

**PIMPING AND PROSTITUTION IN HALIFAX IN THE EARLY 1990s:
THE EVOLUTION OF A MORAL PANIC**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the evolution of the prostitution moral panic which took place in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in the early 1990s. Prostitution has long been present in Halifax, yet in the 1990s, many factors such as racist ideologies, fear, the creation of "folk devils" and saliency of the issue, contributed to the creation of a prostitution moral panic. The panic was instrumental in the formation of the prostitution task force in 1992; the purpose of which was to combat juvenile prostitution. Having gone through agitation, bureaucratization and downsizing phases, the prostitution moral panic is now in its legacy phase. This legacy is characterized by new, tougher laws and legislation, heightened community awareness, and fewer young women being pimped on the streets of Halifax. The results of this thesis include a more comprehensive understanding of the movement of the prostitution moral panic through literature and media analysis, as well as reflections on potential research for the future.

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CHAPTER ONE

PROSTITUTION IN HALIFAX

1.0 Introduction

Prostitution is an occupation that has been a part of society as far back as biblical times and accordingly is often referred to as "the world's oldest profession" (McNamara 1994, p.118). It can be found in every corner of the world and Halifax, Nova Scotia is no exception. Being one of Canada's most important seaports, there has for centuries been a busy schedule of ships entering and departing Halifax harbor. "Prostitution was likely to be tolerated in port cities such as Halifax...where there was a large surplus male population" (Shaver 1994, p.127) and with this constant influx of men, the demand for the availability of prostitutes increased accordingly. Even popular culture recognizes this fact as locally made beer commercials depict Halifax in those times as a seaport with beer halls that provided food, drink and women.

Given this historical background, Haligonians are no strangers to the existence of prostitution in their city. The question that arises then is how is it that a city inhabited by people who have become accustomed to the prevalence of prostitution for hundreds of years all of a sudden become preoccupied with the idea that prostitution can no longer be tolerated? Why is it that this idea did not surface earlier and what triggered the waves of interest and concern for this subject? Why did this subject develop into a shocking one despite the fact that prostitution had been part of their city's history for hundreds of

years? What triggered these new responses to a very old problem? This thesis examines the answers to these and other related questions and describes the life cycle of the social problem called prostitution.

1.1 Modern Conditions

The different conditions that applied to daily social interactions and rules in modern times compared to those from Halifax's historical past played a role in the fostering of new ideas regarding prostitution. One circumstance that existed in 1992, the year Halifax police and R.C.M.P. officers created a prostitution task force, was that Halifax's prostitution problem had gained national attention whereas previously its notoriety was locally contained. The media portrayed Halifax as a refuge for pimps who transport Nova Scotian women into nationwide prostitution rings where they are beaten, sexually assaulted, injected with drugs, and even murdered. Issues concerning the young age of the typical prostitute as well as the racial dynamic between the often white prostitute and usually black pimp were also factors of importance for the depiction of the prostitution scene in Halifax. Perhaps this acutely negative attention from the national media forced Haligonians, for the first time, to look at prostitution more seriously. News accounts depicted prostitution escalating to the point where it was out of control but was this actually the case? Could it be that prostitution-related events had always been that way and that people had just chosen to disregard it or even tolerate it? Perhaps it was the national attention that forced Halifax to more closely examine the prostitution issue or did

the media help to create a moral panic surrounding what had become the "topic of the day"?

In trying to find the answers to these and other pertinent questions, there are several theories and approaches that will be utilized including theories of moral panic and social problems. These theories combine to give a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics that were at play at the time of the creation of Halifax's prostitution task force as well as during its first few years of operation.

1.2 Moral Panics

The moral panic literature outlines how the media can and did create an orgy of sensationalistic news items that throw society at large into a panic about a particular condition they have come to show concern for. All moral panics have as a common characteristic a concern regarding the behavior of a particular group whose actions have resulted in heightened hostility towards them. For a moral panic to be in place, there must also be a widespread agreement that the threat from the said group's behavior is real and that such behavior constitutes serious wrongdoing (Best 1989). The term "panic" comes into play when people's involvement in the issue increases as a result of over-inflated concerns about the danger involved in the offending group's activities. Finally, the peak of a moral panic is usually reached abruptly and accordingly subside in much the same manner. Concern for the offending behavior may be latent and erupt from time to time but after it has run its course, it almost certainly becomes routinized and/or institutionalized.

1.3 Social Problems

Social problem literature deals with a theoretical pattern similar to that of moral panic literature. The leading authors in this field, Spector and Kitsuse (1977), identify various phases in the life of a social problem. For the purpose of arguments made in this thesis, a composite of those steps has been made so that they coincide with the three stages of moral panic. The first step occurs when the victims of a certain behavior or interest group seek public recognition of the problem they are fighting against. This stage is known as the agitation stage of a social problem (Spector and Kitsuse 1977, p.12). When that problem has earned official acknowledgment or legitimation, or when official agencies define and take control of the problem, the second stage, bureaucratization or routinization, has been reached. When the evolution of a social problem has been completed it is said that the legacy stage has been realized. This stage may materialize in the formation of more stringent laws and penalties and may also include a concept of how that issue may be perceived by societies of the future. Spector and Kitsuse wrote that "a social problem is affected by the outcome of each stage it passes through in its career" (1977, p.12) and this in turn affects how it is internalized by society.

1.4 The Media

The theories of moral panic and social problems are distinctly represented in the media. The three phases of each can easily be matched with the progression of media coverage throughout the reporting of the prostitution problem in Halifax from 1992 to 1995. The articles written during that time frame are represented in the chapter that deals

with details of the data set. Quotes from a sampling of those articles are used to bolster the argument for the presence of a prostitution moral panic and its force as a social problem. Furthermore, from the articles found in the newspapers at the time, in particular those that concern trigger events such as the disappearances of Kimberly McAndrew¹ and Andrea King². It became clear that prostitution was an issue that had saliency for many people across the country. There was much significance in the fact that average girls such as McAndrew and King, who had been good students and who had shared positive relationships with their parents, were suspected of having been forced into the prostitution trade. These girls were never proven to have been integrated into the sex trade but its mere suggestion was enough to perpetuate the already festering moral panic. The notion that "this could happen to my daughter" became very real for many people: a key factor in the mobilization of society to support the creation of tougher sentencing for prostitution-related offenses, the idea that prostitution had become a serious social problem, the creation of the task force itself and the moral panic that surrounded its emergence.

¹Kimberly McAndrew was 19 years old when she disappeared after leaving her summer job in Halifax in 1989. Her disappearance is of quintessential importance because it represents the notion that the good girl with a happy homelife can fall victim to pimps and prostitution. She was the daughter of a police officer and as such many would think her to be out of reach for the sex trade. Her story was poignant for much of society, especially the middle class, of which she was a member, and marked the pinnacle of the moral panic.

²In the case of Andrea King, there was some ambiguity regarding her character. Her activities were questionable at the time she went missing. She had left her home in British Columbia to come to Halifax in 1992. She had allegedly arrived in Halifax and was last seen on Brunswick Street. Following her disappearance, her parents organized a nation-wide search for their daughter that appealed to and touched families from coast to coast.

1.5 Racism

Another pertinent issue revealed to be intertwined with the social problem of prostitution, its saliency as a social issue and moral panic theory was racism. Any discussion of prostitution in Halifax must include an exploration into racist ideologies and how they may impact this problem. One of the main reasons a moral panic was instigated may have been the overt participation of blacks in the pimping business. With the identification of a negatively stereotyped group (i.e. black males) operating prostitution rings, it became likely that those individuals would be identified as the manipulators of young girls and the evil doers. In a city where race relations have been tenuous at best, using local blacks as scapegoats for rampant prostitution would be an easy mark. This is not to say that the issue of prostitution in Halifax was mainly a racial one, but that the role played by the racial differences between pimps and prostitutes, those who controlled and those who were controlled respectively, must not be overlooked. Race was an issue at the height of the moral panic and therefore must be a consideration in the study of that period.

1.6 Legacy

Finally, after the life-cycle of the prostitution moral panic has been examined, it is important to study the legacy its existence has left within society. Halifax and other Canadian cities will remain affected by this legacy for years to come and its importance will be apparent when dealing with future prostitution-related offenses as well as other social problems that have a similarly high degree of saliency. The ramifications of the

actions taken by the media, law enforcement officials and the reactions of the public will impact the fate of prostitution in Canada and therefore a discussion of the notion of "legacy" must be attended to.

To begin this study, attention will be given to a discussion of prostitution in general, the coverage it received in the literature and the various theoretical approaches towards prostitution which will facilitate a better understanding of the subject as well as the progression into a discussion of prostitution as a social problem and the subject of a moral panic in Halifax from 1992 to 1995.

CHAPTER TWO THE LITERATURE ON PROSTITUTION

2.0 Introduction

Prostitution has been written about academically for decades and as a result, there is no shortage of information to be found when researching the subject. This will be an overview of the available literature with the purpose of familiarizing oneself with the treatment prostitution receives in academic literature.

Prostitution and its practice have been virtually universal, both historically and culturally. Yet in many circles, it is seen as deviant and disreputable, despite the fact there have been women in practically every country that have lived as prostitutes. Impressions of prostitutes range from "seductive courtesans, artists' inspirations..." to "the incarnation of evil, the ultimate in desperation and the object of scorn" (Lowman 1988, p. 54). No matter which of these views one may be in agreement with, all are rooted in particular beliefs about human sexuality, social positioning of women and the roles played by women within the contexts of motherhood and family.

According to Carlen, the construction of the notion of femininity has always been achieved through the discourse of sexuality (Carlen 1987, p. 6). In other words, views of sexuality define how society perceives 'woman' and 'womanhood'. Female biology has often been treated in literature as a disease, sick and devoid of the goodness possessed within its male counterpart (Carlen 1987, p.7). Therefore, women have been equated with that which is less than male (sexual inferiority) and are considered to be controllable

rather than in control. With these traditional thoughts in mind, the treatment given to prostitution in contemporary literature is more easily understood.

The assertion that prostitution is dependent on gender roles of dominance and submission (Overall 1992, p. 719) is supported by the same ideas of the sexual inferiority of women that sustain Carlen's work. If we also consider Catherine MacKinnon's assertion that "sexual objectification is the primary process in women's oppression" (Hooks 1992, p.30), it follows that prostitution can be perceived as the embodiment of men's dominance over women. Some believe that prostitution's result is the absolute in the control of men over women, but there is a counter-argument to this interpretation of prostitution in which some feminists believe that the practice of prostitution as a way of life is the epitome of the ultimate control a woman can have over her own sexuality. From the multitude of stances that present themselves throughout the literature, it is not difficult to understand how complex the issue of prostitution has become in today's society.

Sociology's interest in prostitution has historically focused on two main questions: why does it occur and why do some people become prostitutes while others do not? The question as to why prostitutes are usually female and the customers usually male rarely get asked in the face of the theories of male domination and female subordination alluded to earlier. In answering these commonly asked questions, the profile of a typical prostitute emerges. Street prostitutes are usually runaways who have become dissatisfied with their home life. These women are usually sexually victimized street kids who discover that prostitution is the easiest path to financial survival for life

on the street. While many believe that people who face conditions that lead them toward street-life are deserving of our compassion, many more associate street people with a "fundamental detachment from societal values and social bonds" (Visano 1983, p. 217). The literature asserts that this pattern of thinking evolves from the notion that street people "do not act in ways that maximize the welfare of society as a whole, and as such, are susceptible to exaggeration and are ripe for exploitation" (Visano 1983, p. 230). These opinions of street life and prostitution form the foundation for pervasive disinterest and even aversion towards those who engage in such lifestyles.

2.1 The Politics of Prostitution

The political side to prostitution is often referred to in the literature and mostly deals with the aforementioned notion of the relation between economics and prostitution as an occupation. For instance, Carlen states that the number of women engaging in prostitution is directly related to the deterioration of women's economic position in today's society, i.e. their economic powerlessness. Put another way, the poverty women suffer from is a "primary precondition for prostitution (Carlen 1987, p. 43). Carlen and Lowman can be linked together by their shared idea that structural factors associating gender and unemployment make prostitution an attractive occupation for women who experience increasingly limited employment opportunities compared with those available for men. In discussing the Marxist approach to prostitution, Rosemarie Tong explains that "prostitution, like wage labor, is a class phenomenon. The economic situation of unemployed or underemployed women explains why they, like laborers, sell themselves

to others" (Tong 1989, p.64). In accordance with this theory, Carlen discusses the "feminization of poverty" (Carlen 1987, p. 21), a premise that refers to the fewer economic opportunities that exist for women in their struggle to earn a living of a similar level to that of their male counterparts. More specifically, the author writes that women may become prostitutes because they would otherwise be subjected to primarily low-paying seasonal work and be dependent on regional benefit programs. He suggests that all too often women remain at home, not engaged in the work force, because of their innate responsibility for the family that commonly keeps them imprisoned there. Therefore, prostitution becomes "an uninstitutionalized occupational choice" (Carlen 1987, p. 50) due to the non-viability of other job opportunities for women. This choice is referred to Benjamin as the "prostitution or starvation" (Benjamin 1965, p. 95) choice which many would agree is hardly a choice at all. Poverty is not the only factor which makes prostitution a viable employment opportunity for people engaged in the business. The profile of pimps and prostitutes, as stated by the representative of the task force interviewed for the purposes of this thesis, often includes family backgrounds burdened with physical and emotional abuse, broken homes and histories of drug and alcohol abuse.

Once having stepped into the world of prostitution, leaving the trade is quite difficult and is perceived by the women involved to be an impossibility. The pimps' control over these young women is extensive and any attempt to leave the streets would undoubtedly result in violence against them. Any income derived from a prostitute's work is often managed by a pimp and is rationed out to the prostitute herself only in small

amounts or by way of commodities such as cigarettes, alcohol and habit-forming drugs. The prostitute often uses drugs as a result of being part of that world yet, at the same time, she must remain in it to support that habit. The result is a cyclical behavior that is not easily broken. Terminating the addictions that frequently afflict prostitutes, though an important element, is not the only nor the most difficult one to be considered when a woman wishes to end her involvement in prostitution. Poverty, illiteracy, socio-economic inequalities, broken homes and abusive environments must all be addressed, as well as issues of power and control of the pimp and the social network within which a prostitute becomes deeply entangled. From the many issues listed here, it is apparent how deep this problem is inherent in the very being of these women and it therefore becomes difficult to imagine that there will ever be a solution. It has yet to be discovered how to curb the demand for, and existence of, prostitution while preserving people's fundamental liberties.

2.2 Feminist Approaches

Beyond the political and economic views of prostitution there are those of various feminist factions which add depth to this discussion. Certain feminists believe that it is a woman's right to choose prostitution as a way of life (Overall 1992, p.705). Feminists from this school of thought believe that as workers, prostitutes deserve respect and that through prostitution, many women can achieve sexual freedom and pleasure rather than danger and degradation. Prostitution can be viewed as the answer to the sexual double standard that allows men to enjoy sexually derived pleasure while women are devalued

for the same behavior. Feminists who adopt these views may also argue that as a commercial enterprise, prostitution is the only occupation besides modeling where women are able to earn more money than men for performing similar tasks (Overall 1992, p. 107). It is this way of thinking that equates prostitution with the sexual liberation of women and with economic opportunity.

By contrast, we have already looked at the work of Benjamin (1965) that is typical of the theorists who argue that prostitution is by definition not a "choice" for women at all. These feminist thinkers suggest that the liberationist views are inadequate because they overlook the sexual politics of human interactions that are involved with prostitution. As stated earlier, prostitution is contingent upon typical relations between the sexes that assert men's power and women's lack thereof, which cause and encourage asymmetry and inequality in other forms. Equating prostitution with women's liberation might foster the notion that all women are whores and that men's craving for sex is as naturally insatiable as that for food and drink (Bell 1987). Leading feminists believe that prostitution is inherently gendered and part of patriarchal institution. Catherine MacKinnon put it simply: "sexuality is gendered as gender is sexualized" (MacKinnon 1983, p.635). In other words, women are defined by their sexuality. They believe prostitution is public recognition of women as commodities (Sacco 1988) and men as sexual masters (Overall 1992, p.772).

2.3 Canadian Law Regarding Prostitution

In Canada today, prostitution is legal in name only. Its actual practice, that is, its effective legality, depends on selective law enforcement. Canada has three classes of prostitution crime which have evolved from the Criminal Code: procuring and living off the avails, being found in and/or running a common bawdy-house, and offering sexual services in public (solicitation). The Criminal Code has changed and evolved since Canada's first laws and regulations concerning prostitution which were in place over two hundred years ago. Since the Nova Scotia Act of 1759, one of the earliest Canadian laws which attempted to regulate prostitution, laws have changed from being gender-specific, to focusing on male exploiters, to concern over the visibility of prostitution in residential neighborhoods (Shaver 1994).

For authors such as Shaver and indeed for many Canadians who feel that the prostitution problem is long from being solved it is apparent that we have "failed to develop appropriate social and legal policies" (Shaver 1994, p.123) that lend themselves to the resolution of the prostitution issue. Shaver asserts that:

"the key to appropriate social and legal reform lies in recognizing four points: prostitution per se is not different from other work; prostitution as currently practiced is different; the evaluation of commercial sex must be conducted in the broader context of human sexuality; and it is essential to focus on the specificity of women, rather than the specificity of prostitution" (Shaver 1994, p.123).

By this last point he means that it is more important to protect people from abuse and coercion in relationships, be they sexual or otherwise, than to focus on the idea that we are protecting the prostitute as a law-breaker. For Shaver, once prostitution has been decriminalized, the perilous conditions that exist within can be regulated by laws that are

already in place such as those concerning assault, extortion, intimidation, theft, and the like. Also, the less serious elements will be monitored as well by the existing laws which govern labor codes, zoning and health regulations (Shaver 1994, p.144-5). Of course, this perspective assumes that the laws in place to regulate these conditions, serious and otherwise, are in working order as well. This assumption aside, the intention of his solution is appealing to many. Whether one shares Shaver's view of the reasons law has failed to find solutions for the prostitution problem or not, law, prostitution and public perception remain unreconciled in Canadian society today.

One might think that in a port city having the long tradition of prostitution noted above, that there may be high levels of implicit support for "prostitution as an occupation". Such a premise would perhaps especially make interesting the question of why a moral panic developed in Halifax in the early 1990s.

2.4 Moral Panic Literature

The laws regarding prostitution are not the only issue about which Canadians are unable to come to an agreement. With reference to the substance of this thesis, there is significant controversy concerning the social and individual harm inherent in prostitution. Certainly there was controversy over whether or not patterns of prostitution justified moral panic in the early 1990s in Halifax. Some argue that the prostitution problem had grown out of control, while others claimed the media planted the idea of increased prostitution-related activities in the minds of the public to suit their own needs by

generating attention to the subject. It is therefore necessary to look into the definition of moral panic so we can determine if one was indeed present at that time.

According to Goode and Ben-Yehuda, a moral panic can be defined as "a reaction to unconventional behavior" (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994, p. 23). This reaction may be neither a rational nor a realistic assessment of the concrete damage that the behavior in question is likely to inflict upon society, thus earning the description of "panic". Stanley Cohen, arguably the leading author of moral panic theory, actually came up with the term "moral panic" as a means of characterizing the reactions of the media, public and agents of social control (Cohen 1972, p. 9). He believed that there existed a "fundamentally inappropriate" reaction by much of society to certain relatively minor events and conditions. These reactions were fueled by the public taking unconfirmed rumors to be undeniable evidence of further harmful events. Furthermore, Cohen espoused the idea of "community sensitization" where once a class of behavior and category of deviants became noticed or identified, extremely small deviations from the norm were more readily noticed, judged and reacted to (Cohen 1967, p. 280).

Cohen further explains his term, "moral panic", by giving us the following definition:

"A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions: ways of coping are evolved or ...resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. Sometimes the subject of the panic is quite novel and at other times is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except

in folklore and collective memory; and at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way society sees itself." (Cohen 1972, p. 9)

Given the definitions and characteristics of moral panics presented thus far, one may begin to determine if the scenario in Halifax fits this description. Can prostitution in Halifax be considered "unconventional behavior"? Was the public reaction to the prostitution problem a realistic evaluation of the implications it had for society? Did pimps become defined as a threat to the social fiber of the city and were they portrayed accurately as such by the media? What kind of repercussions did the turmoil surrounding prostitution in Halifax have on legal and social policy? Was it a long-lasting concern or did it disappear as quickly as it surfaced? Answering these and other questions allow us to formulate a picture of prostitution in Halifax as a moral panic.

2.5 "Actors" in a Moral Panic

Another way of assessing the validity of the claim that prostitution attained moral panic status is to compare the actors involved in it with those of Cohen's prototype of moral panic. Cohen stated that there are five main actors that participate in a moral panic. **The press** contributes to a moral panic by reacting with exaggerated attention to particular events, stereotyping the people involved, and by using terms and phrases that distort and magnify the events. They are able to depict the actors as part of larger violent groups. The fact that this quality is represented in the media is in accordance with

Cohen's assertion that during a moral panic the subject is treated in a stereotypical fashion (Cohen 1972, pp. 34-8).

The second group of actors in a moral panic is **the public**. For a moral panic to take place there must be latent potential for the general population to react to a given issue, that is, the issue must have salience for a vast majority of the public. If the issue is able to touch a responsive chord in the public then there exists the prospect of a moral panic. Panics can occur because "social reaction to a new and seemingly threatening phenomenon arise as a consequence of that phenomenon's real or supposed threat to certain positions, status', interests, ideologies and values" (Cohen 1972, p.191). If any aspect of the public feels threatened in any way by deviant behavior, and if the media is able to heighten concern regarding such activity, there is potential for a moral panic to ensue.

Law enforcement is the third actor present during a moral panic. Its role lies in the ability to recognize that society is faced with a "clear and present danger". Police forces are able to guide the processes Cohen calls "diffusion" and "escalation". Diffusion occurs where ties between local police forces are established and strengthened to deal with the problem, while the second process refers to the fact that many actions (those which have already been taken) are justified due to the enormity of the impending threat to society perceived by the police. They also use this threat as a means to justify the proposal of new methods of control.

The fourth group of actors in a moral panic are **politicians and legislators** who call for stiffer penalties for the crimes that are being committed, and changes in the laws

to prevent them. Finally, **action groups** are present in a moral panic because they rise to cope with the newly existing threat.

2.6 "Folk Devils"

Another perspective that Cohen provides on moral panics is the idea that "folk devils" (Cohen 1972, p. 40ff) and "disaster mentality" (Cohen 1972, p. 144ff) are two features that characterize moral panics. Folk devils, simply put, are the personification of evil that we attribute to the subjects of a moral panic. The disaster mentality refers to the notion that we prepare for a moral panic much like we do before, during and after a disaster. We make predictions concerning the impending doom; there is a warning phase, a sensitization to cues of danger; we use coping mechanisms; we overreact frequently; the threatening event is institutionalized; rumors spread about what is happening and there are occasionally false alarms and mass delusions (Cohen 1972, pp. 144-80). As we can see, there are many similarities between public reactions to disaster and public propensity towards moral panic.

In one sense, what moral panics may be reduced to is that the reaction to a problem is out of proportion to the actual threat. The panic itself becomes problematic and it demands an explanation. Here, the theory of social constructionism can be considered valuable as it pertains to the notion of proportionality. The social constructionists explain how social problems, as opposed to moral panics, are created or constructed, but both involve claims of disproportionality. Best, as a contextual social constructionist, would argue that claims of proportion can be evaluated and argues that

making evaluative judgment is integral to any analysis of a social problem as it assists in clarifying contradictions made by various participants. Contextual constructionists are also proponents of the view that the media distorts official data to serve their own ends and that this activity contributes to the manipulation of public opinion to generate votes, sell newspapers, increase program ratings and garner political support (Best 1989).

2.7 Disproportionality

With the mention of disproportionality, it must be made clear that this is an element that evokes much debate concerning accuracy and appropriateness. Many, such as Fekete (1994), argue against Best and claim that disproportionality is impossible to measure and is therefore not appropriate in assessing the presence of a moral panic. How would one be able to determine if people's reaction exceeds the danger involved in the behavior? For example, the danger that pimps pose for women in society is very great. However, it would be very difficult to attach to this activity an appropriate amount of public concern. Public opinion often relies on statistics, yet those statistics are often manipulated in accordance with either the prevalence or incidence approach (Fekete 1994, p. 45). Prevalence statistics could escalate the number of women abducted into prostitution while the incidence approach might focus on detail to inflate the severity of the situation. According to Fekete, the "media are a misogynist force distorting women's realities in Canadian society" (Fekete 1994, p.164) and therefore the statistics as quoted by the media rarely can be separated from the argument they were manipulated to make. Once again, it is important to articulate that it is not being said that situations involving

young women and prostitution are not serious. Instead, this argument is being presented only to illustrate how statistics can be manipulated to fit any argument. The notion of disproportionality raises the question of who is able to say how dangerous a controversial behavior is and how do we evaluate reaction and response as appropriate and fitting? When opinion is such a large part of determining disproportionality, the issues of reliability, generalizability, applicability, validity and significance all come into question, making it difficult to prove whether or not one can truly evaluate the situation without involving the standpoint from which that claim is being made.

In *Moral Panic: Biopolitics Rising*, John Fekete provides us with further insight into the discussion concerning moral panics. He refers to the biopolitical panic where the scenario is one of war against a particular behavior or group of people. He wrote that, "wars need enemies" (Fekete 1994, p. 29) and if this terminology is to be applied to the case of prostitution in Halifax, the war was waged against men, particularly black men from North Preston, engaging in pimping-related activities. The black pimp became the object of the moral panic. Issues of race and their relevance to this discussion will be elaborated upon in an upcoming chapter.

Keeping Cohen's definition in mind, panic may not be an inappropriate term to use in describing the pimping situation in Halifax. It was clearly the black pimps that emerged as the threat to the moral order of society. When any specific random act of violence remotely suggesting prostitution-related activity occurred, the public's

nonspecific anxieties were projected onto the (black³) pimp. Panic is sustained by focusing on a small part of the picture (Fekete 1994, p. 35) and this thesis asserts that it was the focus placed on violent pimps that facilitated the panic in Halifax.

Several other of Fekete's assertions about moral panics are applicable to the prostitution dilemma in Halifax. It is Fekete's belief that moral panics foster a "guilty if charged" (Fekete 1994, p. 59) atmosphere. This can be likened to the Halifax condition in that any time a woman was found murdered during the height of the prostitution scandal, it was speculated that prostitution was a factor. The moment that prostitution was mentioned, relevant or not, it became the central issue of the story. The young girl was identified as potentially being a prostitute and the list of suspects included her pimp; both were treated by the media as though they had already been found guilty.

As is argued in other areas of this thesis, fear accompanies saliency as a key factor in the maintenance of the prostitution moral panic. The literature supports the idea that within panic agendas, the raising of awareness of an issue is made equal to raising alarm (Fekete 1994, p. 75). If the media is successful in raising awareness concerning a particular issue, further coverage of that issue sells more papers and perhaps underlines the role of the media as "crusaders" with relation to communicating the evils of prostitution to the public. According to the logic of this argument, the more the media is able to raise awareness about a topic, so to will there be greater levels of alarm and fear. The result is the cultivated interest in a social problem that serves the media's purpose as

³ "Black" appears in parentheses here because while black pimps were the focus of much attention, it was the quality of being a pimp that was of primary importance.

well as facilitated the creation of a moral panic. Fekete also noted that the panic atmosphere rewards the accusers with reassurance concerning their own moral stances and sometimes celebrity status or financial power (Fekete 1994, P. 86). The media certainly can be included as an accuser and also could be perceived to be of higher moral order due to its position on prostitution in Halifax.

2.8 Moral Panic Critics

Moral panic theories are certainly not without critics. Waddington stated his objections to moral panic theory by saying it "is a polemical rather than an analytic concept" (Waddington 1986, p. 258). It implies that "official and media concern is...without substance or justification ... It is, of course, perfectly possible to panic about even the most genuine problem. People may panic in a fire, but this does not imply that the building is not burning nor that there is no threat" (Waddington 1986, p. 258). This is a valid point and must be considered by anyone thinking of using this approach. Once again, the arguments surrounding standpoint theories must be considered here, keeping in mind that the options of all are based on various and differing backgrounds and viewpoints.

Waddington also wrote that the problem with moral panic is "establishing the comparison between the scale of the problem and the scale of response to it ... Conceptually, the notion of a 'moral panic' lacks any criteria of proportionality without which it is impossible to determine whether concern about any ... problem is justified or not" (Waddington 1986, p. 246). This is a point that one is faced with when applying

moral panic to one's own research endeavor. The issues of prostitution and pimping, for example, are very real and deserving of much concern in society. How then can we say that society is overreacting to and exaggerating the threat involved?

Goode and Ben-Yehuda have an answer to this inquiry. They list four indicators of disproportionality: figures are exaggerated, figures are fabricated, other harmful conditions are present, and changes over time (1994). The first two are self-explanatory but the latter two may need clarification. Other harmful conditions mean that if the issue causing a moral panic is put before other issues, what may be very significant for society can go ignored. Changes over time means that if over time the same issue receives different amounts of attention, then there is disproportionality.

Another way Goode and Ben-Yehuda have asked us to look at moral panic is that if the four territories of deviance, social problems, collective behavior and social movements overlap, then there is reason to believe a moral panic is taking place (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994, p. 52). The territory called deviance accounts for the "moral" in moral panic, while social problems account for the public concern involved in a moral panic. The volatility tied up in a moral panic can be explained by collective behavior, and finally, social movements dictate the organization and mobilization of concerned segments of the population.

2.9 Theories of Moral Panic

In an evaluation of moral panic theory, Goode and Ben-Yehuda have asserted that there are two dimensions that distinguish between moral panic theories. The first involves

a "morality" versus "interests" point of view which puts into question the motives of the actors involved in the situation. The second is an "elitism" versus "grassroots" argument which brings up the point that if there are few people supporting the panic then it is an elitist issue, but if there are many people involved, it is probably a grassroots problem. Goode and Ben-Yehuda combine the two dimensions listed above with the possibilities of elite, middle and public class and come up with six possible theories of moral panic based on motives and origins. Each of the following three theories can go on either side of the moral/interest spectrum:

The Grassroots Model: Here the moral panic starts with the general public because the threat is widespread and affects a wide array of society members. This group of people are quite influenced by media coverage and therefore any stories covered by the media that contribute to a panic atmosphere are readily consumed by the public. Goode and Ben-Yehuda remind us that "politicians and the media cannot fabricate concern where none existed initially" (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994, p. 127); therefore, while the media may foster feelings held by the public during a moral panic they cannot create them absolutely. What ultimately causes a moral panic to break out are the deeply felt attitudes and beliefs on the part of the broad sector of the society that a given phenomenon is a real and present threat to their values and their safety.

The Elite Engineered Model: this model suggests that an elite group deliberately and consciously undertakes a campaign to generate and sustain concern, fear, and panic on the part of the public over an issue lacking in seriousness. In doing so, attention can be diverted from other problems that if dealt with, would undermine the position and

interests of the elite. This is possible because much power rests with the elite in society because they dominate the media, legislative content, law enforcement and resources. The media plays an important role in this model as well because of their ability to transmit and sustain a moral panic. They "reproduce the definitions of the powerful" and "reproduce symbolically the existing structure of power in society's institutional order" (Hall et al. 1978, p. 58). Furthermore, the media accepts prevailing definitions of who is in authority, takes their cues from the elite and in turn, contribute to the culture of control the elite need to sustain their power in times of crisis.

The Interest-Group Theory: this is perhaps the most common approach to explaining moral panic. It asserts the rule creators and moral entrepreneurs launch crusades which may eventually turn into panics if they gain enough attention. Interest groups do not take their cues from the elite as do the media, instead they are self-motivated. The question that arises asks for who's benefit does this group work. While it is true that they may experience increased social status because they are advancing a moral cause, it may also be the case that their case is entirely noble. This may be difficult to assess but there remains the possibility that their purpose is altruistic or socially valuable. In either case, mobilization is more likely within this model and therefore may help society more readily than the others.

In terms of the prostitution moral panic in Halifax, it seems that the "grassroots model" may be most applicable due to the level of saliency the issue had for many citizens and because of the massive role played by the media in influencing public opinion. Certainly a moral panic did not appear where there was no previous concern.

however, the media certainly contributed to the notoriety of the issue. The public definitely perceived pimping and prostitution, particularly that of youths, to be a great threat to the moral order of society and as such gave the issue their ultimate attention.

In short, moral panics have the potential to arise out of some latent stress within the general public or segments of it, that is, from an issue that has been present in society for some time but has not developed as crucial to the public for one reason or another. It is interesting to inquire why and how moral panics are expressed at certain times. They must be articulated, focused upon and subsequently brought to public attention. This requires much organization and leadership, which is normally headed by the group that wishes to bring this issue to the forefront. Bringing a particular issue to widespread attention may involve letters to the editor focusing on a consistent theme, seminars being held on the subject, editors printing an increased volume of stories on this subject and public opinion polls being conducted. These conditions help bring the issue to the public and these help to explain how a moral panic can come into existence. Goode and Ben-Yehuda sum it up by breaking down the components of a moral panic. Morality provides the context for a moral panic. Interests explain the timing for the moral panic because they act as a kind of triggering device. Grassroots provide fuel or raw material for a moral panic and activists provide focus, intensity and direction. All of these components come together in the media representation of the moral panic. We now turn to examine the life of the moral panic in the media.

CHAPTER THREE FINDINGS: THE DATA SET

3.0 Chronology of Events

- Summer of 1989 - Kimberly McAndrew disappears from her summer job in Halifax. She was the daughter of an R.C.M.P. officer.
- January 1, 1992 - Andrea King disappears after arriving at Halifax International Airport on a trip to scout out universities.
- May 1992 - Barbara Louise Penney found shot to death in her Dartmouth apartment.
- July 6, 1992 - Valerie Dawn Allen disappears from Halifax. Located in New York in October, 1992, involved with prostitution.
- September 17, 1992 - Toronto police bust large pimping ring. Seven Halifax pimps arrested and six Halifax women found.
- September 1992 - Nicole Jessome was rescued by Toronto police in prostitution raid. She tells stories of violence, abuse and coercion.
- September 25, 1992 - Prostitution task force launched in Halifax, one week after Toronto bust.
- December 1992 - Anna Mason, a prostitute, was assaulted outside her sister's Dartmouth apartment and later died in hospital.
- January 5, 1993 - Task force makes its first arrest.
- January 20, 1993 - Anti-prostitution crusade gets a \$20M boost from government.

- February 16, 1993 - Kelly Lynn Wilneff found beaten, shot and dumped in Preston. She had worked as a part-time prostitute.
- March 1993 - It is announced that Stepping Stone (a shelter for prostitutes needing help, opened in 1987 after the deaths of three prostitutes) may be forced to close due to lack of funding.
- April 7, 1993 - It is announced that the task force will probably outlive its mandate.
- June 1, 1993 - Shelley Connors was found strangled near the High School in Spryfield.
- June 12, 1993 - Canada-wide prostitution ring is busted. Twenty-five men are charged and over one hundred women are said to be involved.
- September 1993 - Gisele Pelzmann is found beaten to death on a Dartmouth golf course.
- September 30, 1993 - Task force outlives mandate but the number of members are reduced by half.
- March 18, 1994 - Stepping Stone is forced to close its doors.
- April 1, 1994 - Provincial government gives \$30,000 to Stepping Stone.
- April 16, 1994 - Stepping Stone reopens.
- August 1994 - Karen Margaret Lewis, a Halifax prostitute is found dead in Laval, Quebec.

November 1994 - Kimber Leanne Lucas, a local prostitute, was found dead near a dumpster behind a North-end Halifax apartment building. She was pregnant at the time of her murder.

3.1 Introduction

Analysis will focus on the articles concerning prostitution and pimping found in the Halifax Chronicle-Herald from January 1992 to April 1995, which takes us from the beginning to the end and legacy phases of the moral panic⁴. The data set, for the purposes of analysis, has been divided into three distinct periods which relate to and are congruent with the three phases of a moral panic as well as the three stages of a social problem. With the discussion of each period of the data set, the connection will be made between it and its coinciding phases of moral panic and social movement as a means by which to highlight the association between those theories and the media activity surrounding prostitution and the task force in Halifax.

Characterizing the nature of the articles found in each time period is pertinent to the arguments put forth here as it facilitates an understanding of the treatment prostitution was receiving in the media at particular points in time. Such a description also allows one to understand the information society was receiving and therefore basing their comments

⁴The data set used for the purposes of this thesis consists of articles found in the Chronicle-Herald newspaper from 1992 to 1995. Further to this information, an interview with a spokesman from the task force was also conducted so as to add to the arguments gathered from the newspaper articles. The interview also helped in gaining insight into the mobilization of the task force from the perspective of an "insider". The information gathered from this interview will be referred to in the text of this work and the full results of the interview are located in the appendix.

and opinions concerning prostitution and pimping upon. Furthermore, showing the nature of the articles assists in understanding the progression of the moral panic as well as the life cycle of the prostitution social problem facing Halifax at that time.

3.2 Phase One - January, 1992 to October , 1992

The first period set the stage and slowly began to introduce the "problem" of prostitution to the public. While it included mostly brief and concisely written articles, there were a few powerful stories interspersed so as to lend importance, severity and urgency to the issue. The majority of the stories dealt with the fact that prostitutes were being prosecuted whereas johns were not, such as "Female hookers caught, while Johns often walk, court told" (01/16/92). This type of article also served the purpose of getting the public to begin thinking about the prostitute as a victim. Possible connections between AIDS and prostitution were also being drawn but statistics or factual reports were not featured in these articles.

Evidence of the beginnings of a moral panic is present in this first segment of the data set, particularly when one examines the language used in the articles written on the subject. As was discussed earlier, Fekete asserted that a war needs enemies, and in this case, the enemy was definitely the black pimp. There were articles introducing us to the "evil pimps" from which women had to protect themselves. For example, "Halifax pimps major players in Toronto" (10/06/92), "Police nab 'key player' in prostitution operation" (10/17/92), and "Jail pimps, help victims" (10/08/92) all portray the prostitutes themselves as victims and the pimps as evil personified. Cohen's moral panic theory

involving the notion of community sensitization also applies here. Once the unwanted behavior was revealed to the public through the media, stories concerning prostitution became more prolific and the "deviant" behavior in question was much more readily noticed and thus reported on.

One such article that was successful in elevating public concern included the statement that "just under three in ten Canadians believe that prostitution is a serious problem in their city or town" (03/09/92). Given that the prostitution-related troubles were rapidly increasing in Halifax, news that portrayed Canadians as somewhat indifferent to prostitution would infuriate those aware of the actual severity of the issue. The lack of what might be deemed to be appropriate concern on the part of other citizens could easily intensify the importance of dealing with prostitution for those with interest in the subject. The emotions evoked in the public by this kind of story encourages events common to the early stages of a moral panic.

Another indicator of the beginning phase of a moral panic is the simple way in which the media made statements designed to shed light on a particular deviant behavior and associate it with the depletion of society's level of moral standards. In a letter to the editor, one person wrote that "prostitution, juvenile delinquency, sex crimes and immorality in general have increased to an alarming degree since the second World War" (03/13/92). This letter is exemplary of the fact that public interest and awareness was peaking and thereby inspiring people to feel passionate enough to write letters expressing their views. Equating prostitution with sex crimes with other activities that afflict society

help to bring the deplorable conditions of prostitution to the forefront of people's minds and therefore eventually to the zenith of public agendas.

As stated above, reporting on the proliferation of deviant behavior practiced within the sex trade helped raise much attention for the prostitution moral panic. Many articles were written during the first phase of this moral panic and social problem to show just how many players were involved in this issue. This list included the following headlines: "Halifax-area men accused of pimping. Prostitution ring may involve 20 women" (09/18/92), "Prostitution-related charge laid" (09/19/92), "Accused pimp denied bail" (09/23/92), "Man guilty of pimping, sex assault" (06/02/92), "Four men face charges" (04/02/92), "Arrest warrant issued for Dartmouth man" (06/16/92), "Escort service busted in Bedford" (08/13/92), "Woman, three men face charges" (05/18/92), and "5 arrested in crackdown" (09/17/92). Readers were bombarded by articles giving evidence of men being charged for pimping or prostitution-related activity until it seemed there was not a day that passed without another pimp being arrested. The sheer number of articles told the public that we were under attack by the amoral world of pimping and prostitution.

Moral panics are also known to have trigger incidents that activate and heighten their existence. The disappearance of Andrea King can be considered to be one such trigger event. With this crucial event, people across the entire country pulled together to help search for the missing girl. Prostitution's potential involvement in King's disappearance was uncertain as can be ascertained from the article which read, "Mrs. King said police have a number of theories including the possibility that Andrea was

abducted for the purposes of prostitution" (03/05/92). Abduction into a prostitution ring was only one of the police theories but it was the only one identified by name in the newspaper articles. For this reason, one could interpret that while King's disappearance was the main focus of the story, police and media mingled recent abductions into prostitution to facilitate intensified anxiety over the subject. "Police check reports of women being abducted" (09/15/92) and "Teenager 'terrified' by pimps threats" (09/05/92) were articles that appeared in the paper during the search for Ms. King and fostered fear in every parent of a young girl who read them.

The linking of Andrea King's disappearance with prostitution had qualities which identified it as a trigger for the initial phase of the moral panic. Media coverage was emotionally gripping, playing on the personal fears of the public, on parents of young girls in particular. The Chronicle-Herald ran an article that presented the various methods pimps use to trap young girls, even those with seemingly happy home lives. "Prowling for clues with a weary mom" (05/13/92) and "Woman fails in search for daughter. 'We won't give up'" (03/05/92) encapsulated the moral panic that told parents their daughters were not safe. The article discussed some realizations made by the mother of the missing girl. Ann King "had talked with several Halifax prostitutes who gave her first hand information. Pimps do indeed swoop on young women and take them into the vice trade. They do it by preying on their weaknesses and fears, perhaps their need for love, for respect. Or through intimidation and violence. Or by getting them hooked on drugs. Or by smooth talk, by stroking some unspoken ambition" (05/13/92). The national concern that resulted from this occurrence heightened awareness of prostitution-related activity and

the danger that many women face when involved in the sex trade. A moral panic was well on its way to being established by the media in Halifax, and indeed from coast to coast.

Likening phase one to Spector and Kitsuse's *Life History of a Social Problem* (Stark 1975), it can be said that this period is characteristic of the agitation phase of social problems. Victims of forced prostitution are seeking to gain attention and public recognition of the issues they face and are joined in this quest by the media. As stated earlier, phase one successfully introduced the prostitution problem to Nova Scotians through newspaper articles. The articles that were picked up by the Canadian Press highlighted problems in other Canadian cities that were pertinent for Halifax as well. It was announced that "MPs promised Tuesday to press for tougher laws on street prostitution after hearing that once-quiet Toronto residential neighborhoods have turned into bustling red-light districts" (05/22/92). The message delivered by way of this article is that tougher laws have to be embraced to fight the pervasive nature of prostitution before it penetrates other cities and towns as it has Toronto. Despite the fact that many believed prostitution had not yet diminished the integrity of residential areas of Halifax as it had in Toronto, the impending threat was real and required immediate attention if the momentum of the problem was to be interrupted. Officials fighting prostitution wanted recognition of their issue and obtained it through the use of the media's representation of prostitution. Although the issue was just beginning to gain status as a moral panic and a social problem in Halifax, serious discussions were taking place concerning the justness of the laws in effect at that time. "Prostitution laws unjust says lawyer" (06/11/92) and "Law on prostitution found to be both fair and fairly enforced" (03/07/92) are opposing

articles which outline the debate over the effectiveness and merit of the prostitution laws that were in place. Hindsight shows us that this battle against prostitution had only just begun.

Another important factor to consider in the discussion of the first phase, and one that is a characteristic of the agitation stage of a social problem, is the renewed interest in the disappearance of Kimberly McAndrew. This young woman went missing in 1989 but with questions of the involvement of prostitution at that time and the more recent disappearance of women in the metro area, her story once again had salience for the general public. The high level of visibility of this case became evident when the reports told us that "Sightings have been reported almost daily from across Canada and the eastern seaboard of the United States" (08/12/92). Furthermore, Kimberly's father Cyril was quoted as saying "There's a lot more attention being paid to this now. Now people will listen... We know that (abductions are) happening on a regular basis. These (criminals) have a free reign. They operate freely in Halifax and in every major city in Canada" (08/12/92). From chronicles of the tribulations suffered by the McAndrew family as told in articles such as "McAndrews await call" (08/19/92) and others of its kind, it may be ascertained that because people across the country were so easily able to identify with the girl and her family, the issue of prostitution as a social problem was quickly adopted by the Canadian public as one in need of immediate attention.

Perhaps the most important feature of the McAndrew case, for the purposes of this discussion, is the fact that she was the epitome of the "girl next door", that is, everything about her life was the essence of middle-classness. She represented the average girl with a

fundamental respectability that parents across Canada were trying to protect in their daughters. She was even the daughter of an R.C.M.P. officer and was therefore a teenager whom all could expect to be safe from the lure of prostitution. Unlike Andrea King, Kimberly McAndrew was not suspected of being involved with prostitution prior to her disappearance, but one hypothesis suggested that she may have been abducted to work in the sex trade. The news articles told us that police "also investigated the possibility that Ms. McAndrew was abducted into a prostitution ring. 'Here is a girl who as far as we can determine had absolutely no reason to leave [her family], Sgt. Kilby said. 'Her bank accounts have not been touched, her credit cards have never been used'" (08/12/94). The picture being painted for the public is one where an innocent girl has gone missing and, given her happy family life, her disappearance is said to likely be an abduction, perhaps for the purposes of prostitution. From reading these and other such articles, sympathy for the family and fear for what may have happened to the young girl surfaces. To intensify those feelings, the newspapers give us privy information as to the lives of the missing girl's family. "Three years ago, Kimberly McAndrew, then 19, left her summer job in Halifax for the day. She has never been seen again...Kimberly's family hasn't stopped hoping for a miracle...They are sure their daughter is alive and being held somewhere against her will" (08/12/92). If Canadian parents could not imagine the terror in the lives of the McAndrews before, the idea of praying that your daughter is not being forced to prostitute herself or that she has not been killed is one that would force any parent to become concerned about the pimping and prostitution trade in their city. The McAndrew story was another incident with tremendous saliency which was able to penetrate to the

core of the Canadian family to bring concern and fear about prostitution to the forefront of the media and public agendas.

While the media could rely on trigger incidents such as the McAndrew and King disappearances, other means were sought to maintain high levels of interest in the subject. In facilitating the process of obtaining further recognition for the prostitution issue, the media was engaged in attaching moral and emotional issues to policies and laws. It was reported that it "is obvious that the section [of the criminal code of Canada] is attempting to deal with a cruel and pervasive social evil. The pimp personifies abusive and exploitative malevolence. It is the pimp that has the parasite's interest in the prostitute's earnings. It is the pimp that encourages and enforces the activities of the prostitute" (05/22/92). Here we can see that the lawmakers' views are made equivalent to those of the people and as such, the people are able to identify with the political crusade at hand.

The end of phase one is marked by events that push the moral panic and social problem into their next phases respectively. There was a police bust of epic proportion which took place in Toronto on September 17, 1992 and of critical importance was the fact that Halifax pimps were among those arrested. The headline read "Toronto police bust pimping ring. Seven Halifax-area men arrested; six local women located" (07/19/92) and finally Halifax had concrete proof that pimps from the area had been abducting local girls and driving them into the sex trade in a city far from home. Further articles, such as "Halifax hookers tangled in huge ring" (09/17/92), bolster previous claims made by the media that fuel the flames of the moral panic. Finally, the creation of the Halifax task force on prostitution is announced on September 25, 1992, ("Task force on prostitution

launched" (09/25/92)), just one week after the Toronto incident. The media, the police and the public had finally converted months of fear, worry and tragedy into a task force that would serve to combat their prostitution and pimping nightmare. "10 more mounties head to N.S." (09/25/92) announced that experienced R.C.M.P. officers were being sent to Halifax to help out local forces to launch an attack on predatory pimps. The announcement of the task force's creation was further supported by claims such as the following: "Police in Nova Scotia have said there may be as many as 100 pimps from the province operating in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto and Niagara Falls, Ontario" (06/05/93). Declarations such as this one serve to demonstrate the dire need for the task force as well as to lend authenticity to the claims being made by the media. Now with the official agencies defining and taking control of prostitution in Halifax, the second phase of a social problem has been reached as well as the peak of the moral panic.

3.3 Phase Two - November, 1992 to September, 1993

This period left the beginning phase of a moral panic and the agitation phase of a social problem behind and demonstrated progression into the prostitution moral panic in Halifax as well as the bureaucratization or routinization stage of that same social problem.

Within the data set, police reports in particular appeared with greater frequency. There were 148 prostitution-related articles written during this period which can be interpreted as an attempt to legitimize the prostitution issue by involving legal authorities and reports of their connections with various prostitution related cases. Another factor

that indicates the presence of a legitimization process in phase two was the increase in the number of editorials written in this period. The fact that people were increasingly responsive to the prostitution related articles confirms that the issue had salience for the general public and caused them to be concerned enough to make it worthwhile and indeed imperative that they share their opinions by way of letters to the editor.

Phase two also involved a wider variety of articles written on the subject of prostitution. The Chronicle-Herald carried stories by the Canadian Press as an indication of the national relevance and importance of the issue of prostitution in Halifax. Briefs were printed as a way to keep concerned citizens up to date quickly and easily on related arrests and incidents. Also included were articles written by guest or special reporters such as community or government leaders, various city bureaus and City Hall reporters. all of which gave the prostitution scare further legitimacy.

The nature of the stories in phase two is also important to note because it characterized the peak months of the prostitution moral panic and indeed helped the media to encourage this process. Reporters told chilling stories of teens being stalked by men who wanted to recruit them for prostitution purposes such as that told in "Former prostitute has 'scars all over'" (11/10/92). There were reports of schools being targeted and infiltrated by recruiters for prostitution rings and also of the opening of safe houses that provided shelter for women seeking refuge from their violent pimps. Stories that further horrified the public included the discovery that a missing Halifax girl was found working as a prostitute in New York city and that a local prostitute, Kelly Lynn Wilneff, was found murdered. Finally, the press revealed that Andrea King's body was found in

Sackville, Nova Scotia. At this point the media had used these and other feared incidents involving murder and international prostitution rings to whip the public into a frenzy. This was the peak of the prostitution moral panic and of Halifax's prostitution situation as a social problem.

At the height of the prostitution moral panic, the task force had a definite purpose and goal : to arrest as many of the pimps alleged to be selling their girls' services all across the country. At the height of the prostitution moral panic, the media had as its ultimate goal, the reporting of as much task force activity as possible to ensure continued public interest in and support for their efforts and to continue to propagate the moral panic as a newsworthy story.

The rate at which pimps were being arrested, charged, and convicted denoted the peak of the moral panic. As stated above, these sort of articles were plentiful in phase two and it is important here to examine how these articles were exemplary of this phase of the moral panic.

First, the stories appearing in the Chronicle-Herald at this time were characteristic of an issue that had become increasingly serious in terms of law enforcement. Various incidents were now more quickly translated into action against the offenders. For example, in the article "Alleged pimp kicked prostitute" (06/01/93), a young girl's story unfolds. After having been assaulted, "the girl went to the police. Her statement led to the man's arrest." Previously, such an allegation would have been followed by lengthy periods of investigation but with the moral panic at its height, police arrested the man with expedience.

Another article, "Ringleader pimp sentenced 7 years", reported that "The 'Kingpin' of a Canada-wide pimping ring that police say is one of the most violent they've come across was sentenced to seven years in prison Wednesday by a judge who called him a 'menace to decent people'" (06/10/93). This strengthened the position of the moral panic for not only were arrests at an all time high, but the violent and dangerous aspects of the pimps and their operations were accentuated as well.

It can also be said that the public was made to truly understand the gravity of the pimping situation in Halifax during this period as police comments, violent acts towards prostitutes, stricter sentencing for prostitution-related offenses and the knowledge of how widespread this issue had become were attributes that were frequently made mention of in the newspapers at that time. After a Halifax-area man was convicted of pimping, the newspaper read: "'This was a serious matter involving the exploitation of young women and girls,' assistant Crown Attorney Patrick Metzler said after the jury spent 8 1/2 hours in deliberations. 'We hope the sentences will reflect that'" (06/05/93). What the press is telling us here is that the law is cracking down, juries are more thoughtful in deliberations and as a result, sentencing will be swifter and more rigid than ever before in cases where prostitution is involved. With the mobilization of the task force and its successful arrests, the charges laid were not limited to pimps fitting the usual stereotypes. One story reported "Couple face pimping trial" (06/02/93), a headline that would normally draw an unusual amount of attention. At the height of the moral panic, however, prostitution's penetration into family life in Halifax made it possible for couples to be engaged in prostitution and pimping together.

Bureaucratization and reaction, identified as a stage of a social problem, are clearly present in phase two. The people of Halifax expected results from the task force, to whom they looked for immediate and satisfactory handling of the prostitution and pimping problem in their city. The public eschewed leniency in these matters and the media reassured us that it would not be accepted. One such assurance came from an article that read, "Judge John Hamilton, in his ruling, made it clear that society will not tolerate such behavior" (06/11/93). The public's expectations were quickly met when the task force made its first arrests and the media was just as swift in their coverage of the arrests and charges laid. Each report of a charge or arrest was written with enthusiasm so as to legitimize the existence of the task force and to assert its effectiveness and worth within the community. The proliferation of articles that heralded every arrest and action made on the part of the task force is evidence of the legitimation stage of a social problem. The constant stream of articles seemed endless: "Prostitution task force makes first arrests" (01/05/93), "Two arrested on pimping-related charges" (01/05/93), "Pair appear on pimping charges" (01/06/93), "Third pimping charge laid: Safe house for hookers announced" (01/08/93), "Three metro men appear in court on pimping charges" (01/09/93), "Prostitution task force makes fourth arrest" (01/13/93), "Prostitution task force reels in fifth suspect" (01/15/93), "Task force arrests two more suspected pimps" (01/19/93), "Anti-prostitution battle gets \$2M boost" (01/20/93), "Task force lays more charges" (01/20/93), "Ninth pimping suspect arrested" (02/03/93). All of these charges laid and arrests made culminated in the lengthened existence of the task force. Articles reported that "Task force expected to outlive mandate" (03/09/93), and on April 7, 1993,

it was announced "police chief extends life of prostitution task force" (04/17/93). This was an affirmation that the task force was successful in accomplishing the responsibilities it had been created to achieve.

Perhaps one of the most vindicating moments for the task force came with the announcement that a Canada-wide prostitution ring had been exposed when many arrests were made on particular pimps from Nova Scotia. The newspaper read,

"Police say they were investigating a Canada-wide prostitution ring based in Halifax and believe the arrests blew the lid off a Canada-wide prostitution ring based in the city. About 25 men have been charged with pimping-related offenses in the Halifax area. The cases involve about 100 girls, police estimate. Police say they've made a dent in the prostitution ring but are under no illusions it has been smashed by a task force of local police and Mounties in Halifax. 'We knocked the tip off the iceberg and the Halifax task force is chipping away at the rest', said Det. Dave Perry of Toronto police" (06/12/93).

At the same time the task force was praised for its activities, the media's efforts to accentuate the existence of the prostitution problem did not subside. As we can determine from the above quote, the media's reporting of the progress achieved by the task force included the legitimization of its continued existence by saying that while the problem may be under control, it has not been solved entirely. This is a quintessentially important characteristic of the bureaucratization of a social problem. The media's reports of the activities of prostitutes and pimps increased in number to ensure the public's support for the task force and the continued justification of their endeavors. This trend continued throughout this period. The research of the task force resulted in further discoveries of pimping activity and as a result, more and more arrests were being made to show the public how well the task force was responding to the never-ending demand. "The 26th

adult arrested and charged in a crackdown by metro's prostitution task force..."

(07/09/93) was a pimp who got six years in prison for three new prostitution-related crimes. With each new arrest, a similar story was sure to follow.

Finally, as Spector and Kitsuse wrote, during the bureaucratization or routinization phase of a social problem one can be sure to find a counter response to the increased restrictions placed on the unwanted behavior. In the case of Halifax's prostitution problem, one such counter response did arise. There was an increase in prostitution and pimping-related activity in Halifax and Dartmouth in the summer of 1993 and "A group of north-end Dartmouth residents pleaded with the city council...to do something about prostitutes working the streets of their neighborhood" (08/25/93). At the height of the moral panic, residential neighborhoods were desperate to rid their streets of the prostitutes who had moved to Dartmouth to escape the increased control Halifax was exercising. Corporal Poirier stated that "the increased activity may be due to a crackdown by Halifax police and metro's task force on prostitution set up last fall to combat juvenile prostitution" (07/15/93).

It is clear that the final days of phase two had arrived when it was announced that the task force was to be downsized. As was stated earlier, the task force outlived its mandate, but on the day its extension was announced, so too was the fact that the twelve member task force would now be comprised of only six officers - "Task force stays but with fewer officers" (09/30/93). With all of the arrests made, the task force was seen to have controlled the bulk of the problem and now, although its existence was still necessary, it required fewer members.

From the above analysis it is evident that the second period of the data set coincided with the height of the prostitution moral panic as well as the bureaucratization or routinization phase of a social problem. From here we move to the examination of the third and final time period under analysis in this thesis.

3.4 Phase Three - October, 1993 to April, 1995

The final period of the prostitution moral panic and social problem can be summed up by the following quote from an editorial written by Diane LeBlanc: "Thirteen months after an angry public demanded that officers be brought together to 'do something' about a N.S.-based pimping ring, teen prostitution is no longer a hot topic... We are busy being horrified by new tragedies" (10/13/93). The prostitution story had run its course and there were new issues that took precedence over it. The legacy phase of social problems and the routinization stage of moral panic were in place.

There was a noticeable decrease in the frequency of articles written and the nature of the reports had also modified; their intensity was lost and the bureaucratization of the problem had stifled the immediacy that was once characteristic of the issue. Articles written during this period reflected ongoing investigations surrounding the death of Gisele Pelzmann and disappearance of Kimberly McAndrew ("McAndrew case remains frustrating" (08/12/94)), growing concern that the construction of a casino would foster prostitution-related activities and stories barely related to Halifax's prostitution problem such as police officers dating ex-prostitutes. Stories like "Cop disciplined for dating ex-

hooker" (04/01/95) are delivered more as amusing anecdotes than news-breaking pieces that once typified any article concerning prostitution.

There are stories scattered throughout the Chronicle-Herald that remind us of the downsizing of the prostitution moral panic and a phase that could be described as the legacy of the social problem Halifax faced in prostitution has been left behind. The downsizing process of the moral panic was accompanied by media reports that no longer had any real focus. Some stories reflected the most recent troubles in Dartmouth that surfaced when prostitutes invaded various residential neighborhoods forcing residents to have greater interest in crime prevention programs. "The first step is bringing community policing to their area to respond to citizens' concerns about prostitution, drug dealing and other crime in the city's north end" (01/31/95) and it is by such measures that these residents plan to free their streets from crime. It should be noted that prostitution is not the sole problem listed in this article when it for several years had been able to stand on its own as important enough to elicit crime awareness and prevention measures from the public. Similarly, in the article "Cops gear up for casino-related crime", the newspaper reports an "anticipated rise in prostitution, organized crime and the drug trade" (04/05/95). Again, prostitution is teamed up with other crimes as though it is no longer important in and of itself which indicates a definite downsizing and a diversion of public interest and attention.

Not only were articles on prostitution being reported with less frequency and intensity but the nature of the articles has also changed dramatically. Previously, a story that stated "Man charged with pimping-related offenses gets bail" (03/15/95) would have

been met with outrage given that leniency in charging pimps was not common. During this downsizing process however, the fact that a pimp was allowed bail is indicative of the final stage of a moral panic where the issue subsides and lays dormant until new triggers begin another moral panic cycle. This stage of the prostitution moral panic is characteristic of Halifax today and although prostitution finds its way into the media on occasion, we remain in the downsizing phase.

Finally, phase three also contains elements of the legacy stage of a social problem. Just as today's phase is one of moral panic downsizing, so too are we experiencing the legacy the prostitution problem has left us with including tougher laws on prostitution and related offenses, more stringent penalties as well as firmer public stances against pimps and their activities.

Part of the legacy society inherited because of the prostitution social problem had reached such heights, is an actual decrease in the number of prostitutes working the streets in downtown Halifax. During a government forum in March of 1995, it was announced that "it used to be common to see 15 or 20 prostitutes working the downtown Halifax strolls on Friday night. Now there are 'maybe 5 to 10' says Const. Darrell Gaudet, a member of metro's task force on prostitution since its inception in 1992" (03/04/95).

While a reduction in the number of women working the strolls is definitely part of the task force on prostitution's legacy, so too is the fact that such forums and official government meetings were even being held. When it was announced that the forum was to take place, the newspaper read "what we need is strong community involvement"

(02/23/95), and it is that community concern and pulling together which signifies the legacy stage of a social problem. While the moral panic had been downsized and the urgency of the issue had dwindled, there remained the memory of how pervasive the problem once was and could be again, thereby making part of the legacy a general awareness and concern for the issue that requires community involvement and intermittent meetings which remind us of the former importance of the issue.

The media also helps us understand the legacy the prostitution task force left in terms of tougher legal stances on prostitution as well as a general atmosphere of intolerance for related behaviors. In an article entitled "Stalking, prostitution laws on agenda", it is announced that "tougher anti-stalking legislation and a new debate on prostitution laws are in the offering" (01/17/95). The need for constant vigilance and revision of prostitution laws is indicative of the legacy that the battle against prostitution has left behind.

Finally, in the legacy stage there is a return to where we were at the beginning. Pimping and prostitution still existed at the end of phase three as of course it does in Halifax today. Perhaps this issue does not carry the same weight it once did but it exists nonetheless. Articles still pop up in the media from time to time such as "Trapped in the silent sex trade" (02/18/00) and "Undercover cops target young-prostitute trade" (02/24/00). The notions that women involved in prostitution are trapped, a great deal of coercion is involved in prostitution-related activities and that the sex trade often has very young girls as its target are ideas that pervade the media to this day. The legacy of the prostitution problem in Halifax has even kept up to date with technology in the new

millennium. The article "Men charged in internet pimping case" (03/04/00) is testimony to the fact that prostitution, while it may be considered to be under control, will always find new methods of permeating our society. If prostitution was thought to be out of control in the early 1990s, the new possibilities which present themselves given the audience the internet provides, surely have potential to add to the problem.

A modest task force is still in effect today and the topic of prostitution is still discussed, reviewed and assessed, as are the laws which govern it. The difference is that the problem seems to have been brought under control, as is reflected in the media, and the moral panic has consequently subsided. We are now left with the legacy of a social problem and the changes in public perception, a subdued level of concern and new laws which characterize it.

CHAPTER FOUR CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

4.0 Moral Panic and the Media

In his book *Constructing Danger: the mis/representation of crime in the news*, Chris McCormick reminds us that "the news constitutes a textual (mis) representation of crime and that analyzing the media involves examining discursive themes and patterns found in news reports" (McCormick 1995, P. 9). In their reporting of the news, the media often presents stories as social facts when, contained within those stories, there is much that represents the opinions of the reporter. Due to the methods by which these "facts" are presented, the majority of the public may not be able to separate fact from opinion. The result is that the media's interpretation of the facts quickly become absolute fact for the public. Any academic analysis of media coverage of a specific issue must sort through the language so as to uncover what is suggestion and what is actually an accurate description of the situation. With this in mind, the following analysis demonstrates how the media was instrumental in the propagation, and indeed the very creation, of the moral panic surrounding prostitution in Halifax.

The headlines that were appearing in the newspapers not only allowed the nation to identify with the perils of young women being abducted into lives of prostitution, but also created awareness as to the battle that was being fought in their neighborhoods. Carefully chosen words and phrases forced the public to consider the media's assertion that we were in the midst of a moral war against the evils of pimping and prostitution.

While it is true that pimping and prostitution invaded the lives of many families, the heightened level of fear and anxiety were, in part, created by the media. That is, if a family had not yet been directly affected by the evils of this industry, the media made it be known that they soon could be. By monitoring the headlines that appeared in the Chronicle-Herald newspaper, we can examine how the media and their reports were able to facilitate the progression of a moral panic concerning prostitution in Halifax.

The initial captions that began to appear with the preliminary phase of the prostitution moral panic were benign in nature and would later be juxtaposed against the increased intensity of the headlines. The public read "Few Canadians think prostitution a problem" (03/09/92), which allowed them to feel there was little to be concerned about. After all, the newspapers were reporting that few of their contemporaries viewed it to be a pertinent issue. A moral panic is best created under circumstances where disregard for a certain issue turns quickly into great consideration due to outbreaks of related activity and violence. This is exactly what was to happen in Halifax. Where there was once little concern, now much attention was given to prostitution as a threat to society. It may be considered that the original indifference contributed to the depth of the new concern. When that stage was reached, the public may have attempted to make good the damage done and a moral panic may have arisen from the zealotry to rectify prior apathy.

4.1 Fear

Fear and suspicion were definitely key characteristics of the public played upon by the media in their efforts to arouse public concern. "Teenager 'terrified' by pimp's

threats" (09/05/92), "Longtime friend suspects murder in woman's death" (05/22/92), and "Police check reports of women being abducted" (09/15/92) were all epithets that set the stage for public curiosity about the surfacing of this "new" prostitution problem. At this point, the articles were purely speculative about the involvement of prostitution in the aforementioned "murder" and "abduction" and were replete with non-committal language. The reporter's use of "suspects" as opposed to "knows", and "check reports" instead of "confirm reports" were used to induce anxiety before the exact details of the story were established. These unconfirmed reports allowed the public's collective imagination to run wild as to what could be happening and the extent of prostitution's role in these incidents. The notion of one teenager being threatened leads to speculation about how many others are facing the same levels of intimidation. With curiosity and trepidation at their peak for many concerned citizens, the media was able to begin their barrage of prostitution-related stories. Unaware, the public had been primed to receive news of the now under way prostitution moral panic.

The next stage in the creation of the moral panic was the media's affirmation that their claims were true. They now reported that a prostitution ring was operating in Halifax and that women were being lured by pimps into exploitation. "Abducted girls being forced into prostitution, police say" (09/16/92) was the first story to confirm that Halifax pimps were extorting women for the sex trade. This claim was supported by other headlines such as "Mother of missing girl says 25 have been lured into ring" (09/16/92). These articles were found within pages of each other in the same newspaper; the second acting as testimony to support the claims of the first. These reports and others like them

forced the public to focus their attention towards the perpetrators of these crimes. Pimps quickly became the "folk devils" Cohen wrote about in that they were the embodiment of evil, a threat to the moral order and thereby an essential part of the media's creation of a moral panic. It must be said here that the sole purpose of the media was not to create panic where there was little cause for concern. The notion of the pimp as "evil" was not only reported by the media but was supported in the literature and also by law enforcement officials such as the representative of the task force interviewed for the purposes of this analysis (see appendix). The media representatives themselves were also viewed, and perceived themselves, to be crusaders in the battle against the evil inherent in pimping. Their job may have been to sell papers, but they also played a vital role in the communication to the public of important developments surrounding the disappearances and deaths of the girls involved. They also were instrumental in the relaying of messages from the families of victims to the public in attempts to caution potential victims of similar circumstances.

Keeping the earlier reference to Waddington in mind, it must be stated that in no way is it being asserted that concern over pimping was without foundation or justification. Much justification came from the validation of the media reports by members of the task force. During the interview featured in the appendix of this thesis, the informant from the task force said they relied heavily on the media to relay any information they had for the public in relation to the prostitution problem and that the task force considered the media to be a valuable weapon in their war against pimping. However, we must be mindful that the media reports would have us believe that the rate

of incidence was much higher than it actually was and also was responsible for introducing abductions and murders as potentially prostitution-related when there were no details to support such an allegation. A headline such as "Task Force seeks tally of missing girls" (10/21/92) provides the imagination with the fuel to exaggerate the number of missing women. With the multitude of articles written on the subject and the number of different perspectives on each story, it is difficult to keep track of how many actual cases of missing women there were. The resulting aggrandizement is key to the creation of a moral panic.

4.2 Stereotyping

Another aspect of the successful creation of a moral panic was the stereotyping of the nature of the group blamed for the problematic events. The media easily attained this goal given that the group being blamed were pimps who were already loathed by the public. The media did however change the mental images the public had of a pimp. The common perception of a pimp included that he was the prostitute's boyfriend who took all the money she made and "protected"⁵ her from other men interested in becoming her pimp. This portrait was too banal and did not evoke enough fear for the general public. Instead, the pimp needed to be portrayed as a brilliant mastermind who invades the lives of vulnerable little girls, traps them with gifts and tokens of affection and then abducts them from their parents to force them into prostitution in various cities far from home. In

⁵ The word "protected" appears in parentheses because the pimp often did not protect his prostitute at all but rather was often the perpetrator of crimes against her such as assault and even murder.

the meantime, those young girls are beaten, mentally abused and often killed if they try to escape or disobey their pimp in any way. Stories such as the ones told in "Former prostitute has scars all over" (11/16/92), and "Yarmouth warned about pimps" (12/11/92), "Threats, abuse forced girls into prostitution" (05/04/93), "Young women were sex slaves" (05/13/93), and "Teen was forced to work as prostitute for a night" (05/15/93) allow us to be privy to tales of recruitment, coat-hangar beatings and physical and emotional scars that will never heal, all because of the evil activity of the pimps in Nova Scotia.

After the media had assured us that there was reason to be fearful of the ability of pimps to come into the lives of defenseless young girls, they reinforced the panic they instilled by bombarding us with reports of cases where trouble went beyond threats and one-night experiences as a prostitute. "Slain woman local hooker" (02/19/93) and "Grieving mother warns parents" (02/23/93) advise us that the threats have turned into reality and the horror of indigenous pimping rings has penetrated many families. With that, the media includes troubling articles about the inability of our legal institutions to handle a problem of such epidemic proportion. "Climate of fear hampers prosecutions" (05/03/93) indicates that the young girls who have survived and escaped from pimping rings say the fear of pimps finding them is greater than the desire to testify against them so they can be incarcerated. Even if these women were to testify, it would be difficult to find a place to hide from the pimps, especially when Stepping Stone⁶ would no longer be

⁶Stepping Stone is a local support service agency for women working as prostitutes. It provides a safe place to stay should the need arise and it also provides condoms and clean needles to those on the streets.

able to provide that service as we learned in "Stepping Stone forced to close doors" (03/18/94).

Karen Margaret Lewis was not allowed the luxury of deciding whether to testify against her pimp or not because it was she whom the articles "Halifax hooker found dead in Quebec" (08/17/94) and "Halifax prostitute strangled" (08/19/94) were written about. The same was true for Gisele Pelzmann and in her memory, "Murdered teen's mother warns parents" (09/09/94) was a report that allowed Pelzmann's mother to send the message out to parents of young girls that their daughters are not safe as long as the pimping and prostitution ring in Halifax still exists. Another article expounded a similar belief. "Recruiting hookers 'easy' in Nova Scotia" (03/07/95) referred to the fact that because of the history of prostitution in Halifax, Nova Scotia would always be a preferred target for pimps interested in recruiting women to work around Canada and even in the United States. Furthermore, the pimps in Nova Scotia were very organized and had a system of recruiting girls that was extremely effective and successful. They were known as being greatly skilled in securing women to work as prostitutes and therefore Nova Scotian girls were "easy prey".

As we can see, this reporting and creation of a moral panic on the part of the media spanned three years and indeed continues to be referred to in the newspapers today. Articles found today are fewer in number and lack the fervor found within the articles of 1992 to 1995. This reality is testimony to the fact that the media engaged in sensationalistic reporting of events that led to heightened public anxiety over the prostitution issue in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

4.3 Racism

Issues of race are integral to many of the assertions made in this thesis. Racist ideologies make the creation of a moral panic relatively effortless when the individuals involved in the deviant behavior are identified as belonging to a group which is already the subject of scapegoat agendas in our society. When it comes to the relationship between crime and race, the two are often indivisible. Reiner wrote that "race and criminal justice has become the single most vexed, hotly controversial and seemingly intractable issue in the politics of crime, policing, and social control" (Reiner 1989, p.5). This statement certainly holds true when examining the issue of prostitution and particularly the situation that began to develop in Halifax in the early 1990s. The connection that exists between black pimps and white prostitutes makes it important to address racist ideas as a factor in the formation of the prostitution moral panic in Halifax. In the social world there is a definite connection between race and prostitution. It is not the intent of this report to suggest that the media fabricated any connection between blacks and pimping that did not exist before.

It is well known that it is predominantly blacks who control street prostitution in Halifax. During the interview with the task force representative, the fact that the pimps being targeted were mostly black was revealed as an issue for spokes people of the community of North Preston. My informant assured me that while their activities were not racially motivated, it was true that black men were mostly arrested because of their involvement in the Toronto prostitution ring. Blacks are disproportionately involved in prostitution just as other groups of minorities are disproportionately involved in certain

other crime around the world. Furthermore, people who have the least amount of social status in society are most likely to engage in the service economy. Those in such a social position are the members of our society that provide services for those who enjoy higher social status. Minority groups such as blacks are often part of this social stratum and as such can be seen as vulnerable, risk-taking, service providers. The fact is, it becomes very difficult not to stereotype when involved in discussions on pimping. It has been, and still is today, a quasi-group activity. By this, we mean that members of a particular group traditionally are responsible for pimping in various areas. For instance, blacks and members of the Hell's Angels have historically been in control of pimping rings in Halifax, while the Latino community occupy the same role in Vancouver. Breaking into the business without being a member of that specific group is very difficult and therefore pimping is often not an equal opportunity crime. Stereotypes result after years of control by the same minority group within a specific area or city and because of their traditional roles, these groups are very difficult to separate from the activity in which they have been known to be involved in the past.

Don Clairmont wrote that "Minority group members, if oppressed and discriminated against, often find a mode of adjusting to their situation by performing less desirable and sometimes illegal services for the majority group" (Clairmont 1983, p. 321). This was the case for the residents of the community of North Preston. Prostitution is one of the services that they were involved in providing because it had allure as a potentially lucrative venture and this task was not undertaken by others as it may have been perceived as too risky a behavior.

Because the lure of illegal activity is great for those with little to lose in terms of social status, minority groups often engage in endeavors that are outside the realm of societal norms. Rainwater observed that "Lower class groups have a relatively high degree of functional autonomy vis-à-vis the total social system because the system does little to meet their needs. In general, the fewer the rewards a society offers members of a particular group in society, the more autonomous will that group prove to be with reference to the norms of society. Only by constructing an elaborate repressive machinery, as in concentration camps, can the effect be otherwise" (Rainwater 1966). This reality was used by the community of North Preston, in response to the moral panic that targeted some of its people, to argue that there was a dire need for more legitimate economic opportunities for black citizens. If given more viable economic opportunities, pimping would not be as prevalent among their young men. Despite this plea, the economic situation of the North Preston community has not undergone radical change and the provision of such services continues.

Despite the obvious connection between race and pimping, one should not of course consider the two terms interchangeable, that is, not all black males are pimps and not all pimps are black males. That in mind, a definite problem emanated from the inability of the media to make this distinction when reporting on the development of Halifax's prostitution problem. This was not only a trait of the media but also in much of the literature on the subject as well. Presented here is a review of the literature that contends with relations between racism and prostitution.

4.4 Literature on Racism and Prostitution

We begin the literature review with Marshment's statement that "Racism is introduced to 'explain' events that do not explain themselves" (Marshment 1978, p. 340). If we deliberate on the conditions under which the panic over prostitution began in Halifax, i.e. the disappearance of women, their possible abduction into prostitution rings and the sheer size of the actual pimping ring when uncovered, it becomes apparent that what was projected to the public was a phenomenon that could hardly be explained as to how it has reached such extensive proportions. Concerned parents and citizens could not conceive of how prostitution characterized by such young participants who were forced into street work had become so pervasive in their community. Commonly, people use scapegoats to channel their incomprehension and concerns, and when the pimps were virtually all identified as Afro-Canadians, race immediately became a factor in the people's understanding of the situation. This is not to say that Halifaxians would not have found fault with the pimps had they been mostly white, but once race was introduced into the formula, it became impossible to separate it from the heinous nature of the pimp. Hence, one could argue that the 'black pimp' as a stereotype was used by some to explain the severity of the prostitution problem.

Sex and myths concerning black men have been intertwined in literature in ways that are pertinent to this discussion. It has been asserted that "...men of the capitalist class and their middle-class partners are immune to prosecution because they commit their sexual assaults with the same unchallenged authority that legitimizes their daily assaults on the labor and dignity of working people" (Davis 1981, p. 200). This quote attempts to

explain why it is that white men are not as proportionately accused of the same sexual aberrations as black men. The latter group does not have the authority or unchallenged power behind them as does the former. Davis goes on to argue that sexual crimes are indiscriminately attributed to black men because of what many have considered to be an "unchecked propensity toward sexual crimes" (Davis 1981, p. 189). It is this sort of stereotype that allowed a community of black men to become for many the reason that prostitution got out of control in Halifax. Finally, Davis maintained that "the myth of the black rapist continues to carry out the insidious work of racist ideology" (Davis 1981, p. 199), and when considering the blame that was passed on to the black community, the prostitution moral panic in Halifax is a good example of how myths about black men's sexuality in literature has fostered racist dogmas.

As has been discussed in other areas of this thesis, fear played a key role in the maintenance of the moral panic concerning prostitution. This fear was exacerbated by the typification of black males as the manipulators and organizers of young, usually white prostitutes and tapped into racist conceptions of shadowy folk devils. This attribution has been discussed in the literature by Davis as we have already observed, but also in works written by Bell Hooks (1992) and James Q. Wilson (1992). Wilson wrote that a common view of young black males is that they are "the source of fear, the perpetrators of crime, the fathers of illegitimate children, and the members of gangs" (Wilson 1992, p. 92). It could be argued that in Halifax, 'pimps of young, white women' was added to this list that stereotypes the nature of black males. If it is the case that the perception the general public hold to be an accurate assessment of black men's behavior concurs with this

description, it is no wonder that other characteristics are added to the list when incidents occur and cannot be explained. These men are already being blamed for certain crimes, gang violence and illegitimate children, and therefore many believe that these men are to blame for the rest of society's ills. Wilson's statements allow us to consider the similarities between fear and racism. He wrote, "Fear is sustained by ignorance. Fear can produce behavior that is indistinguishable from racism" (Wilson 1992, p. 91). As was argued earlier, once race was introduced as a component in the prostitution problem in Halifax, fear and racism allowed black males and pimps to become synonymous. A respected community leader from North Preston, Mrs. Thompson, was aware of the connection made between black men and pimping and was quoted as saying, "Pimping and prostitution have long been problems that people in the predominantly black communities discussed" (10/09/92). This likening of race to pimping embittered a situation already out of control.

Hooks' writing may be likened to that of Wilson in that she also makes note of the portrait of black masculinity that has invaded the greater part of society. She articulated that dominant assumptions of black maleness include notions of "dangerous, violent, sex maniacs..." (Hooks 1992, p. 89). Furthermore, she discussed the observation made by the black sociologist, Robert Staples, that "if black men could legitimately dominate women more effectively they would not need to coerce them outside the law" (Hooks 1992, p. 980). Again, reference is made to the power inequalities suffered by black males. Whites have institutionalized coercive practices over women whereas black males are deemed deviant for similar activities.

When in the face of a seemingly insurmountable problem like prostitution, society looks for someone or some group to blame. Black men are an easy target given that popular notions and even what is considered to be academic literature often tells us that black men are violent, dangerous, and have the need to control women, regardless of the means by which they accomplish that task. Fear of the "other", especially when it is an issue with high saliency such as forced prostitution, results in people looking for scapegoats. If they can be found expeditiously, then the fears of the public are more quickly suppressed. It can be argued that in the case of prostitution in Halifax in the early 1990s, the prostitution moral panic caused people to look for folk devils and racist ideologies inherent in popular culture and literature provided the opportunity to blame black males. In this way, racism and prostitution were found side by side and together contributed to the growing state of moral panic in Halifax.

4.5 Racism and the Media

Having given this brief glimpse of how racism has been linked to prostitution in the literature, we can now turn to an examination of the way in which racist notions flavored the articles covering the prostitution issue in Halifax as published by the Chronicle-Herald from 1992 to 1995. To accomplish such a task, the articles within the data set were analyzed in three parts which coincide with the three phases of moral panic: the beginning, the pinnacle, and the downsizing phase. As discussed in an earlier chapter, these phases coincide too with the three stages of a social movement known as agitation, bureaucratization and the legacy that is left by the social movement.

During the agitation or beginning phase, there was only one article, "Battle against pimping widens: North Preston community may be revived to help" (10/09/92), that made an overt connection between race, pimping and prostitution. A correlation between blacks and pimping was alluded to but efforts were made to separate pimping from racial issues. The article referred to a connection between the community of North Preston⁷ and prostitution when it commented on that community's efforts to combat pimping and prostitution ("Meeting participants Mum on pimping issue" (10/10/92)). This article shows the relationship between race and pimping to be a matter of coincidence; however, one must note that these two factors have been linked together by the media and the public is left with that connection in their memory.

Another article that mentions race can be found in the early part of the second phase and is one that reflects the issue's potential for controversy. In "Task force denies bias in pimping investigation" (01/23/93), it is stated that all men that had been charged with pimping-related offenses by metro's task force were black. Yet again, the articles tries to dismiss the race issue as secondary in importance to pimping but as stated earlier, once mentioned, race takes on importance in and of itself. Significant in the report is the fact that it informs the reader that the black community felt it was necessary to react to the statement made concerning the race of the men charged for pimping. North Preston residents felt they were being targeted unfairly and such a reaction identifies the pressure that community felt when racist undertones were detected. The fact that the black

⁷North Preston is a well known black community about thirty minutes outside of metro Halifax.

community felt it was necessary to respond to the connection the media was making between black males and pimps set the stage for the controversy that would arise over issues of race and prostitution. These were the only two references the media made to race in the first thirteen months of the prostitution moral panic. This may appear at first to be insignificant but when the ensuing onslaught of articles concerning race is taken into consideration, it becomes apparent that these articles were preparing us for the next stage of the prostitution moral panic in which the topic of race was rarely missing from the central assertions of the news piece. These two articles effectively marked the first stage in the life cycle of racism's relation to pimping and prostitution in the media.

At the height of the moral panic and while the prostitution issue was becoming bureaucratized, race was being linked to, and in some part deemed responsible for, the pimping and prostitution problems of Halifax. The majority of people arrested for pimping related offenses were black and those arrested for prostitution were almost exclusively white. This portion of the cycle contained a myriad of articles that blamed the community of North Preston for the growing notoriety and size of the pimping ring. The lines separating blackness and pimping became increasingly obscured during this phase where notions of pimps and black men practically became synonymous. The ills of society were attributed to activity within North Preston revealing that the stereotype of the young black man as dangerous was at work in our society.

In remembering assertions made by Hooks and Wilson, the idea that the 'black man' is dangerous by nature is by no means absent from the newspaper articles written during the middle phase of Halifax's prostitution moral panic. "Two men injured in freak

accident plan legal action" (03/25/93) is an article which exemplifies the common bias against blacks in the Halifax area. In it, one person is quoted as saying that "whenever they see a black guy and a white girl, they automatically think prostitution. Then they see a black guy with a cell phone and they think he's up to no good." Although this article does not directly deal with prostitution or pimping in Halifax, it demonstrates that common assumptions and racist stereotypes have the ability to transform people's perceptions and allows them to be more easily manipulated by such forces as the media. Once a few pimps were identified as North Preston residents, it became easier for the media to make a direct association between blacks and pimps and therefore this connection was adopted by the general public. The media did not make any efforts at that time to diffuse the affiliation between race and pimping and instead facilitated its creation by means of the innuendoes contained in the articles they published.

Various articles written in this middle stage made reference to the fact that racism was institutionalized in Nova Scotia and that the ills of society were being placed squarely on the shoulders of the young black men of North Preston. While pointing out these problems was vital, nothing was ever written to refute the accuracy of these allegations, i.e. that all pimps were blacks from North Preston, leaving it in the hands of the public to sort out fact from speculation in matters in which they were not equipped to make such evaluations. In the article "We must all fight racism, sexism" (04/03/93), the title suggests that the newspaper is prepared to take a stand against racism, yet they declared the public has a common "belief that pimping is a black occupation"; no

arguments were made to the contrary, leaving an aura of confusion as to whether this point was to be argued or if it was the argument itself.

Not all readers were oblivious to the apparent lack of concern for the racist connotations emanating from within the media and one particular reader submitted a letter to the editor. The "Voice of the People" column on November 6, 1993 features a piece that read, "Over the past few months there have been a series of news reports, editorials and feature articles in the press dealing with pimping and prostitution in Canada. Unfortunately, because these articles contain an intense obsession with the race of the actors without any critical analysis of context and history, most of what has been written is profoundly racist." The presence of this letter in the newspaper gave one a sense of hope that other readers could see through the racist context of the media representation of the prostitution and pimping issues across the country. This however was the only one of its kind and the distinct lack of public concern is indicative of the old adage that some believe everything they read. The inability of the public to be more critical of the articles presented to them concerning pimping and prostitution in Halifax made it reasonable to infer that many adopted the racist ideas inherent in the stories they absorbed from the media. The prostitution moral panic had racist undertones as one of its characteristics and the media were successful in using that as well as adding to it.

The final phase of the prostitution and pimping reports in the media happened simultaneously with the downsizing and legacy phases of the moral panic and social movement phases. This radical contrast to what had been headlining for over a year went unexplained by the media. It was evident that they had exhausted the worth of the

prostitution scandal and sought to make a transition into other areas of the news by reducing the number of articles written as well as muting their content. After all, there were many arrests being made, pimps were being convicted, new laws regarding prostitution and procuring were being proposed; the task force had been successful in controlling the youth prostitution problem and society could now focus on new issues as worthy of their attention as this one had been.

The only remembrance of pimping and racial issues were a few references to the "north end"⁸ of Halifax and the occasional mention of North Preston. "Dartmouth homeowners hoping to deter hookers" (04/11/94), was an article concerning prostitution in a predominantly black neighborhood but its purpose was primarily to report that residents preferred to live in an area free from prostitutes standing on their street corners. The nature of articles such as this one was distant from the danger and panic once found in any report on prostitution.

This denotes the end of this cycle of panic concerning prostitution and as has been documented, the importance of race to the issue increased and decreased with the corresponding phases of the moral panic and social problem. When the moral panic was initiated, race was slowly introduced as part of the equation. During the height of the moral panic, social conceptions of race plagued news stories and were responsible for much of the momentum behind them. Coming full circle, nearing the end of the prostitution moral panic, there was a distinct decline in relating prostitution to issues of

⁸The "north end" of Halifax had previously been known as *Africville*, an area of the city traditionally and historically inhabited by blacks.

race. Articles involving race, prostitution and pimping became few while new stories captured the attention of the media and therefore the public as well.

4.6 Saliency

Essential to understanding why the issue of prostitution was able to achieve such notoriety in the media is the notion of saliency. As the literature tells us, the more salient an issue is, the more likely it is to be labeled as a serious social problem (Best 1989, p. 403). For people to address the issue of prostitution as one which threatens the well-being of society at large, it had to strike a responsive chord and it had to have meaning for a large portion of society. The media played an important role in conveying to the public that this issue could affect their own lives and in demonstrating how prostitution invaded the lives of their neighbors and fellow citizens. The depiction of pimping and prostitution had to be recast and customized by the media into an issue that was closer to their lives than was previously thought. An effective way of monitoring how the media was able to accomplish this feat is by looking at various headlines that accompanied the disappearances of, and searches for, the string of young women that went missing and/or were murdered during the prostitution moral panic in Halifax. The newspaper published many stories concerned with the status of the girls and while prostitution was not mentioned in every by-line, innuendoes of its involvement were present in the reports and was thereby able to play on the minds of the readers. The saliency of an issue is easily reinforced by what people see (Best 1989, p. 10), and with the abundance of articles

printed in the paper, the media helped to ensure that prostitution and pimping were issues that held much importance for people living in Nova Scotia.

4.7 The Victims

In 1992, Andrea King⁹ was the first missing girl to be reported. The plight of the missing girl's parents was meticulously documented and included such headlines such as: "Woman fails in search for daughter" (03/05/92), "Missing girl's mom returns home empty-handed" (03/05/92), "Missing girl's parents offer reward" (03/12/92), "King still optimistic she'll find daughter" (05/11/92), "Prowling for clues with a weary mom" (05/13/92), and "Mother's pilgrimage" (05/13/92). Aside from reporting the facts of the breaking story, these headlines allowed people to relate intimately with the parents of the missing teenager. One article even mentions that Mrs. King brought the young girls teddy bear with her to Nova Scotia so she could give it to her daughter if she was found. Information such as this targets the sentimentality of the reader. The articles' carefully chosen words force the reader to begin wondering what it must be like to be the parents of a missing child. Once prostitution is hinted at, the story takes on new meaning, heightened levels of fear are experienced by parents imagining to be in the Kings' position, worried parents fear for their own daughters' safety, and the issue has achieved increased saliency for a broader spectrum of parents and the public in general. The idea of the King family relentlessly tracking clues and trying to determine their daughter's

⁹Andrea King was an eighteen year old girl from British Columbia who went missing upon her arrival at Halifax International Airport on January 1, 1992.

whereabouts amid rumors of her potential involvement in prostitution and the possibility that she may not be found alive, would horrify the most confident of parents.

Furthermore, the media was successful in arousing concern over the limited success of police in searching for Andrea King. There was a lack of funding that impeded the size and success of the search for the missing girl. Stories such as "King may hire investigator to search for daughter. Mother says police resources exhausted" (01/09/92) had a profound affect on the public. While dealing with the tragedy of their missing child, parents discover that a lack of financial resources could affect the nature and ultimate success of the police in finding their daughter. The public would of course be outraged that finances would encumber such an endeavor and would be left with even more anxiety over the ever-increasing prostitution moral panic. A sense of helplessness was fostered by way of the media coverage which undoubtedly added fury to an already undesirable situation.

The stage was set for the public to rise up and demand action. Andrea's father, Wayne King, headed up the battle. "Missing woman's father seeks national task force" (09/21/92), began the article which had Mr. King professing that in cities such as Halifax and Toronto, where girls were being kidnapped for the purposes of prostitution, there needed to be more formidable action taken. He called for the formation of a national organization with the goal of helping to prevent young women from being lured into the sex trade. He referred to many horror stories that had been circulating about pimping operations and said that a task force would assist in the prevention of similar incidents in the future. Because of this incident, Halifax was named as a key location in a national

pimping structure and thus, the fear of prostitution taking a hold on their city became an issue of even greater proportion for many Haligonians.

Unfortunately, the search for Andrea King ended in tragedy in December of 1992 when "Family's worst fears come true" (12/24/92); the girl's skeletal remains were discovered in Sackville, Nova Scotia. Not only did the King family realize their worst fears but so too did the nation. Parents across the country had imagined themselves in the Kings' nightmare and when Andrea King's parents lost their daughter, the nation suffered the loss of one of its children to violence suspected to be intertwined with prostitution.

Arguable, one case may not have salience for an entire nation. However, the King tragedy was triggered the resurfacing of the disappearance of Kimberly McAndrew who went missing in 1989. Her case was brought to the forefront during the King saga. If the King case did not reach into every Canadian home, the two cases together certainly had more power to do so. Since the McAndrew girl's disappearance in 1989, there had always been stories appearing in the papers intermittently to remind the public that the search for the girl continued, but with the similarities between her story and that of the new missing girl, the story had greater saliency for the general public. Stories such as "McAndrews await call" (08/12/92) and "Waiting for a phone call: Kimberly McAndrew's parents wait for a call that will end their agonizing 3-year wait" (08/12/92) were designed by the media to build upon the helplessness felt by the country during the development of the King case. The notion that one is defenseless against kidnapping and the potential infiltration of pimping into their life is a fearful one, and one that indeed holds much saliency for the greater public. This case also was instrumental in the mobilization of the

task force in Halifax. As stated in the interview with a task force representative, after the disappearance of this girl was speculated to have had ties with prostitution-related abductions, files were kept regarding various individuals suspected of prostitution and pimping-related activities. These files were later used by the task force to assist in the apprehension of many individuals involved with the pimping ring.

After Kimberly McAndrew was missing for five years, the story continued to captivate the nation. "McAndrew case remains frustrating. Police, parents refuse to give up hope after unsuccessful 5-year search" (08/12/94), read the newspaper in August, 1994 and the story is still remembered to the public to this day when a rare article appears in the paper making reference to her case. The unexplained details of the disappearances of both King and McAndrew leave room for much speculation. One common link between the two cases is the curiosity over the role forced prostitution may or may not have played in these cases. Mere speculation that these women had been forced into prostitution was enough to put parents from coast to coast ill at ease.

After the disappearance of both King and McAndrew came a list of nine more girls who had either been murdered or were thought to have been abducted by pimps to work in the vice trade. The first girl to follow the McAndrew and King ordeals was Barbara Louise Penney, a twenty one year old escort, found shot to death in her Dartmouth apartment in May, 1992. Her death was ruled as a suicide but during an interview, one of her friends expressed her belief that Penney had been murdered (05/22/92). She was remembered as a quiet girl with lots of friends, information the

media printed to illicit compassion and sympathy for the victim and her family while making prostitution a potential player in the woman's death.

Valerie Dawn Allen was the name of the next young woman to be found in the Chronicle-Herald as a victim of the vice trade. The headlines read, "Help sought to find girl" (09/19/92) and "Missing Halifax girl found in US" (10/19/92), captions which made the pimping and prostitution ring and its dangers seem closer to home. Cases of missing girls were a major catalyst for gaining public recognition for the issue and for the media's portrayal of a moral panic situation in Halifax. The media used the disappearances of these girls to show that pimps were using force to obtain young women for sex trade work and that a gang of North Preston black men had developed an elaborate network within which vicious means were being used to maintain these girls in positions of fear, subservience and danger.

Allen, at the age of fifteen, went missing from Halifax on July 6, 1992 and was eventually found in New York two months later. The stories covering the disappearance of this girl were laden with confusing statements. In the same article, the police at one point said that she "may have come into contact with the prostitution trade", while another Constable said there was "no evidence she [had] been taken into prostitution" (09/19/92). The article went on to explain that while the girl may not have engaged in prostitution, she had been in contact with people who had. It seems the damage was done once prostitution was mentioned, even if it was to say she had no involvement with the business, as her name appeared in future articles announcing the deaths of girls who had worked as prostitutes. Lumping all women who had disappeared into the same group

adds to the embellishment the media engaged in when reporting on the prostitution problem in Halifax, and hence, added to the prostitution moral panic.

The story of Nicole Jessome, who was rescued by Toronto police from the pimps who abducted her and forced her into prostitution, followed that of Ms. Allen. While working the streets, Nicole "suffered physical torture, including burns and cuts, and emotional abuse" (09/18/92). "Dartmouth girl united with family" (09/18/92) marked the happy return of with girl to her family, but the prostitution ring and its dangers loomed over the heads of concerned parents and citizens alike. Jessome was located during the task force's raid in Toronto, but despite Jessome's safe return in September, 1992. Halifax's role as a major center for prostitution-related activity and recruiting remained evident and could not be ignored by those still living in fear for their children's safekeeping. Also pertinent to this discussion is the fact that the media reported that the Jessome family wanted the public to know that Nicole was "not a runaway" (09/17/92). The family, as well as the media, stressed this fact so that the public would be well aware that the pimps were indeed predators, and the girls were being taken and held against their wills, as opposed to running away to lead a prostitute's life. Even though Nicole Jessome was located during the largest raid made by the task force on prostitution, more and more demands were being made of the task force in hopes of crushing the pimping operation before the next woman was abducted or found dead.

The sixth woman in this lamentable list of victims was Anna Mason, twenty three, a prostitute who was assaulted outside her sister's apartment in Dartmouth and who died later that night in hospital. She had become a prostitute in order to provide for her three

children until she began to receive social assistance, at which time she quit the prostitution trade. She was to testify against a pimp involved in the prostitution ring but was murdered before the trial. The police said that the fact she was to testify was not related to her death (12/19/92). Ironically, Ms. Mason had been interviewed in relation to the death of Barbara Louise Penney, and was the person quoted as saying she believed her friend had been murdered, not committed suicide. The friendship between Penney and Mason and the fact that both of their lives ended tragically because of their involvement in prostitution had much saliency for the general public. Having the relationship highlighted in the newspapers made both of the girls seem more tangible, their story hit closer to home and therefore seemed more deserving of our sympathy.

The statistics continued to accumulate as did the desperation and despair of those increasingly aware of how unmanageable this dilemma had actually become. Kelly Lynn Wilneff, seventeen, had been beaten and shot several times in the head and dumped in Preston where she was found on February 16, 1993. She had been a part-time prostitute, had a cocaine addiction and was to testify against a man who was accused of assaulting her. These details do not depict Wilneff as a girl many would have sympathy for given her wayward lifestyle, but her young age and the brutal nature of her death instilled in the community a sense of responsibility for the girl and the general sentiment that she should have been protected. The article announcing details of her death, "Slain woman local hooker" (02/19/93), included a quote from Sergeant Bill Price: "although the killing might not have been prevented if Kelly had been under the task force's wing, it does illustrate the importance of the operation and a safe house to protect young women who

want to escape the trade". It was still being projected to the public that the task force was needed to provide protection and a way out for these girls. The violence continued and young girls and women belonging to our community were dying at its hands.

Shelley Connors, Gisele Pelzmann, Karen Margaret Lewis and Kimber Leanne Lucas had sadly joined the list of the women who had lost their lives to the violence of pimping and prostitution. Connors was a seventeen year old found strangled in Spryfield, Nova Scotia, on June 1, 1993. Prostitution was not involved in the death of the young girl but her name appeared in articles dealing with the deaths of Gisele Pelzmann and Kelly Lynn Wilneff, both of whom were known to have connections to prostitution. The media associated Connors with the other girls who had gone missing or were found dead and therefore she was found in the midst of the prostitution moral panic whether she was involved in the trade or not, allowing the media to add to their pimping and prostitution hysteria once again.

Gisele Pelzmann, not unlike Kimberly McAndrew was a girl many were shocked to hear might have been involved in prostitution. The initial media portrayal of her reveals she had been a behaved student and a quiet and shy girl no one would ever suspect could become involved in the squalor of prostitution. The media would quickly reveal that there were two sides to this girl. On the one hand, teachers and family remembered the good student who was well behaved. Gisele had held the same paper delivery route for several years and had donated some of her free time to the Bide Awhile shelter for animals. The other side revealed was one of a girl who had been doing crack cocaine and who associated with people involved in prostitution. Some of her classmates

said she was "streetwise" and there were rumors that she worked as a prostitutes part time to pay off her debt incurred from her drug habit (09/11/93). She was found beaten to death on a Dartmouth golf course in September 1993.

Karen Lewis and Kimber Lucas were eighteen and twenty-five respectively and both worked as prostitutes. Lewis was found dead in Laval, Quebec in August 1994. "Halifax hooker found dead in Quebec" (08/17/94) was the article which announced her death. She was thought of by many as a "gentle-spirited" girl with a sad past of suicide attempts and cocaine addiction. Kimber Lucas was found in November 1994, near a dumpster, behind a north-end apartment building. The story became more complicated when the papers revealed "Slain prostitute was pregnant. Slashed, naked body left in alley" (11/24/94). Not only was her murderer now responsible for two deaths, but the public related more to the story because an innocent baby was murdered as well. Lucas' murder evoked much emotion from the public and distaste for the media's coverage for the story was distinct. A follow up story was entitled "Callousness of hooker's demise hits nerve" (11/26/94), and there were also responses to the media treatment of the story in "Voice of the People", a letter to the editor-style column. One person wrote in and said, "it seems that the powers that be have more respect for the rights and lives of animals than the rights and lives of certain people... Kimber Lucas and her unborn child did not deserve to die no matter what life she may have lived or what she may have done". Perhaps the public was tiring of the sensationalistic way the media had been reporting the deaths of these girls and women and no longer wanted the details of their personal lives to somehow make the details of their deaths less important or horrible. Pimping, prostitution

and the deaths and disappearances of the women involved had achieved such a high level of saliency that the public now saw them as people, not statistics or even prostitutes. They were girls who did not deserve the torture and pain they received at the hands of their pimps or because of the lifestyles they lead.

CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSIONS

5.0 The Legacy

Prostitution, the world's oldest profession, has not been eliminated in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The prostitution task force created in 1992 was designed to combat the rising problem of juvenile prostitution in Halifax, and was successful in securing the arrests of many men accused of living off the avails of prostitution. It also assisted numerous women in their attempts to retreat from the violent lives they lived on the streets. The task force did not claim the extinguishing of the sex trade as its ultimate goal, and it is probable that this end will never be achieved. The progressive and adaptive nature of pimping and prostitution has resulted in the use of evolving modern technology as a medium for its pervasive intervention into people's lives as we can interpret from the prostitution-related internet sites that exist today. The ability of prostitution to modernize itself will undoubtedly continue in the future given that the end of prostitution is nowhere in sight.

As examined in the chapter on moral panic, there are several models, which may be applied to the prostitution moral panic in Halifax that existed in the early to mid-nineties. The grassroots model may be the most appropriate in describing the situation in Halifax, however, the elite-engineered and interest group models also have their merit. The grassroots model of moral panic tells us that when there is widespread threat concerning a particular behavior which affects a wide range of members of the public, and when that subject has much saliency for the general population, then a moral panic

may ensue. In this model, the public is greatly influenced by the media who helps to propagate the panic. This prototype certainly fits the Halifax scenario. The elite-engineered model includes the notion that a subject, who formerly lacked significance, gains attention and the result is the generation of fear, concern and panic. Prostitution has been a part of the history of Halifax, but due to trigger incidents, it was pushed to the forefront. The elite-engineered model, therefore, has value as well. Finally, self-motivated actors create the panic in the interest group model. Perhaps if we consider the families of victims as the interest group, their campaign to inform the public of their various situations and to warn them from the evils of such activity could be construed as awareness raised in efforts to create a panic. Halifax's prostitution moral panic most convincingly belongs to the grassroots model but has elements of the other two intertwined as well.

When considering the activity of interest groups concerning this issue, we might well include that of the police. Although the role of the police as an interest group was not fully explored in this work due to restrictions inherent in the limited scope of this thesis, they certainly can be named as such. They were in search of increased resources and power in the fight against the "black pimp", a longtime "enemy". As mentioned previously, the fact that one of the victims, Kimberly McAndrew, was the daughter of an R.C.M.P. officer increased the level of saliency for the police and acted as a further incentive in their battle against the evil pimp.

As may be determined from the evidence provided in this work, we are now in the legacy phase of the prostitution moral panic and social problem. The task force is still in

existence today, despite its dwindling membership, and youth prostitution has seen a decline since the height of the moral panic. However, since 1995 there has been a decrease in interest on the subject. The arrests, heavier sanctions for pimps of young girls, and tougher penalties for those convicted of procuring that have resulted from the war waged against prostitution are can be viewed as the result of a successful operation against the deviant behavior. There has also developed a "common law" pattern, or everyday practice, whereby the norm for sentencing those convicting of pimping offences experience harsher sentences than ever before. These convicted pimps receive particularly harsher sentences if they are found pimping juvenile prostitutes. Very few articles have appeared in the newspapers concerning prostitution or pimping-related developments and the public's attention has been diverted from the issue to make way for more timely horrors.

5.1 Changes to the Criminal Code

Another aspect of the legacy of the prostitution problem in Halifax is the changes to the Criminal Code of Canada resulting from the events that transpired in Halifax at that time. Laws relating to procuring, keeping a bawdy house and offenses related to prostitution have been altered so as to have greater impact on the running of the sex trade. In 1992, case law provided legislation stating that a pimp is guilty of living off the avails of prostitution while the prostitute is not, despite the need for the presence of both parties for the crime to be committed (Watt and Fuerst 1992, p. 318). It also stated that the owners of a nightclub frequented by prostitutes were not guilty of living off the avails of

prostitution. This is because receiving profits from admission fees and tips was not the same as receiving all or part of the proceeds from prostitution or that the proceeds were in some way used to support the owners' living (Watt and Fuerst 1992, p.318). In 1995, two additions were made to the above legislation. It was now the case that "the element of exploitation inherent in the parasitic aspect of the relationship [between pimp and prostitute] is essential to the concept of living on the avails of prostitution" (Watt and Fuerst 1995, p. 367). Also, there would now be mandatory presumption that a pimp is living off the avails if he lives with or is habitually in the company of prostitutes. Formerly this had been considered a violation of the presumption of innocence, but the new, tougher laws exhibited less tolerance of pimping activities which resulted in a tightening of the former regulations.

Under section 210(2)(b) of the criminal code dealing with the keeping of a bawdy house, 1995 saw clarification of the terms of the offense. The law states that "Every one who is an inmate of a common bawdy house, is found, without lawful excuse, in a common bawdy house, or as owner, landlord, lessor, tenant, occupier, agent or otherwise having charge or control of any place, knowingly permits the place or any part thereof to be let or used for the purposes of a common bawdy house, is guilty of an offense punishable on summary conviction" (Watt and Fuerst 1995, p. 361). The meaning of the word "found" was changed so that the mere proof of presence on the premises was no longer sufficient to establish liability. It was now the case that, in court, the defendant must "have been perceived there or seen by someone" (Watt and Fuerst 1995, p. 362).

Also, to be found guilty of "keeping" a bawdy house, one must be proven to "have some degree of control over the care and management of the premises; and, participate, to some extent, in the 'illicit' activities of the common bawdy house (Watt and Fuerst 1995, p. 362). In other words, the accused would not have to participate in the acts within, but would need to participate in the use of the house as a bawdy house. Finally, the amended version of this section of the criminal code of 1995 came to include the provision that when charged with keeping a common bawdy house for the purpose of the practice of acts of indecency, "a test of community standard of tolerance, similar to that used in obscenity cases, should be applied" (Watt and Fuerst 1995, p. 363). The notion to apply a community's standard of tolerance would mean the application of the community's experience of fear, level of saliency and exposure to the issue which, to a great extent, is molded by the media's presentation of the issue over a period of time. Surely, from the information presented here, it can be gathered that Halifax's standard of tolerance regarding prostitution and pimping had reached its lowest point during the moral panic and as such, would result in harsher sentences for people charged with prostitution-related offenses.

One other change in the 1995 criminal code was made to offenses in relation to prostitution. Section 213(1)(c) is intended to prohibit street solicitation of sex for money from a person who the offender believes to be a prostitute. In 1995, it was changed so that the recipient of the communication no longer was required to be a prostitute; there need only be intent of communication for the purpose of exchanging money for sex on the part of the offender. These changes made to prostitution and pimping sections of the criminal

code were a result of the heightened attention towards prostitution in the preceding years and were a consummation of the demand for stricter and clearer laws that would diminish the likelihood of leniency in the courts for people charged with living off the avails.

5.2 Review of the Findings

In this thesis, I discovered that it was very useful to apply social problem and moral panic theories to facilitate a better understanding of prostitution and pimping in Halifax in the early 1990s. Moral panic theories, as outlined in the works of Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994), Cohen (1967), and Fekete (1994) gave shape to the prostitution issue as a social movement; analyzing the data set with the stages of moral panic in mind allowed me to fully comprehend how prostitution went from being tolerated by much of society to being on the forefront of public agenda in very short order.

The media played several roles in this social movement: they acted not only as moral crusaders in the war against pimping, but were also the liaison between the task force and the general public. They passed on information regarding missing women, kept the public up to date on the searches for those women, and assured parents from coast to coast that their daughters were in need of protection from the dangers of the "evil pimps". In reporting such stories and informing the public that even the daughters of the most stable families, such as that of the McAndrews' were at risk, they were successful in helping to create a moral panic. The message they sent to the public was intensified by the further tragedies suffered by the families and friends of ten local women who went missing or were murdered as a result of their ties to the world of prostitution and

pimping. From agitation to legacy, there were characteristics of the prostitution issue in Halifax which established the existence of a moral panic.

In considering Cohen's (1972) assertions concerning the actors employed in a moral panic, my hypothesis that a prostitution moral panic was indeed taking place in Halifax in the early 1990s was further supported. The press, the public, law enforcement, politicians, legislators and action groups were all in place and armed to cope with the perceived threat of pimping and juvenile prostitution.

As was stated earlier in this thesis, Cohen (1972) proposed that "folk devils" commonly characterize moral panics. This assertion served to bolster my confidence in the theory that a moral panic was underway. In the case of the prostitution issue under scrutiny here, the black man from North Preston became the quintessential "folk devil". When looking for a group to blame, the already stigmatized men from the well-known community of North Preston became the target. Of course, there were members of that community who had been charged and sentenced for their role in the pimping of juvenile girls and this added legitimacy to some of the claims being made against them. However, being a black man from North Preston became synonymous with being a pimp, due to racist ideologies and the media frenzy that surrounded the issue. The "folk devil" had been created for those needing someone to blame for the disorder that was being reported.

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

Upon completion of this thesis, there were many issues that emerged as viable research questions for future endeavors. After observing how much influence the media

had over public opinion and the shaping of it, it would be interesting to conduct a study to determine the impact the media had on recent prostitution-related issues such as internet pimping or women assuming the role of the pimp. It would also be of value to engage in a project that would look at media representation of prostitution in Halifax before the 1990s to determine if there have been any patterns in the way the issue has been reported to the public. Perhaps one might discover that the moral panic surrounding prostitution is cyclical and surfaces from time to time.

An obvious research project for the future would be to follow any development that may occur by way of rational discussions concerning the regulation of prostitution. Part of the legacy of this issue, as suggested by Shaver (1994), is that agencies of social control will be looking at the regulation of prostitution. There may be discussions regarding the decriminalization, or even the legalization, of prostitution in the years to come and progress in this area will be important to monitor.

Another research effort I would be eager to attempt would be one that examines newspapers across Canada. One could perhaps determine if the prostitution moral panic existed elsewhere in our country. I would be curious to compare newspapers from various Canadian cities to determine if the prostitution and pimping issue was as salient an issue for Canadians in other parts of the country, or if the phenomenon I studied was indigenous to Halifax alone.

Finally, further research might include an exploration into the role of the police as an interest group in the prostitution moral panic. As stated earlier, their role was not fully explored due to the limitations of this thesis, however, I would be curious to examine the

inner-workings of the police during this moral panic so as to better understand their involvement and the role they played in fostering the existence of that panic.

5.4 Final Words

In the end, the prostitution moral panic had run its course. A legacy was left behind of new, more rigid, laws against pimping and prostitution, heightened community awareness and ultimately, there were fewer young girls on the streets of Halifax due to the efforts of the task force. Prostitution and pimping in Nova Scotia, and indeed all of Canada, would forever be tied to the events in Halifax of the early 1990s. It is not clear if the prostitution moral panic will be a cyclical phenomenon or not, but it is certain that the circumstances examined in this thesis will have bearing on any future developments in this field.

APPENDIX I

Task Force Interview

The series of articles reviewed in this work, collectively referred to as the data set, are not the only means by which to gain insight into the common perceptions held by those affected by the prostitution moral panic. The articles printed in the Chronicle-Herald offered analysis of the task force and prostitution-related events through the eyes of the media and, in letters to the editor, various interest groups and members of the general public. An interview with a representative of the task force on prostitution offered a potentially new approach that would supplement the information provided to the public by the media.

The interview was informal and only brief notes were taken to assist in recollecting the comments made; a tape recorder was not used in the interview room. I went into the interview armed only with a few broad questions I had hoped would give the sergeant an idea of the kind of information I was looking for. The sergeant was extremely receptive, eager to discuss the workings of the task force and not only answered the questions I had prepared, but provided me with information I was not expecting to hear. The following is an account of the information I gained during that interview.

Before I began with the questions I had prepared for our meeting, the sergeant handed me a report he had prepared which answered some of the more frequently asked questions about prostitution. It began with a brief discussion of what the task force is, indicating that it is a joint command consisting of members of the Halifax Regional Police Services and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It was formed in September, 1992 primarily to combat the growing problem of teen prostitution. The unit approached the problem by targeting the pimps because it was they who were profiting from the labors of the girls, who are the real victims of the cycle of domination and violence.

The prepared information given to me by the sergeant also revealed a description of the pimp/prostitute relationship. He believed it was important to understand more about the ties between them if one was to comprehend the seriousness of the crime of pimping. The profile of a typical prostitute usually included a broken home environment where there was often a history of sexual or physical abuse. These girls tend to run from an environment they can no longer deal with physically or mentally. The pimps are able to spot the weaknesses in these youths and it is common practice for pimps to shower them with affection and gifts so as to gain their love and trust via material and emotional means. Once they have the youths' trust, they will often remove that child from the town or area they are familiar with. The resulting lack of friends, family, and thus any kind of support system, means the youth has no one else to turn to and therefore the pimp is much more easily able to control them. Once a certain level of control has been obtained, the pimp informs the girl that it is time for her to pay him back for all he has done for her and all he has given to her. He forces her to begin earning an income which is entirely

given to him. Once the first transaction has occurred, the pimp's control over the young girl is tightened. If that girl should show disrespect for her pimp or refuses to work, she is in danger of being severely punished and may even face the threat of death.

The prostitution task force representative assured me it was the girls who were the victims. He said the task force was dedicated to making every attempt at keeping the girls off the streets and out of the "clutches of these predators". At the time the interview was conducted, the task force had prosecuted in excess of 60 pimps with a success rate of over 85 percent. Because of this, they were confident that their task force had been a success.

I asked the sergeant if he could give me a sense of the historical evaluation of the task force and if he saw any distinct stages or phases throughout its history. He told me that the first activity that led to the creation of the prostitution task force was a mini operation that took place on the downtown stroll area that was designed to identify the active pimps in the area. This was only a matter of interest to the police until the disappearance of Kimberly McAndrew¹⁰. Her disappearance sparked public interest in prostitution because one theory, although never proven, was that she was abducted to be used in the prostitution trade. From this period on, the police created and maintained files on certain individuals involved in pimping and were monitoring their whereabouts.

The trigger that started the task force was that a prostitute from Halifax, living in Toronto, escaped from her pimps in September of 1992. She went to the police and told

¹⁰It occurred to me that the disappearance of Kimberly McAndrew had not only sparked public interest but also that it had much saliency for the police as well since she was the daughter of a local R.C.M.P. officer. The sergeant did not make mention of this fact, but I had wondered if the increased activities of the task force would have been so immediate if the girl's father had not been in law enforcement.

them the story of her abduction into prostitution. The raid that ensued resulted in the arrest of six members of a family from North Preston. This was not a surprise to the police because the records they had been keeping and the surveillance they were involved with suggested that this family was involved in a multi-provincial pimping operation. It was a surprise, however, for the politicians in Nova Scotia, as well as for the general public. People's concern was heightened as they feared for the well-being of their own young girls, and they forced politicians to address the problem immediately. This pressure and concern was so acute that the task force came into being in September of 1992, a speedy one month later. Twelve investigators and an analyst staffed the task force at its inception and they were successful in making many arrests with a reasonable conviction rate.

My source told me that in order to be considered a success, the task force needed three main factors to come together. The first necessity was the establishment of a safe house. If women were testifying against their pimps, or if they simply needed a safe place to stay while trying to leave the streets, they would be out of harm's way. A safe house would also make it very difficult for their pimps to contact them which was important for the women who were trying to escape their control. The task force became associated with Byrony and Adsum House, where a safe haven could be provided for these reasons. The second element required for the success of the task force was a dedicated crime prosecutor. This was important because having one person to see the process through from the laying of the charges to the court trial would provide continuity and consistency. Finally, the task force sought to receive a dedicated judge for the same reasons they

wanted a dedicated prosecutor. Although the dedicated judge was not delivered until much later in the life of the task force, the success of the project was not compromised.

At the time of the interview, the task force had recently undergone a period of downsizing. Due to manpower shortages, the various detachments which had sent officers to the task force needed their officers back.¹¹ At the time of the interview, the R.C.M.P. and Halifax Regional Police Services shared the budget for the task force, and together they provided funding for its activities as well as salaries and necessary supplies.

As mentioned above, my informant indicated that members of a family from North Preston were arrested in relation to the prostitution ring in Toronto. The newspaper articles written between 1992 and 1995 focused on the fact that the majority of the prostitutes were white while the pimps that were being investigated, and consequently arrested, were black. I asked the sergeant how the task force approached the issue of race as it pertained to their investigation of pimping and prostitution in Halifax. He told me that the task force was often criticized by the residents and spokespeople of Preston as being racially motivated. He explained that the task force only focused on pimps in North Preston (who were known as "the Scotians" by those involved in the trade) after they became aware of their presence in Toronto. The prostitutes who finally came forward for protection indicated that their pimps were black and from North Preston, Nova Scotia.

¹¹With this statement, I was reminded of a similar trend in reporting issue on prostitution. Once the public felt the problem had been appropriately address by the authorities, a downsizing period occurred and it was back to work as usual. The same thing happened in the media - when the prostitution moral panic was on the downswing, people were no longer as interested in reading articles about prostitution so it was back to the old routine and fewer and fewer articles concerning prostitution appeared in the newspaper.

These were the reasons the task force targeted the black pimps and the sergeant assured me that there was no racial element at all.

I was curious as to how much interaction existed between the police and the media and to what extent the media hindered or helped their investigation. The sergeant told me that the task force had an excellent working relationship with the media and they were extremely helpful in relaying messages to the public. There was one task force member through whom all information given to the media was funneled; no other officers dealt with the media officially. He told me they were quick to use the media because the best way to assure the task force's existence was to engage the public interest. He said that the best way to achieve that was through the media. They even brought members of the media along on escort raids so they could get a good idea of how the task force went about its work on a daily basis. I had expected to hear that the task force considered the media to be a vehicle for providing the public with facts on the prostitution problem but was surprised to hear the sergeant admit to using the media as a tool for bolstering support for their work.

The next question I asked my informant concerned the success and shortcomings of the task force in addressing the prostitution problem in Halifax. The first thing the sergeant said was that the pimps were not as active at that time as they had been because they know they will be arrested if they are actively prostituting young girls. The task force sends representatives into local high schools to give lectures on pimping methods so as to make them aware of how they could be approached by pimps. They view this campaign towards public awareness as part of their success. My informant told me that

when the task force began, he believed that if he could save one girl from the business then it would be worth the effort. In this respect he said he could see no shortcomings of the task force at all. They pride themselves on being advocates for the girls involved. They do not force the girls to go to court if they are fearful of the consequences of testifying. They also have ties with Byrony House, Adsum House, Operation Go Home and Tough Love and try to turn the girls onto these institutions if they need assistance or shelter. Furthermore, the task force maintains a good rapport with the prostitutes who work the downtown strolls. These veterans of the trade are independent workers and keep an eye out for any new girls who might appear on the stroll, helping the task force to identify any new workers.

I was curious as to why Stepping Stone was not on the list of organizations the task force dealt with. My informant was quick to say that Stepping Stone and the task force did not cooperate in addressing prostitution. It is the opinion of the task force that Stepping Stone does not assist prostitutes in getting off the streets and merely supplies them with needles, condoms or any other necessities they may require. The sergeant stated that Stepping Stone refuses to share information they may have on women working as prostitutes and therefore make their job much harder than it need be. He also indicated that he believed Stepping Stone had their own agenda; they are government funded and operate so as to maintain their own existence.

The interview ended with a few comments made in reference to the legacy of the task force and my informant made reference to what he considered to be the future direction of the task force. He was of the opinion that the task force had made it difficult

for pimping to exist in 1992 and still did at the time of the interview. The task force drove many pimps into exile and it was unlikely that the original pimps arrested would ever be able to operate in Halifax again. He could not make predictions as to the activity of the task force in the future, but said he believed it would be operational for at least another year. At that time however, the task force might amalgamate with typical police units such as the Morality Squad or that one section of Morality would handle task force-related activities only. Finally, he said that all the task force could really do is ensure the safety of as many women as possible. He felt that this had been accomplished and that the legacy of the task force would continue to enforce such safety in the future. It seemed to me he was saying that the cycle had been completed. They had gone from inception, to the height of their activities and finally reached downsizing, but their legacy would continue to maintain order in the pimping and prostitution arena.

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