilio and Freedman, 1988: 140). Women suffragists opposed the regulation of prostitution based on the recently exposed inequalities between men and women, especially the denial of property and voting rights for women. Women in the first wave of feminism, such as Susan B. Anthony, believed that prostitutes were victims of male oppression and that in order to eliminate prostitution, women had to be allowed the same social privileges as men (149). With pressure on one side for the elimination of prostitution from moral reformers and on the other side for an expansion of women's rights from the suffragists, the common ground to quell the fires of both groups came with the creation of the White Slavery Scare (MacLaren, 1986). At the beginning of the new century, with increasing trade between the New World and the Old, the creation of a

panic that white women were being sold into sexual slavery and transported away from home was enough to draw attention of both groups away from prostitution practices at home. A growing fear developed that middle-class white girls would be kidnapped from their homes and sold on the sex market². Not only did this encourage the public to oppose prostitution based on a threat which touched closer to home, namely a fear for their own daughters, but it used the notion of the masculine oppression of women (ie. Pimps kidnapping and transporting women to be sold into sexual slavery), which spoke to the concerns of the feminist movement.

Although the belief that a White Slave Trade existed is quite widespread, there is no evidence to substantiate those claims. (Bell, 1987; Chapkis, 1997; D'Emillo and Freedman, 1988; MacLaren, 1986; Pheterson, 1989). What this construct did accomplish, however, was to draw the attention of feminists to the whole prostitution debate. At the root of the rise in this feminist interest, there was a division between two main groups of feminists. The first group objected to the whole notion of the sexual double standard which exists between men and women, and the fact that women are oppressed economically, socially and sexually by the patriarchal system of regulation in our society. The second group objected to the fact that sex was commercialized, and thus being engaged in outside of the love/intimacy ideal (MacLaren, 1986). While the desired end result of the efforts of both of those groups would be the elimination of prostitution, their means of getting there were fundamentally different, which was to cause future tension between the multitude of feminisms emerging from that original debate.

²For a more in-depth explanation of the White Slave Trade, please see MacLaren, 1986: 142.

Unfortunately, many feminists have argued about the differences between their perspectives on women's oppression in our society, and they have not focussed on their common goal of eliminating that oppression.

Another issue of concern is the feminists' omission of the very people they are debating about; the prostitutes. Until very recently, prostitutes have had no voice to express their perspectives on their own work, and as such, feminists have done the very thing they object to: repressed the female voice, and oppressed women. It is due to a group of courageous prostitutes and ex-prostitutes, such as Margo St. James, Gloria Lockett, Peggy Miller, Norma Jean Almodovar, Annie Sprinkle, that prostitutes' voices were brought into the debate³.

With this new addition to the feminist debate on prostitution, there are now three major points of reference during feminist discussion on prostitution; the Radical Feminist approach, the Libertarian Feminist approach and the Sex worker Activist approach. The following sections will briefly summarize and critique these three perspectives, and then extend them by suggesting the possibility of a fourth Postmodern view which responds to some of the problems inherent with the first three.

³ In 1973 Margo St. James founded a prostitutes' rights organization in San Francisco named COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics), a National Task Force on Prostitution in 1979, and organized the First World Whore's Congress in Amsterdam in 1985 and the Second World Whores' Congress at the European Parliament in Brussels in 1986. For more details on the congresses and on prostitutes' rights organizations around the world, please see A Vindication of the Rights of Whores, edited by Gail Pheterson in 1989.

2.5 Radical Feminist Perspective

2.5.1 Area of Examination #3

The Radical Feminist perspective clearly deals with Area of Examination #3 of this study: violence experienced on and off the job.

Perhaps the most commonly known names associated with the Radical Feminism are Andrea Dworkin (1989) and Catherine MacKinnon (1987). These two feminist theorists argue that the patriarchal oppression of women stems from and is enforced by the sexual double standard, and the repression of women through sex. Prostitution exemplifies this oppression as it represents not only female economic dependence on male authority, but it also epitomizes male domination of women through female sexual oppression, including violent acts such as beatings, rape and even murder. "Women's equality, their argument asserts, sexual and otherwise, cannot be achieved so long as prostitution, which is predicated on the sexual subordination of women to men, continues to exist" (Jolin, 1994: 76).

The basis of the Radical Feminist perspective stems from the existence of a binary system of gender classification. According to MacKinnon, (1989), the very characteristics attributed to "male" and "female" imply a power differential, with the masculine as dominant and the feminine as submissive. She argues that in order for masculinity to embody power, there must be something over which the masculine has power; namely the feminine. This power, in large part, is based on and played out through sexual interactions between the two genders.

“In the concomitant sexual paradigm, the ruling norms of sexual attraction and expression are fused with gender identity formation and affirmation, such that sexuality equals heterosexuality equals the sexuality of (male) dominance and (female) submission” (MacKinnon, 1989: 212).

Male power, therefore, defines sexuality; all sexuality, including female sexuality. In other words, because we live in a male-defined world, we (women) cannot create our own discourse around sex - because it is always written and understood through male power, and the implied threat of violence (MacKinnon, 1989: 210). Although we all claim to believe that our notions, beliefs and understanding of sexuality are constructed, fundamentally, we do not ask the appropriate questions of “by what” and “why”. We assume the essentialist line; sexuality is essentially biological (212-213). “Through pornography, among other practices [namely prostitution], gender inequality becomes both sexual and socially real” (221). In other words, according to MacKinnon, we will never attain social equality if we continue to perceive and define sex and sexuality using present-day descriptions, and the binary categories of male and female. The only way we can break free of this oppression is to extricate ourselves from this patriarchally-defined world and create our own meanings of gender, pleasure and sex. This would require sexual segregation.

Radical Feminists maintain that we perceive sex as constructed by men and for men; therefore we cannot truly derive pleasure from the ways we interact sexually every day. If our perception of sex is a construct, then so is the end result. Taking that line of reasoning to its logical conclusion, if all of our sexual interactions are defined by men for the purpose of female oppression by male power, then all sex is oppressive. Modern

colloquialisms used by both men and women is indicative of this. "That the act of sexual intercourse with a man is damaging to a woman is implicit in the vulgar language we use to describe this act. As Robert Baker pointed out, a woman is 'fucked', 'screwed', 'banged', 'had' and so forth, and it is a man (a 'prick') who does it to her"⁴. According to Andrea Dworkin (1992), an equal sexual interaction between men and women cannot exist in an unequal society, therefore all sex in our present-day society is rape. The ultimate female sexual oppression, then, is prostitution. If all sexual interaction is simply a physical enactment of male power over women, then women cannot choose to have sex; much less in an economically-driven situation. Through the lens of Radical Feminist theory, prostitution is doubly oppressive to women, because they are unequal to men in two ways; economically and sexually. Not only are they forced to depend on men financially for their survival through a system of patriarchal institutions, but they are seen as valuable only through their potential to provide sexual pleasure and release for men through their bodies. "The exploitation of female sexuality is a ruling-class privilege, an advantage which allows those socially identified as 'men' to perpetuate their economic and cultural hegemony" (Shrage, 1989: 192). An extreme view of Radical Feminists poses that prostitutes provide a vehicle for the expression of misogyny, through their murder. There are many examples of "gender-cleansing", a term coined by Dworkin (1992), whereby the mass murder of prostitutes goes largely unchallenged and unpunished. It has only been when that murder touches closer to home that they are put to a stop (1992).

⁴ For complete reference, see footnote number 21 in Laurie Shrage, 1989.

“Because of the cultural context in which prostitution operates, it epitomizes and perpetuates pernicious patriarchal beliefs and values and, therefore, is both damaging to the women who sell sex and, as an organized social practice, to all women in our society” (Shrage, 1989: 187).

So, not only are prostitutes devalued, but according to the Radical Feminist perspective, all women are seen as expendable whores. Prostitution simply makes this fact explicit. And while all sex means male domination, some forms of it more clearly express this sentiment, such as prostitution, pornography, s/m and domination.

“From this perspective, it is not enough to reject some of the more apparently abusive sexual practices, it is also necessary to recognize that the language and symbolism of those acts are the building blocks for even that which women perceive to be their most authentic sexual selves. According to WAS (Women Against Sex)... female desire must be recreated entirely outside the practices and symbols of contemporary culture. What desire would look like divorced from sex cannot be known” (Chapkis, 1997:18).

According to the Radical Feminist approach to prostitution, then, because of the nature of patriarchy, women and men will never reach any level of equality if prostitution, and all forms of accompanying violence, continues to exist. Equality can only be obtained through the removal of social institutions which reinforce and contextualize that inequality. As long as men have the economic upper-hand over women, and as long as there are women willing to “sell their bodies” in order to survive, the cycle of domination and subordination will perpetuate itself in an endless loop, sustained by an ever-present undercurrent of violence. For the Radical Feminist, violence experienced by prostitutes would disappear when prostitution itself is eradicated. History tells us it is highly unlikely that we will see the end of prostitution.

2.6 Libertarian Feminist Perspective

2.6.1 Area of Examination #4

Area of Examination #4, opportunities for other, more legitimate work, can be viewed from the Libertarian Feminist perspective.

Like the Radical Feminist approach, the Libertarian Feminist perspective identifies patriarchy and male oppression of women as a problem which causes many women to choose prostitution as a means to survival. However, as argued by Hillary M. Lips (1991), Libertarian Feminists do not believe that the solution to the problem is the eradication of prostitution. Rather, they recognize that for many women, prostitution provides them with an adequate income to support themselves and their children, while allowing a sense of worker autonomy. While they do not believe that prostitution is ideal, they believe that by condemning the worker, we are missing the point. Prostitution, for the Libertarian Feminist, often exists because of female poverty and/or lack of equal opportunity in the workplace for women. Our society devalues work traditionally occupied by women, and therefore adequate remuneration for that work is not present. The socialization of women into those traditional roles begins at an early age, so as to ensure male social and economic domination, and to provide a reserve labour force of women during times of war or prosperity, when the number of men in the work force is outweighed by the number of jobs. However, when we are faced with economic hardship either through a recession or a depression, women until recently have been the first to be discarded, so as to ensure employment for the majority of men (Lips, 1991).

“The effect of this social discrimination is to channel women into a narrow range of occupations, which not only keeps wages in these jobs low but also tends to undercut female wage levels in all other occupations even when they attempt to enter non-traditional jobs. This, in turn, created the spectre of low-wage competition which encourages predominantly male unions to adopt policies of exclusion. As long as there remains a large reserve army of unemployed women in the household but available for work when the opportunity presents itself - or of underemployed women who work part-time or at low-level, low-wage jobs, yet who are capable of and willing to move into other, more productive areas - there will be considerable downward pressure on women’s wages” (Phillips and Phillips, 1993: 60).

There are other factors which lend themselves to female poverty, such as child care. Libertarian Feminists maintain that not only are women in our society the primary care-givers of children, they are generally isolated from one another, and not financially compensated for their child-rearing work. Due to physical realities and social restrictions, a child born to a heterosexual couple, is generally cared for at home by a woman. While the time-frame for this withdrawal from the paid work-force varies, it comes with a price. The woman either becomes financially dependent on her mate, or she shoulders double-duty as mother and wage-earner. If she chooses to stay at home for an extended period of time, she becomes less desirable as an employable individual because she may not be perceived as remaining current with new developments in her field. If she chooses an early return to work, a child-care worker often must be hired, thus reducing the family income. Furthermore, the nature of the nuclear family system common to today’s society tends to inhibit community support in child rearing which puts pressure on mothers whether or not they are with a mate. A woman who has a child

without a mate is often bereft of support, especially financial support, which can often lead to a life of poverty (Lips, 1993).

Although most people when asked, claim that child-rearing is one of the most important jobs today, this “belief” is not supported by our economic structure. Women are expected to both bear children and be good mothers, as well as be financially independent in a society where the jobs they traditionally occupy are not well-renumerated. This situation puts women at an economic disadvantage to men who are at an equal educational, cultural and socio-economic standing (Marchak, 1973).

There are very few occupations in which women are better paid than men. The two most commonly known professions where women do exceed men in terms of financial remuneration are in the modelling industry and the sex industry. Women are valued, in our society, for their physical attributes which is reflected in pay-scales for female and male sex-workers and models (Lederer, 1980: 57). It follows then, that in a society where we equate success with economic gain, women who experience poverty and see a way to earn good wages doing something that does not require a high level of education, will often consider doing stigmatized and/or illegitimate work as a viable option. As such, prostitution can become attractive to these women. According to Shaver (1988), the average income for street female prostitutes in Montreal and San Francisco is \$2000 per week, or over \$100,000 per annum, whereas male street prostitutes can expect to earn between \$600 and \$800 per week (\$30,000 - \$40,000 per annum). Considering that minimum wage in Quebec right now is approximately \$7.00 per hour, the financial benefits of working as a street prostitute for women as opposed to a cashier, janitor, store clerk or fast-food restaurant worker, far outweigh the negative

consequences of the work. This is particularly true for single mothers for whom social welfare ensures a life of abject poverty. This becomes especially relevant for women who do not answer to a pimp, but who experience high levels of worker autonomy which is often lacking in minimum-wage earning jobs⁵.

Given the economic constraints for women living in our society, Libertarian Feminists would argue that as long as this male-oriented system determines what women can and cannot do with their bodies, namely, their sexuality, then women are not at an equal standing with men. In other words, key to their concept of equality is the notion of free choice, and as long as women are prevented from selling sexual services, they are not functioning on an equal level with men. Regardless of how society morally perceives prostitution, the single most important element to female autonomy is the ability to choose any form of wage-earning she deems appropriate for her (Jolin, 1994: 79). So unlike Radical Feminists, Libertarian Feminists argue that condemning any one woman and taking away her choice only reinforces oppressive attitudes and does not resolve the fundamental issues of inequality in our society. "...As feminists in general, they (radical feminists) work to liberate women from sexual restrictions, but as feminists in the prostitution debate, they work to impose restrictions on women's sexuality." (Jolin, 1994: 78). Libertarian Feminists may not all believe that prostitution is ideal work, but they would argue for the right of individual women workers to choose prostitution as another opportunity for legitimate work.

⁵ Approximately 50% of women and almost no men have pimps according to data collected by Shaver and Weinberg during their research with street prostitutes in Montreal in 1990 and fewer than 10% of the women and none of the men had pimps in San Francisco in 1991.

2.7 Sex worker Activist Perspective

2.7.1 Areas of Examination #3 and #5

The Sex worker Activist perspective addresses this study's Areas of Examination #3, violence experienced on and off the job, and #5, whether or not prostitution is seen as a career.

Within the past thirty years a new perspective on prostitution has emerged. Unlike any other approach in the past, this one was initiated by sex workers and ex-sex workers themselves⁶. After hearing armchair theorising for many years about prostitutes as deviant, uneducated, coerced, drug-addicted, sex-addicted fallen women, small groups of prostitutes in North America and Europe started speaking of their experiences in sex work and debunking many of the myths surrounding the business. This created an enormous backlash in the feminist community. Many feminists dismissed the sex workers' accounts as lacking in understanding of the larger social context in which the trade is practised, or as not exemplifying the majority of prostitutes' experiences, but only referring to the least dangerous and degrading side of the industry. By doing this, however, feminists forced the existing wedge between themselves and their subjects even deeper. In their refusal to accept the words of the prostitutes as legitimate, feminists did precisely what they objected to; they silenced and discounted the experience of a specific group of women. This was not the first time that feminists were criticized for their exclusionary practices. During the emergence of the second wave of

⁶ For a listing of some of the key activists who began this movement, refer to "A Vindication of the Rights of Whores" edited by Gail Pheterson (1989).

feminism, the primary feminist voice was that of the middle-class, educated white woman, which did not speak for countless other groups of women. When black feminists attempted to enter the discussion, they felt unheard and disrespected.

“The exclusionary practices of women who dominate feminist discourse have made it practically impossible for new and varied theories to emerge. Feminism has its party line and women who feel a need for a different strategy, a different foundation, often find themselves ostracized and silenced. Criticisms of or alternatives to established feminist ideas are not encouraged, e.g. recent controversies about expanding feminist discussions of sexuality. Yet groups of women who feel excluded from feminist discourse and praxis can make a place for themselves only if they first create, via critiques, an awareness of the factors that alienate them.” (hooks, 1984:9)

And so the struggle between sex workers and feminists was born. Sex worker Activists took the notion of prostitution one step further than it had been previously taken with the idea of the sale of sexual services as work, not as criminal or deviant behaviour. These women and men did not discount the feminist arguments that prostitution could be very dangerous for those involved, but claimed that the danger was not inherent in the exchange, but in the criminalization of the work, and the stigmatized nature of sex in our society. In other words, the problems lay not in the work itself, but in the laws regulating the work, and the attitudes the general population hold towards the workers (Lowman, 1992; Shaver, 1988).

As the number of personal accounts emerged and evidence to support the notion of prostitution as work mounted, feminists were forced to take a serious look at what prostitutes had to say. This became even more apparent at the first International Whores Congress held in Amsterdam in 1985. “Prostitutes and ex-prostitutes from eight

countries⁷ drafted a charter of demands... which was presented to the press on the fifteenth of February in 1985.” (Pheterson, 1989: 33). This event was instrumental in doing two things: first, it created a sense of global community for sex workers and legitimated their concerns; second, it enabled them to create a more academic space in which their issues could be debated with people outside of the profession. In other words, if feminists we not going to allow space for the prostitute voice(s) to be heard, prostitutes would take matters into their own hands and create their own separate space where they could express their needs and concerns. Another important element to the Whore’s Congress was the inclusion of prostitutes and prostitute-advocates from many countries, providing travel funds for those who could not afford to make the trip, which acknowledged the possibility of varied experience, until that time a point many feminists resisted (Pheterson, 1989).

The Sex worker Activist approach makes the claim that selling sex can be a legitimate career choice made by women and men, and not one necessarily based on poverty and inequality in the workplace. While they do not deny that these other factors play a role for some prostitutes, they argue that this is certainly not the case for all. In fact, women like Norma Jean Almodovar (1993), made prostitution an explicit career choice, moving out of socially acceptable occupations into the illegitimate business of prostitution. The argument made here is that the state does not have the right to regulate our bodies, and if people choose occupations where sex is the commodity, and all

⁷ Participants included prostitutes and ex-prostitutes from the Netherlands, France, Switzerland, Germany, England, Sweden, the United States and Canada as well as prostitute advocates from the above countries and from Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Translation was available in Dutch, French, German and English.

involved are consenting adults, there is no basis for the criminalization of that activity (Bell, 1987; Bell, 1995; Highcrest, 1997; Laurier, 1990; Pheterson, 1989 & 1996; Shaver, 1988).

In fact, the Sex worker Activist approach recognizes that the issue here is not the purchase or sale of sexual services, but the "...control of women's sexual, reproductive and economic behaviour" (Pheterson, 1996: 16). In their view of our society women are expected to service men's sexual needs. This may be through marriage, dating, or even casual sexual encounters. Until recently, a man has had legal claim to his wife's sexuality through marriage, as it was not legally possible to charge one's husband for rape⁸. Sex Worker Activists say that in many ways a man "purchases" a woman's sexual services, whether that be by buying her dinner, paying her rent, buying her gifts or by marrying her. If the purchase of sexual services is deemed acceptable in those situations, what is it about prostitution that is morally questionable? In the words of Gail Pheterson: "What is transgressive for women is neither providing services to men nor is it receiving money or goods for sexual service; women's transgression is *explicitly asking* for and taking money for sexual services - or *refusing* to service men in whatever domain..." (1996: 17). By separating women into categories of "good" and "bad" we condemn all women to live within that dichotomy. All women's behaviour can be examined within those bounds, and as such, women are polarized, and never the twain shall meet. By doing this, women are dehumanized. It becomes difficult to see the whole person outside

⁸ An amendment to the Statutes of Canada regarding sexual offenses on October 27, 1982 stated that the law would now recognize spousal sexual assault. This amendment (Ch. 125 sec. 19 of the 1980-81-82-83 Statutes of Canada) was made to an act in Ch. 93 sec. 244-246 of the 1974-75-76 Statutes of Canada.

of specific acts; so the prostitute cannot be the mother, the wife cannot be the sex worker. When we insist upon the “respectability” of women we miss the point. There should be nothing wrong with being de-legitimated; this undermines the feminist struggle for equality. The problem, rather, lies within assumed male rights (Pheterson, 1996: 22).

The Sex worker Activist perspective also lends its own particular view to the issues of violence experienced on and off the job, as in Area of Examination #3. Considering the ineffectiveness of laws around prostitution⁹, one begins to wonder why prostitution is criminalized at all. If the point of the law was to eradicate the existence of prostitution, then the justice system would treat the crime differently. However, what the laws are effective in doing are separating “good girls” from “bad girls”, maintaining a social structure which ensures a large population of women who will turn to prostitution as a viable alternative to existing legitimate options, providing a social situation in which violence against women is tolerated, and ensuring women’s sexual availability in legitimate social situations. Unlike the majority of legitimate work situations, Sex worker Activists believe that violence in prostitution is considered to be part of the job. As such, those who exact punitive measures against prostitutes are able to do so without fear of retribution. This removes the responsibility of the violence from the offender to the victim. “Associating abuse with female unchastity rather than with male domination maintains the illusions which perpetuate violence against women” (Pheterson, 1996: 80). In any other work situation where violence is considered to be a possibility, such as police work, prison work, or security work, there is a very clear response to any instances

⁹ For an examination of the impact of existing prostitution laws, please see Bell, 1995; Lowman, 1992; Shaver, 1988; and Pheterson, 1989.

of violence. It is not likely that a security guard will be blamed for being shot by a thief. However, it is quite common for a prostitute to be told to expect to be treated with violence (Bell, 1995).

In addition to addressing the responsibility for violence experienced in prostitution, the Sex worker Activist perspective attempts to deconstruct existing notions of “good” versus “bad” women by identifying links between prostitution and other forms of economic/sexual exchange. It also tries to demystify the prostitute and the sex industry, and bring a sense of humanity to the sex worker. Not only does it bring a level of understanding to the reasons behind selling sex, as in the Libertarian Feminist perspective, but it attempts to add another element; the notion of prostitutes as exercising economic power through sex as a career.

2.8 A Summary of the Three Traditional Feminist Approaches to Prostitution

The three major feminist perspectives on prostitution we’ve seen so far all have their strengths and weaknesses. Each one presents very important issues of concern for and against prostitution. In fact, they all come to the fore with the same goal in mind: the creation of a space where men and women can engage socially, economically and sexually on an equal level. The problems they each face is the path they take in order to create that space. Radical Feminists take the extreme approach of total segregation of the sexes. Libertarian Feminists take the middle ground of advocating prostitute rights, but condemning the business of prostitution itself. Sex worker Activists move towards the other end of the continuum by declaring that not only do prostitutes have the right to

practice their trade, but that there is in fact nothing inherently wrong with prostitution itself, rather, it is the way society views women's sexuality which is problematic. This perspective also implies that suffering experienced by sex workers is not inherent to the sale of sexual services, but rather to the way laws are set up and enforced, making prostitutes scapegoats for the existence of the business. In other words, the Sex worker Activist approach claims that if prostitution was taken out of the criminal code and regulated by the business code, many problems we associate with the work would disappear. If we were to assign a legal approach to the three feminist perspectives examined above, one could argue that the Radical Feminists would like to see prostitution criminalized, the Libertarian Feminists would want it to be legalized and the Sex worker Activists would call for the decriminalization of the work¹⁰.

2.9 The Postmodern Element - A Possible Fourth Perspective

2.9.1 Areas of Examination #3, #6 and #7

The Postmodern Feminist perspective for this study is mainly concerned with Areas of Examination #3, violence experienced on and off the job, and #6 and #7, respectively sexual pleasure experienced on and off the job and sexual orientation.

¹⁰ An assessment of the three legal approaches to prostitution can be found in Shaver, 1988.

2.9.2 Origins of Postmodern Feminism

The roots of Postmodern Feminism can be traced to a critique of the feminist movement by women belonging to various minority groups who felt excluded by the white, middle class feminist notion of equality for women. Women of colour, lesbians, and women from lower classes did not have the resources or the time, often, to make their interests known by the existing feminist groups. Nor did they have the same educational, occupational and financial opportunities that white, middle class women had. So, even if they were given "equality", it did not mean equal opportunity, therefore, they were still in disadvantaged positions. These women started to share their experiences as a way to critique the existing feminist movement. They argued that there is no such thing as 'the female experience' (Fraser and Nicholson, 1990).

2.9.3 What is postmodernity?

The notion of postmodernity is often linked to the destructive criticism of society evident in postmodern art (Chisholm, 1993). Its purpose is to break down belief in structure, order and compromise. Often called "avant-guard", it is known for its violence against the establishment in order to make room for future ideology, the ideology of the individual. Postmodern theorist, Jean-François Lyotard (Rorty, 1985), however, attempted to impel the ideology away from the idea of destruction as a means of emancipation, and toward a theory of inclusion. Instead of seeing existing social establishment as an obstacle to be destroyed, Lyotard espoused the notion of the

recognition of differences, and the need to acknowledge the existence of countless small narratives as essential to understanding where present theory has failed. According to Rorty (1985), Lyotard would argue for emancipation through change, the debunking of metanarratives, and of all-encompassing power structures, which can be done through the recognition of small narratives. In the constructive view of postmodernity, social criticism becomes more pragmatic or contextual (Fraser and Nicholson, 1990). Postmodern theory on prostitution, then, includes the attention to individual voices of the people involved and listening to the voices within their individual social and historical contexts.

2.9.4 Postmodern Feminism

As previously mentioned, traditional Feminist Theories on prostitution claim that the problem examined arises from the male/female dichotomy created in our society, and the inequalities associated with those categories. What most theories on prostitution fail to do is to factor in the varied experiences of the sex workers; one cannot assume that all prostitutes experience the work in the same ways, just as one cannot make the same claim for accountants, mail carriers, CEOs, doctors or store clerks. The most glaring omission from prostitution theories is the discussion of the male prostitute perspective. In fact, it seems that most theories on prostitution are based wholly on the inequality between men and women, which denies the experience of a large population of sex workers. Research on male adult prostitution is difficult to find: most studies examine the issue of male youth who “turn tricks”, which is very different from an examination of

prostitution as a career choice (Earls and David, 1989; Pleak and Meyer-Bahlburg, 1990; Snell, 1995; St. Blaise, 1995). As a result, the bias towards an examination of prostitution as a female-only issue leaves an unexamined element to the business.

2.9.5 Men Sex Workers

In recent years, male sex workers have taken it upon themselves to include their own voices and experiences in the mix (Bell, 1995; Pheterson, 1989; St. Blaise, 1995). Their accounts tell of similarities and differences from the female prostitute experience. They report similar issues of violence against the sex worker which holds no consequences for the perpetrators of such attacks. They speak of the attraction of money, autonomy and “the life” of prostitution, as do women sex workers. As well, they speak of a lack in alternatives in the legitimate job market which creates a context in which prostitution is a viable option (St. Blaise, 1995). However, issues which women do not raise as concerns emerge from the male prostitute accounts. For example, sexual orientation plays a role in the work: the majority of clients of all prostitutes are men, which raises different issues for sex workers who identify as homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual. As well, there seems to be a higher level of fluidity in the work experienced by male prostitutes. For example, they move in and out of “kept” situations, which does not seem to be a consideration for female street workers¹¹. As such, we can

¹¹ “Caukins and Coombs (1976) identified four subgroups of male prostitutes: the street hustler (who conducts business in the street), the bar hustler (who makes contacts in bars catering to a homosexual clientele), the call boy (with whom contact is made by telephone to arrange a meeting time and place), and the kept boy (who generally lives

see that it is erroneous to assume that we are speaking of a woman when we speak of a prostitute, and this brings into question the basis for many objections to prostitution, and this for different reasons than previously addressed.

Once we realize that we cannot speak of “the prostitute experience”, as Andrea Dworkin, for example, has suggested¹², we may question not only the male/female polarization that many feminists use for analysis. but we also begin to look at other factors which can affect how the worker her/himself perceives the work. Through an inclusion of the postmodern perspective, we are then able to see the experience of the very people we classify as “prostitute” essential to our examination of their work. In fact, by including the multitude of prostitutes’ voices in the analysis, we are challenged to see prostitution as work, and the prostitute as worker. We identify with and humanize sex workers as people, and leave behind our need to categorize them as “other” in order to make ourselves more comfortable with the trade.

with an older man in exchange for money, clothes, and living accommodations).” (Earls and David, 1989: 402-403).

¹² Andrea Dworkin made the following statement as part of a speech she delivered at a symposium entitled ‘Prostitution: From Academia to Activism’ at the University of Michigan Law School, October 31, 1992: 3: “Prostitution: what is it? It is the use of a women’s body for sex by a man, he pays money, he does what he wants. The minute you move away from what it really is, you move away from prostitution into the world of ideas. You will feel better; you will have a better time; it is more fun; there is plenty to discuss, but you will be discussing ideas, not prostitution. Prostitution is not an idea. It is the mouth, the vagina, the rectum, penetrated usually by a penis, sometimes hands, sometimes objects, by one man and then another and then another and then another and then another. That’s what it is.”

2.9.6 On the Job Violence

Other assumptions which impede our examination of the work of prostitution have to do with the work experience itself. We assume that prostitution is dangerous, that all sex workers are bound to experience violence on the job. In order to validate and make relevant this assumption, it is important to examine whether or not this is the case, in other words, ask the prostitutes themselves whether they experience violence on the job, and then to find out who perpetrates that violence (ic. clients, police, pimps). In other words, one must listen to the “small narratives” proposed in the Postmodern element of Feminist Theory. As well, we must question where that violence occurs, if it is more true for one work location than another, in terms of geography and location of client-solicitation. Gail Pheterson (1989) reports that at both Whores Congresses, prostitutes’ experience of violence on the job varied by these very categories. Not surprisingly, this had an enormous impact upon the enjoyment of the work.

2.9.7 Sexual Pleasure Indicator

Another, and very crucial, issue of contention among theorists is whether or not prostitutes are able to experience sexual pleasure on or off the job. It seems that the acknowledgement of sexual pleasure (or lack thereof) among sex workers varies, depending on who is asking the question (Bell, 1995; Chapkis, 1997; Earls and David, 1989; Savitz and Rosen, 1988). “We each find the story of prostitution most appropriate for our own political agenda” (Chapkis, 1997: 212). We all assume that clients hire

prostitutes to attain some level of sexual satisfaction, and workers are often using parts of their own bodies normally associated with sexual pleasure. As such, it appears highly relevant to ask the question of sex workers themselves; can sexual pleasure be an element of the job? In fact, if it is indeed a job, would we expect prostitutes to experience pleasure, or as with others who perform emotional labour (Chapkis, 1997: 70), would they be able to make the distinction between work sex and pleasure sex, thus reducing the possibility of sexual pleasure experienced on the job? Not only is this question relevant to ask in terms of understanding the prostitute's perspective on the job, but it is also relevant as an indicator of variance of experience in the work. Presumably, pleasure is not experienced in a vacuum, and as such, how much one allows oneself to feel pleasure is influenced by how comfortable one feels performing the work. If, for example, one is constantly wary of client violence, it would conceivably be more difficult to allow for the experience of sexual pleasure. Chapkis (1997: 131) states: "Women's experience performing erotic labour is highly determined by the conditions under which the work is performed". As well, if one is sexually engaging clients who do not come from the gender one normally deems desirable, then pleasure certainly will not ensue. The examination of sexual pleasure of sex workers could be enhanced by the application of the Postmodern insistence on attention to historical and social context, as well as to the small narratives of individual voices.

The suggested Postmodern element, then would be an extension of the three major feminist perspectives. It would also consider the voices of men sex workers, the issues of on-the-job violence and the sexual pleasure indicator, all of which illustrate the variance of sex workers' experiences.

The Findings and Analysis chapter is an examination of the factors which I thought would be relevant to the variance of the work experience of street prostitutes. I considered issues which may have influenced the decision to enter the profession, such as level of education and legitimate work experience. I also looked at factors which may affect how the worker experiences the work itself, such as violence experienced on the job. And finally, in order to get an idea of the variance to be found in the enjoyment of the work, I looked at sexual enjoyment on and off the job, factoring in gender and sexual orientation. All of this was done in the hopes of illuminating the variance experienced in the work, and lending credence to the notion of prostitution as work, as opposed to prostitution as deviant, criminal activity.

Chapter 3 - Methodology and Research Design

3.1 Research Design

The data used in this thesis come from the responses of 76 women and 76 men sex workers interviewed in San Francisco in 1990 and in Montreal in 1991. These women and men took part in a larger study conducted by Dr. Frances Shaver and Dr. Martin Weinberg who examined the work experiences of street prostitutes in San Francisco and in Montreal. While the original study included transvestite and transgender sex workers as well, I chose not to include their responses in order to keep the scope of this paper manageable. Questions from the Shaver and Weinberg samples selected for this thesis will encompass those that replicated Savitz and Rosen's (1988) study, as well as questions which may account for the gender differences in sexual enjoyment of street prostitutes (as already mentioned). The interview guide consisted of a combination of open-ended and close-ended questions, with the responses recorded on the interview-guide by the interviewer (see Appendix A). The responses were then coded and input into the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis.

3.2 Sample Selection

Of the 76 women in this study, 46% were single, 39.5% were cohabiting with their lover and 14.5% were married. While none of the men were married, 91% of the 76 identified themselves as single, leaving only 9% cohabiting with a lover. Eighty-two

percent of the women identified as heterosexual, and 13% as bisexual. The remaining 1% said it was difficult to identify their sexual orientation. For the men, 17% identified as heterosexual, 37% as bisexual and 42% as homosexual. The remaining 4% claimed their sexual orientation to be a combination of those categories.

Seventy percent of the women interviewed were white, 21% were black, 1% was oriental, 4% Hispanic 1% Native American, and the remaining women fell outside of those identified categories. For the men, 79% of those interviewed were white , 11% were black, 3% oriental, 3% Hispanic, 3% Native American, and the remaining men, again, fell outside of those identified categories. The average age of the women at the time of the interview was 27 years, and that of the men was 24 years. The average age when first paid for sex for the women was 18.5 years, and for the men was 22 years.

All of the men (100%) and the majority of the women (78%) claimed to work for themselves, and not for a pimp. Seventy percent of the women claimed that they worked regularly as sex workers, whereas only 46% of the men made the same claim. The same numbers of women and men claimed that sex work was their only source of income. The average number of customers the women saw in an average week was twenty-seven, and for the men it was only twelve. The women, on average, spent 21.5 minutes with each customer, while the men spent 41 minutes on average with each customer.

3.3 Research Method

The interviews were conducted during the working hours of the respondents (generally between 10pm and 4am) on the street where they were working, or in nearby

restaurants and coffee shops. Respondents were approached by the interviewers at their place of work during their regular work hours. Interviewers walked the area where street prostitutes were known to work (called the Stroll or the Track) and, after identifying themselves to women, men and transsexuals who were working, would ask for interviews. The sex workers were offered a small sum of money as payment for their participation in the study. As such, purposive sampling, was the method used. This is a technique by which the researchers, through a period of observation on the street, identified those who worked regularly in the area, and then attempted to interview the majority of those regulars. The researchers decided to sample an equal number of men and women sex workers to facilitate the gender comparison, however, this did not represent the ratio of women and men on the street. Shaver and Weinberg estimated that approximately 20% of street prostitutes are men. The interviews generally lasted from forty-five minutes to one and one half hours.

Through my own experiences interviewing street sex workers in Montreal and Toronto in a later study conducted by Shaver and Weinberg, I gathered many anecdotes and field experiences which are relevant to this work and which will be used to inform the discussion section.

3.4 Areas of Empirical Examination

I employed seven areas of examination: 1) the impact of the regulation of women's and men's sexuality in the west; 2) the impact of the history of prostitution in western society; 3) violence experienced on and off the job; 4) opportunities for other,

more legitimate work; 5) whether or not prostitution is seen as a career; 6) sexual pleasure experienced on and off the job; and 7) sexual orientation. The last five areas are tested by a series of questions in the interview guide, and the first two were addressed in the previous chapter by an examination of the literature on the history of human sexuality in and the history of prostitution the west.

Area of Empirical Examination 3) was tested using a series of questions which identified the number of times sex workers were raped, robbed or beaten on or off the job. These incidences of violence experienced were further broken down into categories identifying the abuser as client, pimp, police or another individual.

Area of Empirical Examination 4) was tested by identifying the level of education attained by sex workers, and whether or not they had ever worked in more legitimate jobs, outside of prostitution.

Area of Empirical Examination 5) was tested by looking at whether respondents saw sex work as their only source of income, and by asking about the amount of time they expected to continue engaging in sex work.

Area of Empirical Examination 6) was tested using a set of questions regarding sexual pleasure derived from specific sexual acts: giving and receiving oral sex, performing and receiving anal sex, engaging in sexual intercourse, performing and receiving Sado/Masochistic acts, giving hand jobs, having breasts fondled and kissing. The respondents were also asked how often they achieved orgasm. They were asked to rate their responses on a five point scale, 1 being “never” and 5 being “all of the time”. They were asked to rate their sexual enjoyment of these sexual acts with both their clients and their lovers. I recoded the responses, collapsing categories “all of the time”, “most

of the time” and “some of the time” into a “yes” response, and categories “rarely” and “never” into a “no” response.

Finally, Area of Empirical Examination 7) was tested by breaking down responses to questions used in Area 6) by sexual orientation.

With these variables, I intend to test the following hypotheses. Hypothesis 1: women and men sex workers experience different levels of sexual pleasure while engaging in specific sex acts on and off the job. Hypothesis 2: the levels of sexual pleasure experienced by women and men sex workers are, in part, affected by the different social contexts in which they practice their trade. Hypothesis 3: existing traditional Feminist Theories (ie. Radical Feminism, Libertarian Feminism and Sex Worker Activism) do not accurately reflect the lived experiences of street prostitutes.

3.5 Limitations of the Study

It is important to note here the limitations of this study. In Shaver and Weinberg’s attempt to rectify some of the problems inherent in the Savitz and Rosen study, they decided to interview men as well as women. Part of the problem with Savitz and Rosen’s work lies in their decision to only include women in their sample, thus failing to acknowledge a large part of the street prostitute population. Shaver and Weinberg’s intention was to replicate the Savitz and Rosen study. In doing so, they were obliged to use the same questions. In addition, Shaver and Weinberg included men in their study, and asked them the same questions they were asking the women. However, the vast majority of the clients on the street are men. Therefore, what we find is that both

the sex workers who are engaging in heterosexual sex with their clients and those who are engaging in homosexual sex with their clients are being asked about levels of sexual pleasure experienced with the same sex acts. Men servicing men may not perform the same sex acts as women servicing men. As a result, the men in the study may or may not be reporting on their most common and enjoyed sexual activities. Because of this, I cannot report on general sexual enjoyment of women and men sex workers with clients and lovers, but only the enjoyment of certain specific sexual acts. These sex acts may or may not represent what it is they actually do sexually, especially in the case of the men.

In their attempt to rectify another limitation of the Savitz and Rosen study, Shaver and Weinberg wanted a sampling procedure which would result in a group of respondents more representative of the street sex worker population. While they attempted to address this issue by interviewing sex workers in their own work environment, as opposed to those on probation (as did Savitz and Rosen), due to financial and time constraints they were only able to interview people from specific geographic regions. They chose the main Strolls or Tracks in the two cities which were both located in the downtown core and allowed access to three types¹³ of workers in relatively close proximity. This may have prevented accessibility to more marginal groups of street sex workers who did not frequent the well-known areas for solicitation, also known as by the researchers as the High Track Range¹⁴.

¹³In both cities the Track or the Stroll included women, men and transsexual sex workers.

¹⁴ The High Track is the area where sex workers charge within the medium to high price range for their services. Also, the well-known Track (or Stroll) in large metropolitan areas is general found in or around city centres, and is thus comparable

3.5 Inferences

With these data, I will show that women and men sex workers do make a distinction between the sex they engage in with paying and non-paying partners. By debunking the stereotype that prostitutes are coerced into the sex trade and believe they have no other work options, perhaps we can begin to accept their evaluation of prostitution as work, and afford them the same rights and respect as we do any other workers in our society. I also intend to lend credence to the argument that women and men perceive and engage in the work differently, and as such experience differences in their enjoyment of sex on the job. I also wanted to show that factors other than gender, factors which make each prostitute experience unique, also account for variance in the work. Such factors are identified as the above mentioned five areas of empirical examination.

For this study, I used the indicator of sexual pleasure experienced on the job as a means to access the variance in the enjoyment of the work experience. My goal in examining the prostitutes' experience of sexual pleasure was to look at the feminist argument that the problems inherent with prostitution are in large part due to gender inequality in our society. If this were true, then presumably the differences in the level of pleasure experienced on the job between men and women in the sex trade would be marked. Existing feminist theories imply that prostitution survives and is problematic because of gender inequality in our society. Men, throughout history, have struggled to

from city to city.

control and confine women's sexuality (according to much feminist thought), and have been responsible for the creation of prostitution itself. This occurred firstly by establishing the conditions of female poverty, and secondly, the market for the sale of sexual services. This line of thinking implies that present problems associated with prostitution, ie., violence against the prostitute, the lack of other work opportunities for sex workers, the abuse of pimps, and the lack of sexual pleasure experienced with customers, only applies to the women in the sex trade. Clients, who tend to be men, would not be subject to the same kinds of conditions. At the same time, there is little recognition that men involved in selling sex even exist, or if they do, would not be subject to the same working conditions as women. If these assumptions were true, then not only would women and men in the sex trade enter into the work differently, they would also experience it differently. Women would not be in a position to allow for sexual enjoyment with clients, for that could prove to be a fatal mistake, since clients (men) are considered to be the enemy. Men sex workers, on the other hand, would be free to experience high levels of sexual pleasure, since they are not in business with an opponent, but simply with an equal. Hence, if feminist assumptions are true, the data would show a large discrepancy between women and men and the sexual enjoyment experienced with clients.

However, in order to truly understand how the *work* affected the experience of sexual pleasure, I also had to look at how these men and women derived sexual pleasure outside of the work context. In other words, as a control, I examined the enjoyment of sex off the job, in order to give relevancy to the enjoyment reported on the job. This, I believe, is shaped, in part, by the sexual double standard which still exists in our society,

and the stereotype that all prostitutes are women. While the sex workers themselves were not asked questions to that effect, in the previous chapter I have supported the argument through an examination of the literature on the history of the regulation of women's and men's sexuality in the west, and the history of prostitution in the west.

Chapter 4 - Findings and Interpretation

4.1 Introduction

This thesis, based on Dr. Shaver and Dr. Weinberg's 1990/1991 study on street prostitution in San Francisco and Montreal, covers variables which provide a social context for the data. They replicated research conducted by Savitz and Rosen in 1988. A problem with the Savitz and Rosen study, which undoubtedly had an impact on the findings, was their sampling procedure. They only included in their study women who had recently been arrested and convicted of prostitution-related offenses. This very clearly reveals a bias in their sample. Street prostitutes with more experience, who perhaps developed strategies to avoid arrest, were clearly not included in the sample. As well, there are questions as to how consensual the respondents were. While Savitz and Rosen claim that the women were given the option to not answer their questions without fear of impact on their probation status, only two women out of fifty refused outright to be interviewed, and another two terminated the interview prior to its conclusion. In other research settings, that would be considered a phenomenally high level of response. In contrast, although the majority of respondents approached for the Shaver/Weinberg study eventually agreed to an interview, initially a large number of them were hesitant. As such, the state of mind of the women, in the Savitz and Rosen study, actually interviewed is brought into question, and their perception of consequences to their refusal to cooperate is unclear. All of these factors would undoubtedly play a role in the types of

responses subjects believed would be most fitting under those circumstances, regardless of their actual sexual practices.

One way to determine whether or not interview responses are accurate, valid and reliable, is to replicate the study in question, which is what Dr. Frances Shaver and Dr. Martin Weinberg did in 1990 in San Francisco and in 1991 in Montreal. Not only did they inquire about pleasure derived from specific sexual activities, but they also asked a series of questions about work experience as well. These added components will be discussed in this thesis. Their interviews included prostitutes from four gender categories: women, men, transsexuals and transvestites. For the purposes of this work, however, the focus will be on the women and men respondents. In order to increase the sample size so as to make the responses more valid and facilitate analytic techniques, I merged the 1990 and the 1991 results. For this study, there was a total of 152 respondents, 76 women and 76 men prostitutes, all of whom worked on the street selling sexual services for money.

4.2 Effects of Social Forces on Women and Men Sex Workers

Although the findings in the Savitz and Rosen study were a starting point, and the questions they raised provocative, it is not enough to simply look at how much women in the sex trade enjoy sex. Considering that they performed the same sex acts with their customers as with their own lovers, if one were to look at it from a purely biological perspective it would be quite surprising that they did not derive the same amount of physical pleasure in both cases. We can then presume that their pleasure, or lack thereof,

was for reasons other than physical. In this study, I will argue that there are social and cultural factors placing different meanings on the sex acts in the two arenas.

Here it is important to identify the factors which could influence how street sex workers practice and enjoy their work. First of all, it is important to look at why they are there. In other words, what factors contributed to their decision to begin working as a street sex workers. While many would argue that sex workers engage in their work for reasons other than sexual enjoyment, I would venture further and posit that the reasons may indeed be financial. In order to examine this, Shaver and Weinberg asked several questions related to whether or not street prostitution was a choice, and whether or not it appeared that the respondents had options outside of street prostitution. Questions related to their education level, work experience outside of the sex trade, and other sources of income were asked. Presumably, the responses to these questions would shed some light with regards to whether or not the sex workers themselves felt there were other work alternatives open to them, or even whether they would be capable of doing any other kinds of work.

4.3 Area of Examination #3 - Violence Experienced On and Off the Job

Much of the literature dealing with street prostitution emphasizes violence on the job as one of the major risks involved in the sex trade. Radical Feminist Theorists argue that prostitution, in itself, is the ultimate form of violence against women (Dworkin, 1992). According to such feminists, prostitutes are held up as an example to the rest of women in society of what to expect as retaliation if they take ownership of their own

sexuality, and use it in an autonomous fashion (Shrage, 1989). However, these feminists do not discuss the reasoning or impact of violence men sex workers experience. Rapes, beatings and robberies of men sex workers are not even acknowledged in Radical Feminism. Shaver and Weinberg wanted to know how much violence the men and women experienced, and the source of that violence. In order for the Radical Feminists to truly understand the impact of violence against the women sex workers, it is important to do a comparative analysis of violence experienced by the men in the same line of work. The data in the next sections show the trends. As we can see, men and women experienced violence on the job much differently. In general, it appears that women experienced more violence at work than did men, with a couple of exceptions.

4.3.1 Rapes

In Table 1 we can see that women, for the most part, were more likely than men to experience rape by a client (26% of women versus 3% of men), a pimp (3% of women and no men), or others (6% of women and no men) at work. Also, they experienced more instances of rape in these cases. I wrote in my field notes during my time on the Stroll in the Gay Village in Montreal, that the police were not often seen on site, but when they were present on the men's Stroll, I noticed that they were not driving around observing, as they were often seen doing on the women's Stroll, but were showing a presence of force, and attempting to arrest the men sex workers (July 8, 1993 - field notes). In the summer of 1993 in Montreal, the research team was told by the women sex workers that there was an exaggerated effort to "clean up the streets" and remove street

prostitution from the vicinity. Consequently there was a frequent police presence on the women's Stroll, and the threat of arrest drove many of the women to flee the Stroll on the nights that the police were particularly avid in their attempts to make arrests. However the same police presence was not felt in the Gay Village. When they were there, though, it was very clearly their intention to make arrests. (July 8, 1993 - field notes).

TABLE 1

Times Raped, Robbed or Beaten at Work* by Perpetrator & Gender in Past Year (%)								
	By Client		By Pimp		By Police		By Other ¹⁵	
Raped	Women N=76	Men N=76	Women N=76	Men N=76	Women N=76	Men N=76	Women N=76	Men N=76
0	74	97	97	100	99	97	94	100
1	21	3	3		1	3	5	
2 or more	5						1	
Robbed								
0	74	78	93	100	97	99	87	92
1	12	15	4		3	1	12	7
2 or more	13	7	2				1	1
Beaten								
0	70	90	85	100	96	99	91	90
1	18	7	7		3	1	5	8
2 or more	12	4	9		1		3	2

*in the last twelve months

¹⁵ Categories derived from questionnaire

4.3.2 Robberies

Next, we look at frequency of robberies in the sex trade on the street. Table 1 indicates that, again, women were more likely than men to be victims. When it came to robberies conducted by clients, not only were more women likely to be robbed by clients than men overall (26% versus 22% respectively), but they were also more likely to experience robbery more frequently (13% of women were robbed 2 times or more in the past year compared to 7% of men). Because the men sex workers tended not to have pimps, it is not surprising that women sex workers experienced more robberies than men sex workers at the hands of pimps (6% of women versus no men). Women were also more likely to be robbed by others in the business (13% versus 8% respectively). When speaking to the sex workers, the topic of robbery did not often arise. However, on those rare occasions when it did come up, it seemed that the women encountered more robbery by clients than the men. In general, women had more of an issue with money and clients than men. According to the Shaver and Weinberg data, the women were more likely than the men to be financially supporting someone. They were more likely to maintain strict pricing, charging for more services, and extra time. Men did not seem to have the same money concerns as women, often giving more time to their clients¹⁶ and at times not charging at all (May 30, 1994 - field notes). This indicates a more lax business relationship. As such, more frequent negotiations occurred, and a greater sense of

¹⁶ According to data collected by Shaver and Weinberg in 1990 and 1991 in Montreal and San Francisco, the average number of time women sex workers spent with their clients was 21.5 minutes per client. The men sex workers spent almost double the amount of time with clients at 41 minutes per client on average.

control over the exchange could be felt by the clients of the men sex workers. As well, the women sex workers often indicated to me that they would spend approximately ten minutes servicing the client, and if by the end of that time the client had not been satisfied, in other words, had not experienced orgasm, the interaction would either be terminated (the full amount of money having already been paid), or the client would have to agree to pay for more time (July 28, 1993 - field notes). I heard no equivalent stories from the men sex workers. Therefore, perhaps disgruntled clients would demand their money back, and forcibly take it back from the women selling the service. Because the men sex workers were more likely to spend extra time with their clients, a more satisfactory conclusion to the encounter was more likely, reducing the level of disgruntlement amongst the clientele, and increasing the possibility of sexual satisfaction, thus the client's sense of "getting what was paid for".

4.3.3 Beatings

As indicated in Table 1, women sex workers experienced beatings by pimps and police more frequently than men sex workers. Thirty percent of women experienced beatings at the hands of clients versus 10% of men. Fifteen percent of women were beaten by their pimps, while there were no reports of men being beaten by pimps. Four percent of the women were beaten by police versus only 1% of men. Of course, as with rape and robbery, it is evident why women were more frequently beaten by pimps; they had pimps, men did not. It is not clear, however, why women were more frequently beaten by police. Yet, I do remember hearing many stories of police brutality on the

women's Stroll in Montreal in 1993. Again, the attempt to rid the red light district of street prostitutes accounted for much of the police harassment experienced by the women that summer, of which I was a witness on several occasions. The harassment escalated to the point where, by the end of the summer, the women dramatically altered their "uniform" by discarding the trademark high heeled shoes for running shoes, which enabled them to make a quick escape as soon as a police cruiser was spotted (August 18, 1993 - field notes). Perhaps what we saw in 1993 was not a case of unusually high police harassment of female street sex workers, but simply a display of the working conditions these women face in general.

Men and women sex workers reported about the same number of beatings by others (10% and 9% respectively). Because the men were less likely to experience other kinds of violence than women on the job, this indicates an important issue for the men. One would question why they were more threatened by beatings by others than almost all other forms of violence at work. In fact, men sex workers experience beatings by others as the most frequent form of violence, other than robbery by clients. Who were these others? Were they other men sex workers or were they passers by who, assuming that the men sex workers are gay, were directing their violent behaviour at the gay man, rather than the street prostitute? There is evidence to support this claim in informal conversations I had with men sex workers (July 8, 1993 - field notes). Historically, men have not been sanctioned for being sexually promiscuous as have women (Roberts, 1992), in fact, they have been revered or applauded for that kind of behaviour. And traditionally, if they can make some money doing it, there is no social shame attached.

However, in recent times, it is with whom they are engaging in sex that causes problems (D'Emilio and Freedman, 1988). Our data here seem to point to that issue.

In general, we can say that the responses indicate that women were more prone than men to experience violence on the job. While some of the differences in the numbers were subtle, the threat of violence across the board seemed to be consistently higher for the women than the men. This, no doubt impacted upon their work differently. The women must consider techniques for avoiding violence more carefully than men, because it is a greater and more frequent threat to them. As well, they move through their daily work routines with a higher likelihood of encountering a violent situation. With the way the law in Canada is set up today, they have no judicial support against this threat of violence, or even against the violent encounters themselves (Shaver, 1988; Lowman, 1991). Consequently, it becomes easy to understand their constant vigilance against violence on the job. But is this more pronounced threat of violence a function of the work or a function of the gender? Do levels of violence experienced on the job remain constant off the job for the women and the men, or does the work have an impact on the violence experienced? The street sex workers were asked whether or not they had been raped, robbed or beaten off the job in the past twelve months. The responses are indicated in Table 2 . Here we can see that in all reported cases, the women were more likely than the men to experience these types of violence off the job as well. So, it appears that it was not necessarily the job that exposed the women to more violence than

TABLE 2

Raped, Beaten or Robbed Outside of Prostitution by Gender (%)						
	Raped		Beaten		Robbed	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
	N=69	N=72	N=71	N=73	N=67	N=67
Yes	34	13	33	13	19	13

the men, but the fact that they were women. In other words the responses to the questions related to the incidence of violence experienced by men and women, on and off the job, indicate that women were more likely to encounter more violence in either situation. So, not only did the women have to take greater steps to avoid violence at work, they must also have tried to avoid violence in non-work situations. We can see, then, that in general, the women in this study must have devoted more time and energy to avoiding and dealing with violent situations than the men. As a result, it is not inconceivable that women approached their work differently than men, and that the work had a different impact on the two genders. However, what this also indicates that violence is not necessarily a function of the work, but related more so to the gender of the individual experiencing violence.

While the numbers of respondents in the above tables are too small to be statistically significant, what these data do provide are clear trends in violence directed at sex workers. Overall, women sex workers experience more violence on and off the job than men, and while some of the differences are small, they remain consistent. We cannot necessarily generalize these data to the street sex worker population across

Canada, but we can take note of emerging patterns in the data, and move forward from there.

4.4 Area of Examination #4 - Other Work Opportunities

Libertarian Feminists have made the claim that women involved in sex work do so due to lack of choice. Their claim focuses on the unequal access to education and legitimate work women experience in relation to men in our society (Lips, 1991). The following section reveals the actual levels of education attained by the women and men in the Shaver and Weinberg study, as well as their access to the job market. Upon examination of Table 3, we can see that more than half of the sex workers in this study had a minimum of a high school education. The men and women in question rated very closely together in terms of levels of education attained. Fifty-nine per cent of the 76 women questioned had a high school degree or higher, and 55% of the 76 men had the same. To give more meaning to this number, it is interesting here to note the figures cited in the 1996 Canadian General Social Survey with regards to the education level of the general population of Canada. In the general population of Canada (fifteen years and older), approximately 63% of both the women and the men had a high school degree or higher (General Social Survey, Statistics Canada, 1996). So here we can see that the sex workers interviewed did not deviate very far from the national average in terms of education level attained. They are no better or worse off than the average Canadian regarding potential based on education.

TABLE 3

Level of Education by Gender (%)		
	Women(N=76)	Men(N=76)
Less than High School	41	45
High School Degree	34	34
Some College	20	15
College Degree or more	5	6

Another factor which impacts on the sex workers' belief that there are work possibilities open to them outside of street prostitution is whether or not they have had other work experience. Presumably, if one has held a legitimate job in the past, one could go back to the work force and do the same again. As we can see in Table 4, the majority of the respondents have had previous work experience outside of prostitution. This is true for more of the women (81%) than the men(73%). This data lends support to the notion that the women and men involved in sex work had made a conscious choice to trade sex for money, and did not turn to "the Life" of street sex work out of desperation, or lack of other work opportunities due to a different level of potential than the general population. In other words, these individuals were not uneducated, inexperienced, or unable to find work more socially recognised as valuable and legitimate.

TABLE 4

Previous Work Experience by Gender(%)		
	Women(N=75)	Men(N=74)
Yes	81	73

4.5 Area of Examination #5 - Prostitution Seen as a Career

Sex Worker Activists argue that sex work is indeed a viable career option, particularly for women (Pheterson, 1996). They claim that not only are the women involved choosing to work in the sex trade, but they are doing so from a position of autonomy and power (Laurier, 1990). In the Shaver and Weinberg study variables evaluating whether or not prostitution was seen as a career by the workers themselves, were used. So, with these variables in mind, the next question is, did the respondents consider sex work to be a career, temporary work, a quick way to make extra pocket money, or was it their means of subsistence? This question is pivotal in explaining how they perceived the exchanges they engaged in with their clients, and may explain some of the ways in which they managed these interactions. For example, if a sex worker considered sex work to be only a quick way to make extra money, perhaps there would not have been much emphasis or time spent working out how to maintain business-like relations with their clients. However if sex work had been their main source of money then presumably more time would have been spent on the job, therefore thought and energy would have had to be expended with regard to managing the clients and setting up

procedures and systems of operation. Shaver and Weinberg asked their respondents whether or not sex work was their only source of income. As we can see in Table 5, there was a great difference in response between the women and men in this study. Clearly, the women relied on sex work for their subsistence much more than men. It even appears that for the majority of women (70%) sex work was their only means of financial security, whereas men (54%) tended to rely on other sources, using sex work as an income supplement, or a partial source of income.

TABLE 5

Sex Work as the Only Source of Income by Gender (%)		
	Women(N=76)	Men(N=76)
Yes	70	46

Another way to identify how the work is perceived was to examine whether or not the sex workers intended to continue to exchange sexual services for money for any extended period of time. Presumably, the longer the individual intended on turning tricks, the more likely she or he thought of sex work as sustainable work, or even as a career choice. Table 6 shows that women and men had similar expectations about how long they planned to work in the sex trade. More of the women in the sex trade (76%) than men (65%) expected to work for five years or less in the business. There were, however, a significant number of sex workers who planned to work in the field until old age. Twelve percent of women claimed that they intended to sell sexual services until 60 years of age, or retirement age, while 21 % of the men claimed the same. Some men

even claimed that they would work indefinitely, even forever, in the business of selling sex.

TABLE 6

Amount of Time Expected to Continue Working as a Prostitute by Gender (%)		
	Women(N=76)	Men(N=76)
0 to 5 years	76%	65%
6 years or more	24%	36%

4.6 Area of Examination #6 - Experience of Sexual Pleasure

This thesis, with its beginnings as a replication of the study conducted by Savitz and Rosen, must now do a brief examination of the results of the replication. Postmodern Feminists claim that the only way to evaluate sex work in a fair and reasonable manner is to listen to the individual voices of the sex workers themselves. Making generalizations about any work in our society is not only damaging to the workers, but creates false images by which we tend to adhere. To avoid such stereotyping here, I wanted to look at how the sex workers actually experienced their work, and what kind of impact it had on them as individuals, and in their personal lives. This is where an examination of their enjoyment of the sex itself, the meat of the work (so to speak), is essential.

Savitz and Rosen attempted to break down the stereotype that prostitutes are sexually non-responsive, particularly with their clients. In order to do this, they

interviewed 46 women street prostitutes on questions related to sexual pleasure derived from their clients, and compared those responses to sexual pleasure derived from the personal lovers. Their "...sample was drawn from the Philadelphia criminal justice system and consisted of 50 *consecutive* cases assigned to the Probation Department after the women had been convicted of prostitution or a prostitution-related crime." (Savitz and Rosen, 1988: 202). The way in which they measured sexual enjoyment was by asking if they "*always, usually, sometimes, rarely or never*" had orgasms with their clients. Then they asked their respondents to use the same categories to rate enjoyment of "screwing, giving oral sex, getting oral sex, anal sex, giving S-M/bondage, and getting S-M/bondage" with clients. The respondents subsequently were asked to answer the same questions with regard to their lovers. Savitz and Rosen's findings indicate that the prostitutes questioned derived a great deal of sexual pleasure from their clients, and even more from their lovers.

"With customers, 70% of the women reported enjoying intercourse *all, most, or some of the time*; 83% reported the same degree of enjoyment from receiving oral sex, and 63% equally enjoyed giving oral sex. A minority (43%) reported anal sex to be enjoyable at least *some of the time*. About the same percentage (41%) reported deriving equal levels of pleasure from administering sadomasochistic acts to customers.... For every sexual activity the level of sexual enjoyment reported with a private lover exceeded that attained with customers." (1988: 203).

The Savitz and Rosen study has many elements which can be improved upon. First, when speaking of prostitution, one cannot only look at women prostitutes and omit the men hustlers. The inclusion of men sex workers' experiences in a study on sexual enjoyment is essential to understanding the implications of the differences derived from

pleasure in work sex and personal sex. When looking at levels of enjoyment between men and women at work, and then comparing them to enjoyment at home, one can shed light on how men and women perceive not only sex differently, but how their approaches to sex work differ as well. To a certain extent, this is not only useful when examining street sex work, but also, when examining the gendered enjoyment of sexual activity in general. In a sense, sex work may reveal the extent to which the sexual double standard based on gender experienced in our society impacts upon the actual enjoyment of sex men and women experience.

Another problem with the Savitz and Rosen study, which only became clear during its replication by Shaver and Weinberg, was the meaning of the word “enjoyment”. When it was discovered that many of the prostitutes questioned were not necessarily responding with *sexual* pleasure in mind, but whether or not they derived *any* kind of pleasure from the acts in question, Shaver and Weinberg included a set of questions distinguishing general pleasure from sexual pleasure. As such, the responses to the questions changed. It is unclear whether or not Savitz and Rosen made such a discovery, or such a change during their research.

4.6.1 Services Provided

To begin, we will look at the number of women and men sex workers who performed sex acts at work and off work. Throughout the next sections, the tables indicate sexual activities engaged in at work and off work listed in order of lowest level of genital contact, to greatest level of genital contact. When questioned about sexual

pleasure derived from the activity indicated, responses were recoded in the following way. “Yes” indicating an “All of the time”, “Most of the time”, or “Some of the time” response, while “No” indicates a “Rarely” or “Never” response. The tables which simply report a number, are reporting the “Yes” responses.

As shown in Table 7, at work, out of 76 women in the study, the majority reported on giving oral sex (76), intercourse (74), and giving hand jobs (68), which were the most commonly provided service. However, it appears that the remainder of services in question were much less commonly offered. So, while a little more than half of the women interviewed would receive oral sex (43), when it comes to S/M, many more would consider performing it (33) than receiving it (5), less than half of the women would engage in kissing (28), and fewer still offered anal sex as a service (13).

Unlike the women, the majority of the men did not provide intercourse to their clients (13), this most likely because the majority of their clients were men. The most commonly offered services included receiving oral sex (71) (not so commonly offered by the women), giving hand jobs (68) (universally common among both groups of sex workers) and performing anal sex (64) (which, for obvious reasons the women did not do). Men sex workers showed less of an aversion to kissing their clients, with 40 of the 76 men claiming they provided this service at work. Like the women, the men sex workers did not often engage in receiving S/M (12), anal sex (22), or performing S/M (19).

TABLE 7

Sexual Activities Performed by Gender and Environment (N)				
Activity	Women		Men	
	At Work	Off Work	At Work	Off Work
Perform S/M	33	8	31	19
Receive S/M	5	9	12	15
Kissing	28	72	40	71
Give Hand Jobs	68	42	69	53
Give Oral Sex	76	69	57	67
Receive Oral Sex	43	59	71	69
Receive Anal Sex	13	16	22	26
Perform Anal Sex	N/A	N/A	64	63
Intercourse	74	73	13	39
Orgasms	19	67	54	70

6.1.2 Women's Responses

When it came to sex in their personal lives, however, we see in Table 8 a difference not only in what they engaged in, but what they enjoyed. The women in the Shaver and Weinberg study did not experience the same levels of enjoyment as the women did in the Savitz and Rosen study. In Table 8 we see that the sexual activities have been listed in order of enjoyment, from activity scoring highest in terms of enjoyment by most women who engage in the activity to activity enjoyed the least by most women on the job and off the job. Of most interest here is that all activities are

much more likely to be enjoyed off work than on work, and not all women engaged in all activities listed. The most common sexual practices at home for these women included some of the very things they would not do on the job. Kissing is one example here. Not only did the majority of women do it (72), as shown in Table 7, but it was rated as one of the most enjoyed activities (see Table 8), while at work kissing tied with orgasms as the least enjoyed sexual activity. Orgasms were experienced by most women off work (67), and were experienced as third in their preference of sexual activities. Similarly, the majority of women engaged in and enjoyed intercourse with their personal partners (73), however at work it was one of the least enjoyed list of activities, scoring second to last. Here we begin to see a pattern of difference between the experience of sex off work and at work. While there were many of the same activities, the ways in which they were perceived and enjoyed are at opposite ends of the scale. Another interesting incongruity between work sex and pleasure sex, is that the activities most often enjoyed off work were also the most often engaged in, for the most part. While at work, those services which elicited some form of pleasure for the women sex workers were, with a few exceptions, the least often provided. When looking at the reported numbers indicating pleasure for women, we can see that with this sample of women sex workers, there was a great distinction between work sex and pleasure sex. It is clear that a great deal of pleasure was derived from sex with personal partners, whereas very little pleasure was derived from sex with customers.

TABLE 8

Women's Sexual Enjoyment by Environment (%)*			
Activity	On Work (N)	Off Work(N)	% Difference
Perform S/M	27(33)	62.5(8)	35.5
Receive S/M	20(5)	78(9)	58
Kissing	4(28)	86(72)	82
Give hand jobs	9(68)	45(42)	36
Give oral sex	8(76)	72.5(59)	64.5
Receive oral sex	9(43)	76(59)	67
Receive anal sex	8(13)	50(16)	42
Intercourse	5(74)	85(73)	80
Having orgasms	4(19)	83(67)	79

*Figures listed in this table are rated only by the women who engaged in the activity.

4.6.2 Men's Responses

To further develop the inquiry into sex workers' sexual pleasure, it is important here to look at the results from the men sex workers' interviews. Again, it is important to note here that they were asked the same questions as the women. We saw in Table 7 that there are certain activities that were conducted more often than others at work and off work. However, those sex acts performed by men did not always coincide with what was enjoyed the most. For instance, we see that at work as in Table 9 one of the activities most enjoyed, intercourse (61.5%), was the least often performed (13). This held true for receiving anal sex as well: while only 22 of the men reported engaging in it, it was

relatively high on the list of activities enjoyed, being rated third at 27%. On the other hand, one of the activities most often engaged in, receiving oral sex (72), was near the top of the list in terms of enjoyment (49%). For the most part, though, the services most often provided were not very often enjoyed with clients. Only 26% of the 69 men who gave hand jobs derived pleasure from it, 22% of the 64 men who reported performing anal sex enjoyed it, while 21% of the 57 men who gave oral sex to their clients liked it. The men in question did not tend to enjoy kissing their clients (7.5%), nor did they often engage in or get pleasure from receiving S/M (17% of the 12 men who did it liked it). Interestingly, though, 26% of the 54 men who responded claimed to achieve orgasms at work, which it seems must have most often occurred during the exchanges in which they were receiving oral sex for money. Here, many of the responses may be explained as follows. The acts which derived the most sexual pleasure at work were those where the men sex workers were being sexually stimulated by their clients. Those acts where he derived the least sexual pleasure came from the acts in which he was stimulating his client sexually.

Where we note the interesting results is in the choice of activity most often engaged in with clients. The most common activities included receiving oral sex (71), giving hand jobs (69), performing anal sex (64), and giving oral sex (57). With the exception of receiving oral sex, these activities were not greatly enjoyed by the men sex workers. In general, when viewing men sex workers' reports of sexual enjoyment at work, we can see that indeed, there could be relatively high levels of enjoyment derived from interactions with clients.

TABLE 9

Mens's Sexual Enjoyment by Environment (%)*			
Services	On Work(N)	Off Work(N)	% Difference
Perform S/M	26(31)	37(19)	11
Receive S/M	17(12)	20(15)	3
Kissing	7.5(40)	82(71)	74.5
Give Hand Jobs	26(69)	57(53)	31
Give Oral Sex	21(57)	76(67)	55
Receive Oral Sex	49(71)	80(69)	31
Receive anal sex	27(22)	38.5(26)	11.5
Perform Anal Sex	22(64)	69(63)	47
Intercourse	61.5(13)	92(39)	30.5
Orgasms	26(54)	90(70)	64

* Figures listed in this table are rated only by the men who engaged in the activity.

However, when looking at how they were perceiving the sex engaged in off work, we can see a great deal more enjoyment derived from personal partners. As at work, intercourse was the activity that derived the most pleasure off work (92%). The same held true for receiving oral sex, also high on the scale of enjoyment at 80%. The intimate act of kissing was also quite high at 82%, unlike in a work situation where it was only enjoyed by 7.5% of the men who responded. However, performing anal sex was much more often enjoyed off work (69%) than receiving anal sex (38.5%), unlike at work where the latter was more often enjoyed (27%) than the former (22%). Off work,

performing acts of S/M were only slightly lower on the scale of enjoyment at 37%, whereby receiving S/M was the act least often enjoyed (20%).

4.7 Comparing the Female and Male Responses

4.7.1 Area of Examination #6 - Experience of Sexual Pleasure (Women and Men)

With these data in mind, what can be said in terms of comparing how men and women sex workers differ in their enjoyment of work sex and pleasure sex? If we go through the list of sexual activities in question, we can begin to see a pattern of behaviour. It seems that when it came to giving oral sex, women really did not enjoy it with clients (92% said no, whereas only 8% said yes). Men felt the same way, but the percentage difference was not quite so dramatic (79% said no, 21% said yes). In terms of their personal lives, women had a tendency to be more likely to enjoy it with lovers (27.5% rated it no, and 72.5% claimed yes) as did men, however, there seemed to be only slightly more enjoyment experienced than the women (24% no, 76% yes).

As for receiving oral sex, the difference between men and women in terms of interactions with their clients was greater. For women, 91% reported not enjoying receiving oral sex from clients, whereas only 61% of men did not enjoy receiving it from their clients. When it came to their personal sex lives, again, men and women tended to enjoy receiving oral sex, the men slightly more so than the women (with 80% and 76% saying yes, respectively).

Here, we can only compare men's and women's responses to receiving anal sex, because women don't perform it. However, most prostitutes reported that they do not

receive anal sex for pay. For those few who did, again, 92% of the women did not like receiving it from clients. However, only 73% of men reported not enjoying it with clients. Now, in terms of their personal partners, both women and men were more likely to enjoy it. However, here we see that women were more likely than men to enjoy it (50% and 38.5% respectively). With performing anal sex, men reported enjoying it less than receiving it with customers (78% did not enjoy performing it with customers), but enjoyed performing it with lovers more than receiving it (69% enjoyed performing it).

When looking at intercourse, we know that the majority of women engaged in this activity a great deal off work and at work. However, since most men did not engage in intercourse at all, I am only reporting on the few that did. Most women (95%) did not enjoy intercourse with their clients, but did enjoy it with their lovers (85%). Men were more likely to enjoy it in both cases (61.5% at work with clients, and 92% at home with lovers). As we can see, there is a trend beginning to emerge. While both men and women experienced more enjoyment of sex off work than at work, in most cases the discrepancy between the two sites is much more pronounced for the women.

Most sex workers interviewed did not engage in acts of sado-masochism (S/M), giving or receiving, with clients or lovers. The following results are based on those few who did. Women had a tendency to not enjoy S/M with clients, whether if be receiving or performing (80% and 73% respectively, did not enjoy it). Men did not enjoy it with clients, even more so than the women. Seventy-four percent did not enjoy performing it with clients, and 83% did not enjoy receiving it. Where men and women differ significantly is in their use of S/M with personal partners. Women seemed to enjoy performing S/M with their personal partners whereas men had a tendency to prefer

receiving it from partners. Sixty-two and a half percent of women enjoyed performing S/M with lovers in comparison to 37% of men. Seventy-eight percent of women enjoyed receiving it from partners, whereas only 20% of men enjoyed the same. So, in all, it appears that of those who engaged in S/M, women received more pleasure from it than men, particularly in their personal lives.

Men seemed to have less of an aversion to giving hand jobs in general than did women, particularly with personal partners. Forty-five percent of women enjoyed giving their lovers hand jobs, and 57% of men declared the same to be true. However, both had a tendency to not enjoy it with clients, again women (91%) more so than men (74%).

Women tended to not enjoy having their breasts fondled by clients (78%) whereas they tended to enjoy having engaged in this act with their lovers (79.5%). We did not have responses which could be reported for the men with respect to breast fondling.

When it came to kissing, both men and women did not enjoy it with clients (92.5% and 96% respectively), but they did enjoy it with lovers (82% and 86% respectively). It is interesting to note, here, that many men and women who worked as sex workers on the street did not offer kissing as a service they would exchange for money. The data indicate that only 28 of the 76 women did it with clients. While more men engaged in kissing with clients, slightly less than half refused to do it (34).

Women were less likely to have orgasms than men, both with clients (4% of women and 26% of men) and with their personal partners (83% of women and 90% of men). Of course, these data are not surprising considering, on a whole, men seem to

experience less of an aversion to sex with clients than do women, and in general women on the whole have traditionally reported fewer orgasms than men (Hite, 1976).

4.8 Area of Examination #7 - Sexual Orientation

4.8.1 Women

We can further break down the sample of respondents by addressing whether or not sexual orientation had an impact on sexual enjoyment. According to Postmodern Feminist theory, it is the small narratives, the individual voices of women and men which will add depth to our understanding of any given social phenomenon. By considering sexual pleasure experienced by women and men in the sex trade, we can only further our understanding of what might influence that experience of pleasure by adding external elements of influence to the equation. Clearly, the sexual orientation of the individual engaging in sexual activities will influence how they experience those activities, and indeed, the level of pleasure derived.

For the women, 83% identified as heterosexual, and 17% identified as bisexual. No women indicated that they were homosexual. According to Table 10¹⁷, it appears that bisexual women, in general, enjoyed all sexual activities with clients slightly more than heterosexual women (except for receiving anal sex and giving hand jobs). When it came to enjoyment of sex with lovers (Table 11), it seems that bisexual women experienced

¹⁷ The figures in Tables 10 and 11 are based on responses of sex workers who engaged in the activity listed. The numbers of those who engaged in said activities can be found in Table 7.

slightly lower levels of sexual enjoyment than their heterosexual counterparts. This was particularly true with regards to intercourse. Ninety seven percent of heterosexual women reported that they enjoyed intercourse with their lovers, whereas only 77% of bisexual women reported the same. Bisexual women reported slightly lower levels of enjoyment than heterosexual women from engaging in giving hand jobs to their lovers, having their breasts fondled by and kissing their lovers. They also reported fewer orgasms off work

TABLE 10

Enjoyment of Sexual Activities Performed with Clients by Gender and Orientation (%)						
	Women(N=75)			Men(N=73)		
	Heterosexual (62) 83%	Bisexual (13) 17%	Homosexual	Heterosexual (13) 18%	Bisexual (28) 38%	Homosexual (32) 44%
Breasts fondled	13	31		8	18	19
Perform S/M	19	23		8	36	16
Receive S/M	2	0		8	7	16
Kissing	5	8		8	21	22
Give hand jobs	16	15		23	46	41
Give oral sex	14	38		0	29	47
Receive oral sex	16	31		54	71	59
Receive anal sex	2	0		8	7	16
Perform anal sex	N/A	N/A		8	25	31
Intercourse	21	31		N/A	N/A	N/A
Orgasms	12	15		46	58	65

TABLE 11

Enjoyment of Sexual Activities Performed with Lovers by Gender and Orientation (%)						
	Women(N=75)			Men(N=73)		
	Heterosexual (62) 83%	Bisexual (13) 17%	Homosexual	Heterosexual (13) 18%	Bisexual (28) 38%	Homosexual (32) 44%
Breasts fondled	87	77		46	50	38
Perform S/M	8	8		8	22	13
Receive S/M	10	15		0	11	6
Kissing	92	85		85	86	85
Give hand jobs	36	31		39	64	65
Give oral sex	82	85		85	68	91
Receive oral sex	68	77		75	89	91
Receive anal sex	15	15		0	7	38
Perform anal sex	N/A	N/A		0	50	47
Intercourse	97	99		85	71	13
Orgasms	90	85		92	96	100

than did the heterosexual women interviewed. However, we must keep in mind here that because the numbers of respondents were so different (62 heterosexual women versus 13 bisexual women), it cannot be assumed that these data are completely generalizable to the whole women street sex worker population in North America.

We can already see here that Shaver and Weinberg's study does not support the findings of Savitz and Rosen's study reported earlier on in this chapter. This may be due, in part, to the attempts by the former researchers to remedy some of the problems with

the latter's study. In fact, the 1990/1991 data seem to suggest quite the opposite from the results of the 1988 study. The women interviewed in San Francisco and Montreal do not seem to derive very much sexual enjoyment from their encounters with their clients. In fact, for the most part, they seemed to want to limit their interactions to a few basic sex acts, and the ones they enjoyed the most with their lovers, they had a tendency to enjoy the least with their clients. This would indicate an ability not only to be able to separate the work sphere from the domestic sphere, but it also points to a concerted effort to do so on the part of the sex worker.

4.8.2 Area of Examination #7 - Sexual Orientation (Men)

An important factor in levels of sexual enjoyment derived off work or at work with regard to the sexual activities in question was the sexual orientation of men sex workers. Consider Table 10 again. Of the 73 men who responded to these questions, 44% identified as homosexual, 38% as bisexual, and 18% as heterosexual. In general, when contemplating sex at work, it appears that bisexual men sex workers had a tendency to enjoy all listed sexual activities slightly more than their heterosexual counterparts. However, when comparing bisexual and homosexual men sex workers' sexual enjoyment with customers, there seemed to be no such generalizable pattern. The activities that bisexual men claimed to enjoy more than either homosexual or heterosexual men with their clients were: receiving oral sex, intercourse, performing S/M, receiving S/M, and giving hand jobs. Homosexual men rated the following as giving more sexual pleasure than their bisexual or heterosexual counterparts: giving oral

sex, performing anal sex, receiving anal sex, and kissing. Also, they were more likely to have orgasms with their clients than the other two groups. When pondering the types of activities enjoyed by all three groups of men, it becomes clear that the sex acts most often associated with man to man interaction were those most frequently enjoyed by the homosexual men in this study. For the most part, the activities more highly enjoyed by the bisexual men here could arguably be engaged in with a man or a woman. Of course, the men who identified as heterosexual found the least amount of sexual gratification among the respondents. The obvious reason is that, on the street, the vast majority of clients are men, whether they seek the services of men or women sex workers.

In terms of enjoyment of these same sexual activities with lovers, in almost all instances, as seen in Table 11, it seems that homosexual men received greater pleasure than their bisexual and heterosexual counterparts. The few activities where this did not appear to be true included intercourse (for obvious reasons), S/M (bisexual men rated the highest levels of enjoyment with regard to this activity) and breast fondling (with a very small margin between the two). In most instances, bisexual men reported more enjoyment than heterosexual men, in terms of their lovers, except in the following instances; giving oral sex, and intercourse. The three groups of men rated high frequencies of orgasm, the homosexual men being the highest at 100% of the time, then came the bisexual men (no pun intended) at 96%, and finally the heterosexual men at 92%. Because the differences in these numbers are so marked, one would question whether the work, that is, having sex with men for pay, has an effect on the levels of sexual enjoyment off work for the bisexual and heterosexual men, or whether homosexual men find greater sexual satisfaction in general.

From these data, we can comfortably conclude that, in general, both women and men sex workers much preferred non-paid sex to paid sex. What is interesting to recognize is the levels of enjoyment they derived from both. It seems that women experienced a much larger range of difference, in terms of pleasure, between the sex acts they performed with their clients, compared to those same acts they engaged in with their lovers, than did the men. In other words, the men in this study were able to derive a higher level of sexual pleasure from certain interactions with their clients, than the women in question. Could this mean, then, that women make a greater differentiation between work sex and pleasure sex than do men? By simply examining the above data, this appears to be true. However, in order to make this a significant claim, it is important to examine some external factors which may influence this claim. It is apparent that women and men who work as sex workers on the street do not do so in a social vacuum. How they do their work, why they do it, and how it affects them are all tempered by social and cultural values placed not only on their work, but upon them as men and women. Clearly, in our society, men and women operate under different social rules, particularly when it comes to sexuality. These have an impact on all men and women in our society, and how they interact and operate in both the public and private spheres. Arguably, the norms and folkways dealing with sex and sexuality would manifest themselves in an exaggerated manner when looking at street sex workers, since the sexual standards for men and women are played out regularly between sex workers and their clients. In order to place the above data into a social context, it is important to examine the impact of some of these social factors on the men and women in this study.

Chapter 5- Discussion and Conclusions

5.1 Areas of Examination #1 and #2 - The History of the Regulation of Sexuality in the West, and The History of Prostitution in Western Society

In the next chapter we will clearly see the embedded nature of the history of the regulation of sexuality and the history of prostitution in the West in the ways we perceive sex workers and their perceptions of themselves. Every theoretical perspective used to explain prostitution and its effects on society today has interpreted the impact of our history differently and that has shaped the very nature of those perceptions. Theory emerges from history; it is an explanation of the impact of our history on our present lives. Every group in society has a different view of times past, and as such, every theory comes from the story it has chosen to adopt as its truth. My critique of traditional Feminist Theories comes from this very knowledge; that there is no one “Truth”. Just as we must recognize the validity of all the voices in history and their accounts of events past, we must recognize the multiplicity of “truths” when examining any social phenomenon. Here, I have based my assessment of traditional Feminist Theories approaches to prostitution on the acceptance of many of small narratives through the use of Dr. F. Shaver and Dr. M. Weinberg’s data.

5.2 Area of Examination #3 - Violence On and Off the Job

The findings indicate that women experienced more violence than men both on and off the job. Interestingly, we can see that women experienced more beatings and robberies on the job than off the job, but similar numbers of rapes in both situations. As for the men, they were more often beaten and robbed on the job, but experienced more rape off the job. This leads to the conclusion that the violence experienced by the women sex workers was more related to their gender than to their job. However for the men, much of the violence experienced on the job was carried out by people other than clients, police or pimps. So the question remains: is violence more related to the fact that they are selling sex, or that they are perceived as being homosexual? Historically, men's heterosexual interactions have not been as closely monitored or regulated as women's. However men's homosexuality has been severely sanctioned. It would then follow that the violence experienced by men sex workers on the job was more likely due to their perceived sexual orientation than their sexual promiscuity.

5.2.1 Radical Feminism

We can certainly find an explanation for these data through Feminist Theory. According to Radical Feminism, we live in a society governed by Patriarchy, which is a system of male power and domination. This domination is dependent on the socially constructed binary categories of male and female, and is generally played out through our sexual interactions. In other words, in order for men to have power, they must dominate

and have power over someone, namely women, and generally this is enforced through our sexuality. The maintenance of this power depends on a system of violence supported by our social structures, even our very language. Radical Feminists, such as Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon claim that women prostitutes are in a double bind in our society. Not only are they expected to please men sexually, but their behaviour is intricately intertwined with their economic ties to their clients. Based on this argument, it seems logical that the women sex workers, according to the Shaver and Weinberg data, experienced more violence at the hands of their male clients and pimps than their male counterparts.

5.2.2 Sex Worker Activist Feminism

On the other hand, Sex Worker Activist Feminism in offering a theory of gender violence makes the claim that male violence against women, particularly prostitutes, is used as a reminder, a constant threat against unchaste behaviour. According to historical accounts of the regulation of women's sexuality, men's control over women's sexuality, namely the maintenance of a woman's faithfulness to one man, is essential for ownership of land, and inheritance rights of a man's sons. This means that women's chastity, or men's power over women's reproductive capabilities, has historically been seen as important for the generational continuation of land ownership. One effective technique used to ensure women's sexual faithfulness, according to Bell (1987), is violence against the prostitute. She is the social example of what happens to women who are sexually promiscuous, therefore not owned by one man. It takes little violence to sound an

effective warning among sex workers. With the social acceptance of violence against prostitutes comes the social acceptance of violence against any sexually available woman (Chapkis, 1997).

To the Sex Worker Activist, the institution of marriage ensures two social controls over women's reproduction. The first is to introduce the notion of the love/intimacy ideal with sex. If sexual interaction is only acceptable within the confines of an emotional bond, then women will only be permitted to have sex with one man at a time, thus ensuring that her offspring are also his. If this first measure breaks down, a second social control is effected: women who are sexually promiscuous are punished for their unchaste behaviour through the social acceptance of violence against them. Again, the Shaver and Weinberg data certainly provide support for this theoretical perspective. Women sex workers, according to the Sex Worker Activist Feminist approach, would experience violence at the hands of men in our society both on and off the job because they are unchaste, effectively providing a living warning to all women to reserve their sexual interactions for one man.

While the Shaver and Weinberg findings indicate support for both Radical and Sex worker Activist Feminist theories, they bring to light an element not considered by either theory: the male sex worker. These theories explain violence against prostitutes as an extension of violence against women, and as a result, do not account for men who are sex workers and who experience violence on the job¹⁸. What the Shaver and Weinberg

¹⁸ The Radical Feminist trend of viewing women in our society simply as victims of violence at the hands of men creates a biased picture of violence and gender. It does not account for violence which occurs at the hands of women. While only 11% of those accused and charged with crimes of violence are women, they still do exist (Statistics

data allow is a broadening of the lens through which we generally see prostitution by taking into account the male sex worker experience. That brief snapshot of the male sex worker experience indicates that men involved in the sex trade do, as well, experience violence on the job. Because the highest levels of violence against the men noted in this study have been at the hands of those outside of “the Life” of prostitution, it seems that the work itself is not objected to, but perhaps the implications of the work, ie. the sexual orientation of those targeted for violence. These numbers indicate that a closer look at the experience of men sex workers is essential to ensure their inclusion the “prostitution” equation.

5.3 Area of Examination #4 - Other Work Opportunities

The findings show that not only were the women slightly more educated than the men, but that they were also more likely to have previous work experience outside of prostitution. This would indicate that, all other things being equal, the women should have had more legitimate work opportunities than the men. Why, then, as we have also seen in the findings section, were women more likely to see sex work as a career than men?

Canada, 1994, catalogue number 85-205.) To make the claim that women prostitutes can only be seen as victims is also a faulty assumption. There is even data which indicates that women sex workers have also been perpetrators of violence against clients (Synnott, 1996: 133).

5.3.1 Libertarian Feminism

The argument posited by the Libertarian Feminists is that in this, and any other work situation, all other things are not equal with men. Women's traditional roles of child rearing and maintaining the home have generally been economically devalued as paid work. In recent history, women have engaged in unwritten economic agreements to provide those services in exchange for the basic necessities of food, clothing, shelter and possibly more. At the same time, a good woman had to remain sexually available to her husband by creating an emotional bond of intimacy through sex. So, the essential, nurturing elements of life revolving around procreation and food production have been provided by unsalaried women. In our capitalist society, where a dollar value is assigned to every aspect of life, women entering the paid work force have attempted to remain in those nurturing roles, only to find that they are either not well remunerated, or they are working in illegal ways. Teaching, day-care work, and domestic work are among the lowest paid jobs in our society today. Ironically, one of the most financially rewarding yet illegal endeavours the average woman can pursue is sex work. It is also rewarding in other ways. Sex work, if practised independently, allows the kind of worker autonomy most often unavailable in other traditional female work. Women sex workers can choose their work hours, their clients, the services they are willing to provide and can be flexible in their schedules, in case the needs of dependents arise. Such worker freedom is rare in other work situations. Libertarian Feminist Theory makes clear why, although they have other work opportunities, women may choose sex work as a more viable work option. What it does not do, however, is explain the variance in sex work in which men engage.

Shaver and Weinberg's data indicates that the women sex workers interviewed chose prostitution as a career even though many of them had other, more legitimate work options. This would support the aforementioned Libertarian Feminist claim. However, the data also identifies the men sex workers' experiences and shows that men had fewer clients whom they charged less, but spent more time servicing. Yet, according to their own accounts, men sex workers did not see their work in a more permanent light, as did the women. Libertarian Feminism cannot account for the kinds of choices the men made.

5.4 Area of Examination #5 - Prostitution Seen as a Career

The Shaver and Weinberg data indicate that women, more so than men, saw sex work as a career. The majority of women claimed that sex work was their only source of income, whereas men were more likely to name sex work as only one of the ways they made money. However, neither the women nor the men, for the most part, indicated that they intended to sell sex for the next five years. This points to a certain level of dissatisfaction with sex work.

5.4.1 Sex Worker Activism

Feminists who fall under the category of Sex Worker Activists would argue that the dissatisfaction found in selling sexual services is not related to the work itself, but to the social circumstances surrounding that work. Their arguments would support the claim that sex workers do, indeed, see prostitution as work, as Shaver and Weinberg's

findings indicate. They would add that if it were not for the social stigma attached to women selling sexual services, that they could find a great deal of satisfaction on the job. That stigma stems from the social expectation that women's sexual services should be available to men for free. It is the fact that they are explicitly placing economic boundaries on their sexuality that causes objections. Historically, women have been considered the property of their fathers, and then once given in marriage, of their husbands. When women start making financial claims to services they are expected to freely provide, especially sexual services, they can no longer be seen as property, but as autonomous, independent members of society. As Shaver and Weinberg's data shows, women sex workers were making financial claims to those services, and thus saw sex work as just that - work. However, even though they were being well remunerated, they still claimed to expect to leave the business of selling sex in the not-too-distant future. According to Sex Worker Activists, the intention to leave the sex industry would be due to the problems caused by social sanctions associated with the work and not the work itself.

5.6 Areas of Examination #6 and #7 - Sexual Pleasure Experienced On and Off the Job, and Sexual Orientation

5.6.1 Sexual Pleasure

The data collected by Shaver and Weinberg in 1990 in San Francisco and in 1991 in Montreal very clearly indicate a marked difference in levels of pleasure derived by street prostitutes from work sex and pleasure sex. Without exception, the prostitutes in

this study experienced much higher levels of enjoyment off the job, than on the job. Unlike the data found by Savitz and Rosen in their 1988 study, street prostitutes in the Shaver and Weinberg study almost never reported high levels of sexual enjoyment with clients, but quite frequently reported a great deal of enjoyment with their lovers. The implication here is that prostitutes do indeed clearly mark their sexual experiences with clients as work, and not as pleasure. In other words, women street sex workers view their activities with clients as work activity; their vocation as just that, a job.

Shaver and Weinberg went further than Savitz and Rosen and included the voices of the men who engage in sex work, validating their role in the work. What was found was that there were differences between the men and women and the pleasure they derived from the work. In general terms, it can be said that the men, as was the case with the women, experienced much higher levels of sexual pleasure with lovers than with clients. However, those differences were much less marked for the men than they were for the women. Particularly with certain sex acts, men allowed themselves to experience much more pleasure with clients than did the women.

5.6.2 Sexual Orientation

Upon further examination, there were discrepancies found within the category “male” itself. When the variable “sexual orientation” was factored in, men and women still rated sex with lovers as more enjoyable than sex with clients, however, how great those differences were depended upon whether they identified as homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual. This implied that the sexual orientation of the respondent had an impact on

how they perceived sex; not just sex with clients, but sex with lovers as well. There were discrepancies in derivation of pleasure from sex with lovers based on sexual orientation. Again, an important issue here is that we are speaking of certain sex acts, and not a general question about “sex”.

Upon examining the data, I started to wonder whether it was appropriate to break down the enjoyment of sex simply on gender lines, or if that was just one factor in a whole matrix of variables which would impact upon enjoyment of sex. When looking at the impact of sexual orientation, I saw that further differences could be found. Also, when reading sex worker accounts of their experiences, it became clear that factors such as work site (ie. street prostitution, call prostitution, massage parlours, escort services and bar prostitution), geographic location (Canada, United States, the various European countries and Australia), ethnic origin, education level, experience of violence on the job, and mother tongue, to name a few, had an impact on how the work was experienced, thus possibly affecting the levels of sexual enjoyment with clients. This would be the logical next step to take in future inquiry into prostitution and the impact of social, cultural and economic situation on the work experience. A more comprehensive examination of data on sexual enjoyment, targeting the above-mentioned variables as well as gender would certainly be enlightening, and would further reduce the stereotype of “The Prostitute Experience” to allow for the acceptance of prostitution as work, undertaken for a myriad of reasons, and experienced in a whole range of ways.

5.6.3 The Postmodern Element

“There is no such thing as The Prostitute; there are only competing versions of prostitution. The Prostitute is an invention of policy makers, researchers, moral crusaders, and political activists. Even sex workers themselves contribute to the creation of a normative prostitute by excluding those from their ranks who are not ‘real’ enough or ‘good’ enough” (Chapkis, 1997: 212).

Jo Doezema, a sex worker, writes: “When I’ve given talks, I’ve noticed that people’s basic ideas about prostitution remain unchallenged... Everybody who doesn’t conform has to be an exception.” (Chapkis, 1997: 182). Like in any other profession, there is no one notion of prostitution to conform to. All are exceptions to a fictitious rule. The greatest barrier to seeing prostitutes as workers with experiences outside of “the Life” is the insistence that they be placed into the categories “deviant” and “other” by the public. This makes discrimination against them, and the blatant abuse and violation of their rights as people, easier to accept. Valery Jenness, a feminist theorist, states: “To the degree that prostitutes are displayed to the public as ‘normal’, the stigma surrounding prostitution can be diminished” (Chapkis, 1997: 183). In other words, it is essential to the well-being of the worker to see him or her as just that, a worker.

Once we remove the mystery and drama from our notions of prostitution, we are able to relate to prostitutes on a human level. The danger in classifying prostitutes as deviants as opposed to professionals is how that classification overshadows the context of the work. We tend to overlook the bills being paid, the children being supported and the autonomy of the work situation. Instead we focus on all of the negative activities we associate with prostitution. “The things that people had problems with were at the

margins of the profession, like drugs, or pimps, or bad working conditions. Plus a lot of women suffered from the pressure of trying to keep their work a secret.” (Chapkis, 1997:201). None of these things are inherent in the work; the buying and selling of sex acts. If that were so, then we would attach the same stigmatization to clients. However, we have the ability to set aside the purchase of sex as one facet of the client’s persona. In fact, in many cases we focus on the client’s other social roles to highlight the reprehensibility of his crime. We simply cannot believe that a normal person, ie., a father, a professional, a son, a responsible citizen, would consider buying sex. Ironically the very thing that we fear; the fact that the client is just like, and could possibly be, one’s husband, father, brother or son, is the thing we deny the prostitute. Yet we cannot bring ourselves to see that if that is the case, it is not so unimaginable that the same be true for the prostitute.

“As Annie Sprinkle suggests, there are multiple identities to be assumed by those performing erotic labour. Which identity will be most available and most appropriate for a worker in any given context depends more on strategic need and worker control than on uncovering the one ‘true’ meaning of prostitution or the only ‘true’ identity of the prostitute” (Chapkis, 1997: 196).

Until recent years, theories on prostitution have looked at the prostitute experience from the perspective of female oppression. This came from the assumption that prostitutes were women and clients were men, therefore the oppression experienced was on a gender line. While patriarchy and male domination may play a role in women prostitutes’ experience, it is too simplistic to imply that the root cause of prostitution is the inequality of the sexes. This becomes evident with the acknowledgment of the male prostitute. Particularly when we can see that many of the issues which plague the women

in the sex trade are problematic for the men in the same business. Here it becomes key to acknowledge that the perception of prostitution has gone through dramatic changes over the ages, with its beginnings with a reverence for the Great Goddess Creator. The problems associated with prostitution are not inherent to the business itself, but have developed through time, and are more likely to be associated with attitudes towards sex and sexuality in our society, as well as more generally to the status (or lack thereof) associated with the work. When we attach meaning to the exchange of sex for money, we must acknowledge that the meaning comes out of our own biases. “We each find the story of prostitution most appropriate for our own political agenda” (Chapkis, 1997: 212).

In the feminist debates around prostitution and the struggle for best approach to the problem, we have lost sight of our goal; the eradication of inequality. Instead of continuing with the debate, we would be wise to choose the positive messages from each perspective and merge them together to tackle the real issue at hand. We do not want to exclude voices, or shut down opinions and, by denying the values inherent in another’s argument, we do that despite our desire to create better opportunities for ourselves and for future generations. When we overlook the male prostitute experience, or any other prostitute voice, we do just that. Often, this is not done out of malice, but out of a desire to be heard and acknowledged. As such, the best approach to a politics of prostitution is to build bridges between differing accounts:

- “1) The Radical Feminist insistence that injustice must be challenged, not accommodated;
- 2) The Sex Radical insight that subversion is a creative ally to opposition;

- 3) The Abolitionists' recognition that simply because something appears to have 'always' existed, it is neither inevitable nor unchangeable;
- 4) and The Prostitutes' Rights reminder that transformation does not reduce to a politics of prohibition" (Chapkis, 1997:213).

Here I am suggesting a new approach to prostitution, one in which we do not speak of "the prostitute", or legislate the business of buying and selling sex. I would argue that if we return to the original goal of feminism, the right to fair treatment, equal opportunity and a respect for our rights as human beings, we will start making progress. This progress may not come in the form we may assume, the eradication of prostitution, but it may very well do away with what we object to in the business of prostitution: use and abuse of people due to disrespect, poverty and inequality. We find ourselves at a legal standstill. We cannot agree about how to legislate prostitution. Ironically, we all want the same result, but cannot recognize that desire because of the restrictions of each perception through which we view that outcome. It is time to let those who will be most affected by policy to have a hand in it's creation; time to let the multitude of sex workers' voices be heard; time to recognize prostitution as sex work.

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Appendix I

PROSTITUTION IN MONTREAL

Summer 1991

We are doing a study of prostitutes in downtown Montreal and would like to interview you about your work and experiences in the sex trade.

We will not be asking for your name or address so your responses will be kept confidential. Members of the research team will be the only ones to see your interview.

The interview could last up to an hour.

We will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. If questions arise later, you can always reach us through the Research Office at Concordia University (848-2168).

BACKGROUND (personal):
 /_/_/_/ V1
 Resp. No.

1. What is your birthdate? _/_/_/ V2
 day month year

(4-5)

2. Sex/gender?
 female 1 , GO TO 5
 male 2 , GO TO 5
 transsexual (TS) 3
 TV 4

(6) V3

3. (TSs ONLY) Do you live as a woman when you're not working?
 yes 1
 no 2

(7) V4

4. Have you had genital surgery?
 yes 1
 no 2

(8) V5

(IF NO) Do you plan to have genital surgery?

yes 1
 no 2

(9) V6

(IF YES) When?

 V7
 /_/_/_/ (10-11)

5. (FOR ALL) Do you consider yourself to be ...

heterosexual (straight) . . .	1
bisexual (bi)	2
homosexual (gay)	3
difficult to say	4

(1) V 8

6. With respect to your sexual feelings, are you sexually turned on by:

- just <u>men</u>	1
- <u>men</u> but with some interest in <u>women</u>	2
- <u>both</u> sexes equally	3
- <u>women</u> but with some interest in <u>men</u>	4
- just <u>women</u>	5

(2) V 9

7. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

less than high school graduate	1
high school degree	2
some college	3
college degree	4
post-graduate degree	5
other school/training?	

(3) V 10

_____	6
-----------------	---

V 11
/___/ (4-5)

8. Present marital status?

single	1
cohabiting (living w/lover)	2
married	3

(6) V 12

9. IF NOT COHABITING OR MARRIED, do you have a boyfriend or girlfriend?

yes, girlfriend	1
yes, boyfriend	2
no	3

(7) V 13

10. (1) Identify each of the persons WITH WHOM YOU LIVE by their relationship to you, sex and age (if children).
 (2) Tell me their primary occupation or activity.

[NOTE: Activity includes such things as looking for work, student, housewife, retired, pimping, etc.]

1. female
 2. male

Relationship to Respondent	Sex	Age	Primary Occ/Act
_____	V14	V15	_____
_____	V16	V17	_____
_____	V18	V19	_____
_____	V20	V21	_____
_____	V22	V23	_____
_____	V24	V25	_____
_____	V26	V27	_____
_____	V28	V29	_____
_____	V30	V31	_____
_____	V32	V33	_____
_____	V34	V35	_____
_____	V36	V37	_____
_____	V38	V39	_____
_____	V40	V41	_____
_____	V42	V43	_____

(1-63)

10a. In what area/region of Montreal do you live?

V33a
 _____/_____/_____(64-65)

10b. How long does it take you to travel from your residence to the area you regularly work?

_____minutes

V33b
 _____/_____/_____(66-67)

10c. What types of transportation do you usually use when at work? [Probe for walking, bicycle, taxi, clients' car, public transportation.]

GET TO V33c
 _____/_____/_____(68-69)
 WHILE AT V33d
 _____/_____/_____

10d. What type of residence do you occupy?

house 1
apartment in block or house . 2
hotel or motel 3
other (specify)

_____ 4

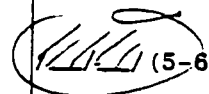
(1) V 33e

V33f
/ / / (2-3)

11. Do you or your spouse/lover own your present home?

yes, I own it 1
yes, we own it 2
yes, lover/spouse owns it . . 3
no 4

(4) V34

 (5-6) Leave Blank

11a. How long have you been at that location?
[Specify the time frame - weeks, months, years.]

V34a
/ / / (7-8)

11b. What languages do you...

	Understand? 1. yes 2. no	Speak? 1. yes 2. no
French	V34b / /	V34c / /
English	/ / V34d	/ / V34e
Other	/ / V34f	/ / V34g

(9-10)
(11-12)
(13-14)

BACKGROUND (family):

12. Age when first left home?

V35
/ / /
years

(15-16)

13. How many people lived with you at that time?

V36
/ / /

(17-18)

14. (1) Who were the ADULTS responsible for your care and support at that time?
- (2) Were they employed on a regular basis or did they have many long periods of unemployment?

1. female
2. male
1. regularly employed full-time
2. regularly employed part-time
3. long periods of unemployment
4. never employed/housewife
5. retired

Relationship to

Respondent

Sex

Reg/Emp

V37
/ /

V38
/ /

V39
/ / (1-4)

V40
/ /

V41
/ /

V42
/ / (5-8)

V43
/ /

V44
/ /

V45
/ / (9-12)

V46
/ /

V47
/ /

V48
/ / (13-16)

15. Did any of these people own the home you were living in at the time?

yes 1
no 2

(17) V49

- 15a. What type of residence did you live in at the time?

house 1
apartment in block or house 2
hotel or motel 3
other (specify)

(18) V49a

_____ 4

V49b
/ / (19-20)

16. Were there periods in your childhood (before you left home) when your family depended upon welfare or food banks (e.g. Montreal Harvest)?

yes, all or most of the time 1
yes, some of the time 2
not at all 3

(1) V5C

17. Overall, would you say that at that time you and your family were financially:

very poor 1
poor 2
comfortable 3
very well off 4

(2) V5I

WORK ACTIVITY:

18. How old were you when you started to get regularly paid for sex?

V52
/ / / years

(3-4)

18a. Describe the circumstances surrounding your decision to begin working regularly as a prostitute?

/ / / (5-6) V52a

/ / / (7-8) V52b

[Reasons 3-4
coded below]

19. Do you work for yourself as a prostitute or do you consider that you work for someone else?

self 1
other 2

(9) V53

(IF OTHER) Who do you work for? _____
relationship to respondent

V54
/ / / (10-11)

How many other people work for him/her? V55
/ / /

(12-13)

V52c
/ / / (14-15)

V52d
/ / / (16-17)

20. Do you have a fairly regular work schedule as a prostitute?

yes 1
no 2

(1) V56

20a. Do you generally work alone or with other people?

alone 1
with others 2

(2) V56a

(IF WITH OTHERS) What is their relationship to you?

V56b V56c
/ / / /
(3-6)

20b. Where in Montreal do you regularly work (identify regular workplace by streets)?

/ / / / (7-9) V56d

20c. We would also like to know where else you have worked as a prostitute in the last 12 months and whether it was inside or outside.

[Probe for other areas in Montreal, other Canadian cities, and other American cities.]

<u>Area/City</u>	<u>In/Out</u>	<u>Reason for change</u>
	1. inside 2. outside	

_____	/ / V56c	_____
_____	/ / V56h	_____
_____	/ / V56k	_____
_____	/ / V56n	_____
_____	/ / V56q	_____

V56f V56g
/ / / /
V56i V56j
/ / / /
V56L V56m
/ / / /
V56o V56p
/ / / /
V56r V56s
/ / / /
(10-34)

21. During the last six months, how many days a week did you usually work?

_____ days

V57
/ / (35)

22. During the last six months, how many hours per day did you usually work?

_____ hours

V56
/___/ (1-2)

23. (1) What proportion of the services you normally provide for your customers involve

1. less than one quarter
2. between a quarter and a half
3. between half and three quarters
4. more than three quarters

5. do not provide the service
9. not applicable

	Proportion	\$\$	
hand jobs?	V65 /___/	_____	V66 /___/ (3-6)
blow jobs?	V59 /___/	_____	V60 /___/ (7-10)
anal intercourse?	V67 /___/	_____	V70 /___/ (11-14)
your breasts?	V67 /___/	_____	V63 /___/ (15-18)
straight lays?	V61 /___/	_____	V62 /___/ (19-22)
half and half?	V63 /___/	_____	V64 /___/ (23-26)
other (specify)	V71 _____/___/	_____	V72 /___/ (27-30)
			/___/ (31-32) V73

(2) How much do you normally charge for each service?
[Record above]

24. What proportion of your customers are "regulars"? ____%

V74
/___/ (33-34)

25. Where/how do you meet most of your customers?

[NOTE: Record in order of where meet most to where meet least number of customers. "9" = none]

street
bars
bars in hotels
adult bookstores
/peep show arcades
public washrooms (MH only)
through classified ads
other

(1) V75
(2) V76
(3) V77
(4) V78
(5) V79
(6) V80
(7) V81

(specify) _____

/___/ (8) V82

26. Where do you usually have sex with your customers?

[NOTE: Record in order of where have sex most to where have sex the least. "9" = never use]

automobile
hotel room
trick pad
client's residence
outdoors (parks/alleys)
adult bookstores
/peep show arcades
public washrooms (MH only)
own residence
other

(9) V83
(10) V84
(11) V85
(12) V86
(13) V87
(14) V88
(15) V89
(16) V90
(17) V91

(specify) _____

/___/ (18) V92

27. On the average, how much time do you spend with each customer after you get there?

_____ min/hr

V93
/___/ (19-20)

28. Have you ever refused a potential trick?

yes 1

no 2

(IF YES) Why?

(1) V94

V95
/ / / (2-3)

/ / / (4-5) V 368

/ / / (6-7) V 369

/ / / (8-9) V 370

28a. We are interested in the extent to which YOU use different languages while working. For each of the following people you meet through work, indicate the language you most often use when talking to them.

1. French 2. English 3. Other

<u>People</u>	<u>Usual Language</u>	<u>Amount</u> (see 28b)	
Co-workers	/ / V95a	/ / V95 >	(10-11)
Clients	/ / V95c	/ / V95d	(12-13)
Cabdrivers	/ / V95e	/ / V95 f	(14-15)
Police	/ / V95g	/ / V95 h	(16-17)
Lawyers	/ / V95i	/ / V95 j	(18-19)
Person work for (if applicable)	/ / V95k	/ / V95 l	(20-21)
Agency people	/ / V95m	/ / V95 n	(22-23)
Other (specify)			
_____	114	114	(24-25)
			(26-27)

Do Not
Code

28b. How much of the time do you actually use the language identified?

[Record above under Amount using the following categories:

1. always

2. more than half

3. about half

4. not aware

9. not applicable

INCOME SOURCES AND EXPENSES:

29. Is sex work (prostitution) your only source of money?

yes 1
no 2

(1) V96

(IF NO) Please tell me what other sources of money you have.

[Probe for both legal and illegal sources as well as welfare and unemployment.]

/___/___/ (2-3) V97

/___/___/ (4-5) V98

/___/___/ (6-7) V99

30. How many customers do you see and how much do you earn in the following situations ...

	# customers	average earnings
on a GOOD day?	V100 /___/___/	\$ _____
on a BAD day?	V102 /___/___/	\$ _____
in an average week?	V104 /___/___/	\$ _____

V101
/___/___/___/

V103
/___/___/___/

V105
/___/___/___/

(8-25)

31. Do you have any large expenses related to your work as a prostitute? What are they?

V106
/___/___/ (26-27)

32. (1) Do you have to pay-off with \$ anyone in order to do sex work? If yes, please indicate who, how often and how much.

1. daily
2. at least once week
3. at least once a month
4. less than once a month

<u>Person</u>	<u>How often</u>	<u>\$ per/wk (month)</u>	
_____/V107/_____/_____/_____/	_____/V108/_____/	\$ _____	_____/V109/_____/ (1-6)
_____/V110/_____/_____/_____/	_____/V111/_____/	\$ _____	_____/V112/_____/ (7-12)
_____/V113/_____/_____/_____/	_____/V114/_____/	\$ _____	_____/V115/_____/ (13-18)
_____/V116/_____/_____/_____/	_____/V117/_____/	\$ _____	_____/V118/_____/ (19-24)

(2) How about pay-offs in the form of sexual favors?

<u>Person</u>	<u>How often?</u>	
_____/V119/_____/_____/_____/	_____/V120/_____/	(25-27)
_____/V121/_____/_____/_____/	_____/V122/_____/	(28-30)
_____/V123/_____/_____/_____/	_____/V124/_____/	(31-33)
_____/V125/_____/_____/_____/	_____/V126/_____/	(34-36)

33. With whom do you share the money you earn? (Include economically dependent children, their ages, and other adults.)

1. female
2. male

<u>Person share \$ with</u>	<u>sex</u>	<u>age</u>	
_____/V127/_____/_____/_____/	_____/V128/_____/	_____/V129/_____/	(37-41)
_____/V130/_____/_____/_____/	_____/V131/_____/	_____/V132/_____/	(42-46)
_____/V133/_____/_____/_____/	_____/V134/_____/	_____/V135/_____/	(47-51)
_____/V136/_____/_____/_____/	_____/V137/_____/	_____/V138/_____/	(52-56)

34. Do you have any personal savings?

yes 1
no 2

(1) V139

(IF YES) Approximately how much do you have?

\$ _____

V140
/ / / (2-4)

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS:

There are a number of dangers/risks involved in working as a prostitute. I'd like you to tell me about the ones you have experienced.

35. (1) DURING THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS, how many times have you been raped, beaten, or stolen from in relation to your being a prostitute? For each case tell me who did it.

RELATED TO BEING A PROSTITUTE

UNRELATED
INCIDENTS

	<u>Client</u>	<u>Pimp</u>	<u>Police</u>	<u>Other Person</u>	
Raped	V141 / /	V142 / /	V143 / /	V144 / /	V145 / / (5-9)
Beaten	V146 / /	V147 / /	V148 / /	V149 / /	V150 / / (10-14)
Stolen	V151 / /	V152 / /	V153 / /	V154 / /	V155 / / (15-19)

(2) DURING THE SAME 12 MONTH PERIOD, how many times have you been raped, beaten, or stolen from in a context unrelated to being a prostitute?

[Record above under UNRELATED INCIDENTS.]

> IF AT LEAST ONE INCIDENT MENTIONED
IN EACH RISK CATEGORY GO TO 37

36. (IF NO INCIDENTS MENTIONED IN A RISK CATEGORY IN Q 35)

- (1) Please tell me whether you were ever raped (or beaten, or stolen from)?
- (2) Was it related or unrelated to your being a prostitute?

	<u>RELATED TO BEING</u> <u>A PROSTITUTE</u> 1. yes 2. no	<u>UNRELATED</u> <u>INCIDENTS</u>	
Raped	/___/ V156	/___/ V157	(1-2)
Beaten	/___/ V158	/___/ V159	(3-4)
Stolen	/___/ V160	/___/ V161	(5-6)

37. Have you been arrested in the last twelve months?

yes 1
no 2

(7) V162

(IF YES) For what crime(s) and what was (were) the outcome(s)?

<u>Crime(s)</u>	<u>Outcome(s)</u>	
_____	_____	V163 /___/ V164 /___/
_____	_____	V165 /___/ V166 /___/
_____	_____	V167 /___/ V168 /___/
_____	_____	V169 /___/ V170 /___/

(8-23)

38. What drugs do you use at least once a week? [Check ALL that apply.]

pot _____ (24) V171

heroin _____ (25) V172

crack _____ (26) V173

other forms of coke . . . _____ (27) V174

other (specify) _____ (28) V175

_____ (29-30) V176

39. (1) How many days a week do you usually get drunk? 17 (1)
- (2) Is this usually ...
- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| when you're <u>working</u> | 1 | (2) <u>V17E</u> |
| when <u>not working</u> | 2 | |
| both | 3 | |
40. (1) How many days a week do you usually get stoned? 1 (3) V179
- (2) Is this usually ...
- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| when you're <u>working</u> | 1 | |
| when <u>not working</u> | 2 | (4) <u>V180</u> |
| both | 3 | |
41. How much did you spend on drugs (not alcohol) in the last week? V181
\$ (5-8)
42. How many times have you contracted a sexually transmitted disease (STD) in the last two years? times (9) V182
43. Have you been tested for AIDS?
- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------|
| yes, tested positive | 1 | (10) <u>V183</u> |
| yes, tested negative | 2 | |
| no | 3 | |
- (IF POSITIVE) Do you presently have AIDS?
- | | | |
|---------------|---|------------------|
| yes | 1 | (11) <u>V184</u> |
| no | 2 | |
44. As a working prostitute, has the AIDS crisis affected you?
- | | | |
|---------------|---|------------------|
| yes | 1 | (12) <u>V185</u> |
| no | 2 | |
- (IF YES) In what way? V186
 (13-14)

WORK RELATIONS:

45. I would like you to tell me a little about how you relate to your customers. I will describe a situation and you tell me how frequently you behave in that manner.

0. no answer
1. never (N)
2. rarely (R)
3. some of the time (S)
4. most of the time (M)
5. all of the time (A)

	<u>N</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>A</u>	
giving a customer a little <u>more</u> sex or time than originally agreed upon	—	—	—	—	—	(1) V187
going back on an agreement made with a customer regarding a sex act or time period	—	—	—	—	—	(2) V188
<u>lowering</u> your price in order to please a customer	—	—	—	—	—	(3) V189
<u>raising</u> your price in a way that angers a customer .	—	—	—	—	—	(4) V190
trying to steal money from a customer	—	—	—	—	—	(5) V191
being especially nice to a customer	—	—	—	—	—	(6) V192
being unpleasant to a customer	—	—	—	—	—	(7) V193

> IF NOT TS GO TO 49

46. (FOR TSs ONLY) How often do you tell a customer that you're transgender or transsexual?

never	1
rarely	2
some of the time	3
most of the time	4
all the time	5

(1) V194

(IF NOT ALL THE TIME) What do you do to hide this fact?

V195
/___/ (2-3)

47. (FOR TSs ONLY) In the last TWELVE months, how many customers discovered you were trying to hide your transsexuality?

_____ customers

V196
/___/ (4-5)

(IF DISCOVERED) What usually happened?

V197
/___/ (6-7)

48. (FOR TSs ONLY) Are you taking estrogen?

regularly	1
once in a while	2
never	3

(8) V198

(IF REGULARLY) Has this affected your ...

1. Yes 2. No

degree of sexual desire? /___/

(9) V199

ability to get erections? /___/

(10) V200

ability to reach orgasm? /___/

(11) V201

> GO TO 49

ENJOYMENT OF SEX

49. (FOR ALL) The next questions concern your enjoyment of various sexual acts with your customers. I will describe the acts and then ask you to tell me how often you enjoy them. If you don't engage in some of these activities please say so.

0. would not answer

1. never

2. rarely

3. some of the time

4. most of the time

5. all of the time

6. no recent/current lover

8. don't engage in it

9. not applicable

	<u>customers</u>		<u>personal sex life</u>		
	49	50a	50	50b	
GIVING oral sex	V202 / /	V203 / /	V204 / /	V205 / /	(1-4)
RECEIVING oral sex	V206 / /	V207 / /	V208 / /	V209 / /	(5-8)
PERFORMING anal intercourse	V210 / /	V211 / /	V212 / /	V213 / /	(9-12)
RECEIVING anal intercourse	V214 / /	V215 / /	V216 / /	V217 / /	(13-16)
ENGAGING in sexual (vaginal) intercourse	V218 / /	V219 / /	V220 / /	V221 / /	(17-20)
PERFORMING S/M bondage	V222 / /	V223 / /	V224 / /	V225 / /	(21-24)
RECEIVING S/M bondage	V226 / /	V227 / /	V228 / /	V229 / /	(25-28)
GIVING hand jobs	V230 / /	V231 / /	V232 / /	V233 / /	(29-32)
having your breasts fondled	V234 / /	V235 / /	V236 / /	V237 / /	(33-36)
kissing	V238 / /	V239 / /	V240 / /	V241 / /	(39-40)
How often do you "come" (have an orgasm)	V242 / /		V243 / /		(41-42)

50. I would also like to know how much you enjoy these same acts with your current or most recent spouse/lover?

[Record using the personal sex life column in Q 49]

- 50a. When you mentioned your enjoyment of these sexual acts with your customers, were you talking about sexual enjoyment or some other kind of enjoyment?

[If not thinking of sexual enjoyment, record any differences this question elicits using the customers column (50a) of Q 49]

- 50b. When you mentioned your enjoyment of these sexual acts with your current or most recent spouse/lover, were you talking about sexual enjoyment or some other kind of enjoyment?

[If not thinking of sexual enjoyment, record any differences this question elicits using the personal sex life column (50b) of Q 49]

- 50c. How often do you use condoms when engaging in the following activities ...

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 0. would not answer | |
| 1. never | |
| 2. rarely | 6. no recent/current lover |
| 3. some of the time | |
| 4. most of the time | 8. don't engage in it |
| 5. all of the time | 9. not applicable |

	with <u>customers</u>	personal <u>sex life</u>	
oral sex	V244 /___/	/___/V245	(1-2)
anal sex	/___/V246	/___/V247	(3-4)
vaginal sex	/___/V248	/___/V249	(5-6)

51. On the average, how often do you have sex with your lover/spouse in a month? _____/month (1-2) V250

52. On the average, how often do you masturbate yourself to orgasm in a month? _____/month (3-4) V251

53. (1) Excluding your primary sex partner, how many different male and/or female sex partners have you had in your personal life in the last month, in the last year?

	<u>MALE PARTNERS</u>		<u>FEMALE PARTNERS</u>		
	Last mo.	Last yr.	Last mo.	Last yr.	
# sex partners	V252 /___/	V253 /___/	V254 /___/	V255 /___/	(5-12)

(2) Did you enjoy sex with these MALE partners?

never	1	(13) V256
some of the time	2	
most of the time	3	
all of the time	4	
no male partners	5	

(3) Did you enjoy sex with these FEMALE partners?

never	1	(14) V257
some of the time	2	
most of the time	3	
all of the time	4	
no female partners	5	

54. How (if at all) has working as a prostitute affected your PERSONAL sex life?

made it better	1	(15) V258
made no change in it	2	
made it worse	3	
don't know	4	

(IF BETTER OR WORSE) In what ways?

/___/ (16-17) V259
/___/ (18-19) V260

RELATIONS WITH OTHER PEOPLE:

55. (1) Can you tell me what your family and friends (the people closest to you) think about your WORKING as a prostitute?

[Let respondent make suggestions before probing for information on those listed. Mark "9" if probe necessary. Indicate the sex of the person if not clear in the title (e.g., M-friend).]

(2) Would you say they approve or disapprove?

(3) [After they answer ask...] Is that mildly or strongly?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. approve strongly | 3. disapprove mildly |
| 2. approve mildly | 4. disapprove strongly |
| 5. neither A nor D | |
| 8. they don't know about it | |
| 9. not applicable | |

DO NOT CODE

PERSON	PROBE	A/D WORK	A/D TRANS	A/D HOMO	
Lover/spouse	/	V260A	V261	V262	
Oldest Child	/	V263	V264	V265	(1-4)
Second Child	/	V266	V267	V268	(5-8)
Mother	/	V269	V270	V271	(9-12)
Father	/	V272	V273	V274	(13-16)
Oldest Brother	/	V275	V276	V277	(17-20)
Oldest Sister	/	V278	V279	V280	(21-24)
Non prostitute friend 1	/	V281	V282	V283	(25-28)
Non prostitute friend 2	/	V284	V285	V286	(29-32)
Others (specify)	/				(33-36)
_____	/	V287	V288	V289	
_____	/	V290	V291	V292	V290 (37-42)
_____	/	V293	V294	V295	V294 (43-48)

> IF NOT TS OR MH GO TO 58

56. (FOR TSs ONLY) Can you tell me what these same people think about your transsexuality?

[Repeat as above and record under TRANS in Q 55]

57. (FOR MHS ^{& anyone else involved in sex acts with S.O. of the same sex}) Can you tell me what these same people think about your homosexual activity?

(lesbian)
[Repeat as above and record under HOMO in Q 55]

58. (1) How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your work as a prostitute?

(2) [After they answer ask...] Is that somewhat or very?

very satisfied 1
somewhat satisfied 2
somewhat dissatisfied 3
very dissatisfied 4

(1) V295

59. Using the same scale, how do you feel about your life as a whole right now? Are you satisfied or dissatisfied?

very satisfied 1
somewhat satisfied 2
somewhat dissatisfied 3
very dissatisfied 4

(2) V296

60. (1) We would like to know who you turn to (people or agencies) when you have PERSONAL or FAMILY problems (e.g., physical or emotional problems, child care problems).

(2) Are they a part of your prostitution network or part of a network unrelated to prostitution?

Prostitution Network

Other Network

V297 / V298
V299 / V300
V301 / V302

(3-14)

61. (1) We would like to know who you turn to (people or agencies) when you have WORK RELATED problems.
- (2) Are they a part of your prostitution network or part of a network unrelated to prostitution?

Prostitution Network

Other Network

V303 / / V304 / /
V305 / / V306 / /
V307 / / V308 / /
(1-12)

62. Who do you turn to when you have MONEY problems? [Proceed as in above question.]

Prostitution Network

Other Network

V309 / / V310 / /
V311 / / V312 / /
V313 / / V314 / /
(13-24)

63. Who do you turn to when you have HEALTH problems [Proceed as in above question.]

Prostitution Network

Other Network

V315 / / V316 / /
V317 / / V318 / /
V319 / / V320 / /
(25-36)

WORK HISTORY AND FUTURE PLANS:

64. How old were you the first time you had vaginal intercourse?

_____ years

(1-2) V321

64a. How old were you the first time you had anal intercourse?

_____ years

(3-4) V322

65. How old were you the first time you were paid in money for sex?

_____ years

(5-6) V323

66. Did you have other jobs before you started ^{or while} working as a prostitute?

yes 1

no 2

(7) V324

(IF YES) What were they?

/___/___/ (8-9) V325

/___/___/ (10-11) V326

/___/___/ (12-13) V327

67. In the time you have worked as a prostitute, how many periods have there been when you dropped out of prostitution for a month or more (other than for periods of illness or incarceration)?

_____ periods

(14-15) V328

68. How much longer would you like to work as a prostitute?

V329
/___/___/ (16-17)

69. (1) How much longer do you think you will ACTUALLY work as a prostitute?

/ / (1-2) V33C

(2) (IF NOT FOREVER) What do you plan to do to support yourself after that?

Plan/Job Have the job skills
1. Yes 2. No

_____	/ / V331	/ V332 (3-5)
_____	/ / V333	/ V334 (6-8)
_____	/ / V335	/ V336 (9-11)
_____	/ / V337	/ V338 (12-14)

(3) Do you have the basic job skills? [Record above.]

70. (1) Do you think it will/would be EASY or DIFFICULT to get a job other than prostitution?

(2) [After they answer ask...] Would that be very or somewhat?

very easy 1
easy 2
difficult 3
very difficult 4
already have one 5

(15) V339

71. If you were offered a square job that paid about the same as you earn now, would you give up prostitution as a profession?

yes 1
no 2
maybe 3

(16) V340

72. Would anyone try to force you to continue working as a prostitute if you decided to quit?

yes 1
no 2

(IF YES) Who?

Relationship to Respondent

(1) V341

V342
/ / (2-3)

73. What do you consider to be the DISADVANTAGES to working as a prostitute?

V343
/ / (4-5)

V344
/ / (6-7)

V345
/ / (8-9)

V346
/ / (10-11)

74. What do you consider to be the ADVANTAGES to working as a prostitute?

V347
/ / (12-13)

V348
/ / (14-15)

V349
/ / (16-17)

V350
/ / (18-19)

75. Is there anything we haven't covered that you would like to comment on?

V351
/ / (20-21)

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

Description of respondent:

To which visible minority do they belong

White (caucasian)	1
Black	2
Oriental/Asian	3
Hispanic	4
Native American	5
Other	6

(1) V371

V372
/ / (2-3)

Other descriptive comments?

V373
/ / (4-5)

Other interviewer comments ...

[Note whether other people were present during the interview.]

/ / (6) V374

/ / (7-8) V375

Interviewer: _____

/ / (9) V376

Location of interview: _____

/ / / (10-11) V377

Date of Interview: _____
Day/Month

V378 V379
/ / / /
(12-15)

Time of interview: _____

V380
/ / / (16-17)

Language of interview: _____

V381
/ / (18)