“If you don't have community, you fucking drown in it.”
The Governing Logics of Sex Work and Community in Northeastern Ontario

by

Lindy Van Vliet

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Canadian Studies

Carleton University Ottawa, Ontario

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Abstract

In this dissertation I explore the complex relationship between the symbols and practices of community and sex work in Northeastern Ontario (NEO). Moving beyond a dichotomous understanding of communities as entirely sites of repression or resistance, I instead focus on how two governing logics, settler colonialism and late liberalism, frame sex workers’ relationship with, labour within, and struggles against the rationalities of community in NEO. Drawing on the work of settler colonial theorists (Rifkin 2013; Simpson 2016), community studies (Joseph 2002; Defillipis et al. 2006), feminist literature (Federici 2010; McKee 2011; Roy 2017; Nunn 2019), and sex work studies (Hunt 2016; Kaye 2017; Mac and Smith 2018; Pratt 2015) I examine the complex web that sex working subjects are produced within, resist, and mediate in NEO.

While at its face, this dissertation explores the relationship between communities and sex working subjects in Northeastern Ontario; a series of broader questions underlie the study: How are the logics and practices of settler colonialism and late liberalism produced and reproduced in the everyday interactions of subjects in colonial spaces? What are the tensions around community “inclusion” and “exclusion,” and what dangers do both control strategies create for oppressed subjects? What does resistance look like if subjects are ‘governed through, not in spite of,” their freedom (Rose 2000)? How can we understand resistance, and the symbols and practices of community, outside of the dichotomy of cooptation or liberation? Through an exploration of these underlying questions, I argue against theories of governmentality and settler colonialism that adopt “totalizing views of power” (McKee 2011, 1). Instead, I work to make visible how sex working participants in NEO perform alternatives through the performance of responsibilization, acts of space reclamation, and informal community networks (McKee 2011, 1; see also Nunn 2019; Rifkin 2013; Roy 2017). In doing so, I aim to show the “disorderliness of governing” by exploring how sex workers in NEO experience their subjection and the processes of governance (Love, Wilton, and DeVerteuil 2012) and attend to the counter-hegemonic ways through which sex working participants are able to “think and act otherwise” (McKee 2011, 1).
Acknowledgements

I owe a lifetime of thanks and baked goods to the many people who played a role in this project:

First, to my incredible supervisor, Dr. Sarah Todd, thank you for your advice, calm, and for trusting me when I did not trust myself. Your reminders that I was allowed to make mistakes gave me the courage to try. Your brilliance, expertise, and guidance (both in the content and the process) made this possible; I could not have asked for a better supervisor.

Thank you to my amazing committee members, Dr. Megan Rivers-Moore and Dr. Peter Hodgins. Your invaluable input and suggestions pushed my analysis further and elevated this project to a new level. Thank you to Dr. Chris Bruckert and Dr. Sheryl Hamilton for your questions, feedback, and for such a wonderfully supportive defence.

A huge thank you to the folks in the School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies. In particular, to Donna Malone and Lori Dearman, I would not have made it through the program without you; I will miss our hallway chats.

Thank you to my graduate colleagues and friends who were there to complain with me, cry with me, write with me, laugh with me, and generally live this journey by my side. I am so blessed to have been able to do this work alongside such incredibly intelligent, caring, and awe-inspiring women.

Thank you to my community of friends who played an essential role in this project and held my life together through food deliveries, constant encouragement, phone calls, and breaks. Thank you to my wonderful family for their unending encouragement, support, and love.

Finally, a never-ending thank you to the women of FSWC. Your intelligence, work ethic, love, friendships, and powerful solidarity inspire me every day. I will always value the trust you put in me and the time we spent together. I am so thankful for the knowledge you shared. Special thank you to Jackie, without whom none of this would be possible.

This dissertation is a testament to what community support can do. I am forever thankful.
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List of Abbreviations

Blood Born Infections (BBI)
Catholic Children’s Aid Society (CCAS)
Children’s Aid Society (CAS)
Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)
Formal Sex Work Community Group in NEO (FSWC)
Informal Sex Work Communities (ISWCs)
Non-Sex Working Community Members (NSWC)
Non-governmental Organization (NGO)
Northeastern Ontario (NEO)
Not In My Backyard (NIMBY)
Ontario Children’s Aid Societies (CAS)
Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA)
Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)
Sex Worker (SW)
Sex Work Community (SWC)

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Content Note
Anti-Sex Worker Rhetoric, Sexual Violence, Anti-Indigenous Racism
Introduction

Sex Work and Community within Late Liberalism and Settler Colonialism

“Although the problems addressed by these new strategies of control are varied, at their heart lies the problem of control in a ‘free society’ and hence the kinds of subjects that are imagined to inhabit and deserve such a society” (Rose 2000, 337).

“What, though, might be lost in an analytical investment in tracing settlement as a structure or ontology – a somewhat self-generating, uniform whole? The ongoing processes by which settler dominance is reconstituted as an embodied set of actions, occupations, deferrals, and potentials can slide from view” (Rifkin 2013, 33).

“It is in fact crucial not to know, in advance, where the practice of community might offer effective resistance and where it might be an unredeemable site of cooptation, hegemony, and oppressive reiteration of norms” (Joseph 2002, xxv).

In 2019, through my association with the local sexual assault centre in Northeastern Ontario (NEO), I was invited to volunteer at a conference organized by a by-and-for sex work advocacy group in the region. The conference brought together activists, police, health care providers, sex workers, and allies for two days. The discussions during this conference centred on how to build communities that are more inclusive and welcoming to the sex industry, the workers within this industry, their clients, and their broader networks of families and friends. The room was strategically set up with self-identified sex workers seated at the front few tables and non-sex-working community members seated behind them with nametags that identified their profession or the community group they were associated with. I stood at the back of the room behind a table of merchandise, and from my vantage point, I could see a clear divide in the room. The front few tables felt like a family reunion as different sex work organizations showed up and re-connected with their colleagues from around Ontario. The back few tables felt like an academic conference with pens poised over paper ready to learn the tricks of inclusion. Throughout the conference the terms “community,” “empowerment,” and
“inclusion” were continually evoked both by sex working and non-sex working participants. It was at this conference, as I witnessed the unspoken tensions and contradictions in the evocation of these terms that the beginnings of this project first sparked.

In this dissertation, I explore the complex relationship between the symbols and practices of community and sex work in Northeastern Ontario. To explore this complexity, I examine how the logics and practices of communities can both act for the “oppressive reiteration of norms” (Joseph 2002, xxv) and simultaneously be valorized as sites of resistance against these same norms. I contend with how the idea of empowerment, and the logics of containment and oppression, are tied to communities. I explore how the affective labour of formal and informal communities can be coopted by state and other actors and how that same labour can offer the possibilities for resistance. In her seminal book “Against the Romance of Communities,” Miranda Joseph (2002) argued passionately against the baseless valorization of communities without condemning those who call on communities as spaces of survival and hope. Following Joseph, in this dissertation, I attend to the messiness of communities as they relate to sex work in NEO. In doing so, I hope to move beyond dichotomous understandings of communities as entirely sites of repression or resistance and instead examine how two particular governing logics, settler colonialism and late liberalism, frame sex workers’ relationship with, labour within, and struggles against the rationalities of community in NEO.

The governance of sex work and sex worker resistance within Canada cannot be understood outside of the structures of settler colonialism and late liberal capitalism. The racialized and gendered logics of settler colonialism and the pathologizing narratives, forced inclusion, and
processes of dispossession\(^1\) that characterize this form of colonization have broad implications for the sex industry and resistance efforts. The “structure” of settler colonialism (Wolfe 2006, 388) is enmeshed within late liberal processes that govern subjects “through, not in spite of” their freedom and the control strategies of inclusion and exclusion that rely on violent norms of gender, race, and formal labour (Rose 2000, 324). Communities, and the symbols and practices of community in Canada, play a role in the continued reification of these colonial norms and act as a justification for late liberal control strategies (Joseph 2002; Defillipis et al. 2006; Anderson 2016).

Within theories of late liberalism, governance can be understood as the process of “guiding the possibility of conduct” of free subjects, and this characterization of governance complicates our understanding of resistance (Foucault 1982, 789). If governing requires a free subject, resistance cannot be understood as the process of gaining freedom from an oppressor, but rather resistance is found within the contradictions and tensions of governing practices and the “correlation between conduct and counter-conduct” (Foucault 2007, 196). Exploring the governance and resistance efforts of sex workers through the structures of settler colonialism and late liberalism illuminates the broader relations of power that sex workers are produced within and reproduce. Yet, examining social relations as “structures” can invisibilize the “everyday machinations” through which the current social systems emerge and become naturalized (Rifkin 2013, ix). In this piece of work, I study the relationship between communities and the governance of sex work alongside an exploration of sex worker resistance to refute “totalizing theories of power” (McKee 2011, 1) that can make both settler colonialism and late liberalism appear as a “virtual totality” (Rifkin 2013, 33). Instead, I attempt to denaturalize and make visible these

\(^1\) Dispossession both through colonial land theft and through the imposition of capitalist orders of exploitation and dispossession.
relations of power by tracing the rationalities and processes of late liberalism and settler colonialism that communities are produced within and reproduce in relation to sex work. In bringing together and exploring the processes, symbols, and logics of settler colonialism, late liberalism, and community, I contend with and make visible the “messy realities” of governance by highlighting how sex workers as “governable subjects can think and act otherwise, and forge their own alternative govern-mentalities” (McKee 2011, 2; see also Nunn 2019; Roy 2017).

While at its face, this dissertation explores the relationship between communities and sex working subjects in Northeastern Ontario; a series of broader questions underlie the study: How are the logics and practices of settler colonialism and late liberalism produced and reproduced in the everyday interactions of subjects in colonial spaces? What are the tensions around community “inclusion” and “exclusion,” and what dangers do both control strategies create for oppressed subjects? What does resistance look like if subjects are ‘governed through, not in spite of,” their freedom (Rose 2000)? How can we understand resistance, and the symbols and practices of community, outside of the dichotomy of cooptation or liberation? Through an exploration of these underlying questions, it becomes clear that sex work and sex work resistance in NEO has never only been a fight for decriminalization within an ongoing colonial system, nor solely a fight for inclusion in community spaces defined by racialized and gendered norms and late liberal control strategies. Instead, through this dissertation, I argue that we must understand the relationship between sex workers and communities as a part of a broader series of logics and practices that are informed by settler colonialism and late liberal capitalism, which “sculpt a domain” of possibilities that sex workers are produced within, reproduce, and yet can also resist (Dean 1995, 564).

I begin in this chapter by situating my study within the current literature on sex work, motherhood, community theory, and late liberalism in Canada. Following the theme of this
dissertation, the literature review brings multiple theoretical fields into conversation to complicate our understanding of communities, sex work, and the conditions they emerge within. In the next chapter, I present my methodological and epistemological approaches to the study, in particular highlighting the importance of community participatory action research for this project and my role in the co-production of knowledge. I attend to some of the complexities involved in conducting fieldwork and the ethical questions that emerge from the inherent power imbalances in research relationships.

The findings and analysis begin in Chapter Two, where I explore how sex workers are produced within communities through the “control strategies” of inclusion and exclusion (Rose 2000, 334). In this chapter, I argue that sex workers manage and resist these control strategies through the performance of the responsibilized-autonomous subject, a subject premised on colonial norms of respectability and acceptable consumption patterns. I explore how the performance of responsibility and autonomy is particularly important for sex working youth and sex working mothers who are subject to different strategies of control.

In Chapter Three, I continue my analysis of community and responsibilization to examine the recent turn towards “empowerment” policing. I argue that the evocation of empowerment rhetoric has done little to minimize state-sanctioned violence against sex workers, which further enables the symbolic and physical removal of sex workers from community spaces. I read empowerment policing practices alongside the recent emphasis on human trafficking, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), and late liberal assumptions about the agency of sex workers to examine how the narratives of empowerment and agency are mobilized by governments and the public. I argue that these narratives are used to position sex workers as
complicit subjects in the ongoing colonial violence against Indigenous women in ways that erase settler state accountability for genocidal practices.

In Chapter Four, I further complicate the relationship between sex work, community, late liberalism, and settler colonialism by investigating the idea of cooptation and resistance within formalized community organizations. I examine how formalized community organizations that are created to resist and make liveable settler colonial and late liberal control strategies can also be contained and depoliticized by these same logics. I use the case study of a semi-professionalized sex work community organization in NEO to explore the potential benefits and pitfalls of formalization. Focusing on the possibilities that emerge from politicized organizing, I argue that formalized sex work organizations can act as sites of collective resistance through the politicization of members, acts of space reclamation, and group sense-making, even as these formalized organizations are produced within, and can reproduce, the logics and practices of settler colonialism and late liberalism that they are created to mediate.

In the fifth chapter, I continue my examination of communities as sites of resistance by exploring informal sex work community spaces and the affective labour that is required to build these forms of resistance. Even as I highlight the false binary between formal and informal communities, I argue for the importance of informal community networks for sex workers in NEO who are often excluded from other forms of state-run community care. At the same time, I contend with the ongoing cooptation of the feminized labour within these informal communities, recognizing the potential for these informal spaces to act as a justification for the destruction of state-funded social services while simultaneously recognizing that these social services themselves are premised on and continue the gendered and racialized logics of settler colonialism and late liberalism. Through this dissertation, I hope to offer further complexity to the study of community,
and the governance, and resistance efforts, of sex workers by exploring the complex relationship between communities (at multiple different scales), the governing logics and practices of late liberalism and settler colonialism, and sex work in Northeastern Ontario.

**Literature Review**
Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this project my literature review dives into a series of different theoretical fields. I will begin by exploring sex work in feminist theory, the feminist sex wars, and research on the intersections between community health and sex work. I follow this with an examination of the current literature on late liberalism and community studies.

**Feminist Sex Wars**
The debate in feminist theory about sex work has two broad camps: prohibitionists\(^2\) and sex work advocates. Prohibitionist feminists argue that all sex work is exploitive and push for the end of sex work through legal reforms or social programs. Within prohibitionist feminism there are two main factions: First, there are moral prohibitionists, who see sex work as a danger to communities, heterosexual family units, and women’s personhood (Weitzer 2012). Andrea Dwokin (1993, 3), for example, believed that sex work fundamentally damages women and famously asserted that “in prostitution, no woman stays whole.” The danger to women’s personhood, according to prohibitionists, comes from the fact that sexuality is inherently “embodied,”\(^3\) and therefore, they argue “prostitution” is not the sale of sexual acts but is the sale of *control* over the body of the sex worker (Miriam 2005, 4).

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\(^2\) This camp of theorists is also referred to as ‘abolitionists.’ I follow Robyn Maynard (2012) and other Black feminists in referring to this theoretical camp as ‘prohibitionists’ to separate it from the work of abolitionist feminists who seek to abolish prisons, police, and other forms of carceral governance.

\(^3\) In her survey of sex workers in Canada Brock (2008) found workers in the sex industry kept sexual service work separate from their own sexuality.
In the second faction are radical prohibitionist feminists who argue that sex work is a product of patriarchal capitalism and, therefore, inherently exploitive (Barry 1997; Bindel 2017a; Bindel 2017b). According to radical prohibitionists, sex work is part of a “long line of institutional and structural sexism and paternalistic views” (Gerassi 2015, 80). Catharine MacKinnon (1991) is perhaps the most well-known prohibitionist, and she uses Marxist theory to argue that sex work is always a form of economic and social exploitation made possible by a patriarchal and capitalist society. Prohibitionists rely on critiques of liberalism to argue that sex workers cannot possess true agency to partake in sex work. According to prohibitionists having agency implies the ability for equal parties to enter into a contractual agreement, which prohibitionists argue “conceals the social relations of domination” that surround the sex industry (Miriam 2005, 5; MacKinnon 1991).

In the view of prohibitionist feminism, clients who purchase sex need to be punished and are “socially tolerated sexual predators” (Farley 2004, 1118). To support this argument, prohibitionists often equate human trafficking with sex work and refuse to see a distinction between the two terms (Weitzer 2012). To ‘protect’ women while punishing clients, prohibitionist feminists in Canada have argued in favour of the Swedish model. In this model, the sale of sexual services is not illegal; however, “the purchase of sex” is effectively continuing the criminalization of the industry (Dempsey 2009-2010, 1731). Changes to Canada’s sex work laws in 2014 are at times described as the adoption of the Swedish model, and these legal changes have been often praised by prohibitionists who argue they signal a commitment to ending the sex industry using public education programs and other social initiatives (Dempsey 2009-2010). The Swedish model has been effectively critiqued by decriminalization sex work advocates who argue that the criminalization of clients increases the risk for sex workers and continues to stigmatize the profession (Mai et al., 2018; Bruckert 2015; Weitzer 2018).
In the 1980s and 1990s, pro-sex work advocates led by Laurie Bell (1987) and Wendy Chapkis (1997) began to question the idea in academia\(^4\) that all sex work is a form of patriarchal oppression and urged feminists to theorize sex work “in more complex ways than simply as a confirmation of male domination” (Chapkis 1997, 29). These theorists argue against the oppression narrative of prohibitionist feminism and instead argue that sex work is a legitimate form of labour. Pro-sex work researchers have focused on how and why sex work has come to be understood as a social problem (Brock 1987), linking the continued moral panic that frames sex work in Canada to a social fear of contagion. This group of theorists argue that sex workers are constructed both as “risks” to communities that need to be managed and contained and “at-risk” themselves from the harms of sex work (Hannem and Bruckert 2013). Pro-sex work researchers have refused the moralizing nature of these risk narratives by arguing that many different careers require physical and emotional intimacy, and sex work is unfairly stigmatized due to Judeo-Christian beliefs that “sexual behaviour [is] the root of virtue” (Rubin 1984, 151; Gerassi 2015). Marxist feminists have similarly argued that the concept of ‘freedom’ or consent that is typically used to divide prohibitionists from sex work advocates ignores how all labour is exploited within capitalism and how we are all unfree as we all must sell our labour to survive (Cruz 2018, 74). Pro sex work scholars have further refused the stigmatizing narratives that position sex work as a dehumanizing profession by fighting for the right to sell sexual services “with dignity” (Cunningham 2015, 45).

Interestingly, both prohibitionist and pro-sex work feminists have called on the other to consider the role of racism in their debate. Prohibitionist feminists have argued that pro-sex work advocates are ignoring the role of racism in keeping women of colour “trapped in the sex industry”\(^4\) Sex workers themselves have been advocating on their own behalf far before this.
In response, de-criminalization advocates have argued that prohibitionist feminists enable and contribute to a “politics of criminalization and incarceration” that disproportionately affects women of colour (Bernstein 2012, 27). Decriminalization advocates have further condemned prohibitionist feminists for enabling the increased incarceration of racialized women through their support for ongoing criminalization (Bernstein 2012; Bracewell 2016).

Feminists on both ends of the debate highlight the role that racism and racialization play in framing what is and is not considered sex work and what is and is not considered socially acceptable forms of sex work. Sherene Razack (2000) traces how whiteness and racialization draw the boundary between respectability and degeneracy in the sex industry. In Canada, outdoor sex work takes place within spaces that have been “racialized” and seen as degenerate (Razack 2000). Razack (2000) argues that sex workers, regardless of their racial identity, are always already racialized when they are engaging in their work in these spaces. Racism and racialization further draw the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable forms of sex work (Hastings et al., 2017; Lucas 1995). More acceptable forms of sex work such as online ‘camming’ (Senft 2008), sales of fetish items online (Newman 2015), and pornography (Hastings et al. 2017) are often dominated by white women. Women who participate in these areas of the profession are less often viewed as “whores” and are more often associated with being “naive” of the dangers of engaging in the sex industry or as sexually liberated (Lumby 2007, 348). Sex workers who participate in these forms of sexual servicing can drift in and out of the sex worker label, in part because there is less stigma attached to these less racialized forms of sex work. Women who participate in camming, fetish

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That being said, Butler (2015) also argues that criminalization is not the answer necessarily because of the disproportionate level of state violence that is committed against racialized women through incarceration.
sales, or pornography are also more likely to be celebrated for their “empowered” sexuality and for refusing patriarchal control (Jones 2016, 250). Racialization and racism further contribute to how sex workers are treated by authorities of the state: including, police and public health officials. Sex workers who work out of doors and are racialized experience much higher rates of incarceration and violence at the hands of police (Bingham et al. 2014; Lucas 1995; Shannon et al. 2007).

Racism and racialization also structure how social programs are created to address perceived social ‘problems.’ There is a long history of paternalistic social programs aimed at “improving” the lives of people of colour that simultaneously re-affirm and expand colonial control in the lives of Indigenous people and other racialized people in Canada (Carter 2008; Fortier and Hon-Sing Wong 2019; Tuck and Yang 2012; Razack 2016). The paternalistic history of health care in Canada and the connection between healthcare and colonial expansion has broad implications for my research because it is the background through which current health programs, policing, and other social services emerge.

Research on Sex Work in the Canadian Context
In the Canadian context, research on the sex industry can be broadly separated into two main camps: Research on sex work and research on the conflation of sex work and human trafficking. In the first camp, a series of theorists study the violence that sex workers face and how social stigmas (Kinsler et al. 2007; Logie et al. 2011; Sanders and Campbell 2007), media reports (Strega

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6 This is not to suggest that all feminists agree about the usefulness of the internet and sex work. Feminists who support cybersex work argue that the internet can be a place free of male domination and a space for liberated sexual practices (Plant 2004; Senft 2002) where they can perform fluid sexual and gender identities (Wakeford 2000) and where women are free from physical threats from their clients if they refuse to perform particular acts (Foster 2000). Opponents of cybersex work argue that despite the utopian dreams of the internet as a democratic space free from racial and gender bias, racism, colonialism, and sexism continue to structure online interactions and therefore its liberatory potential is limited (Magnet 2007; Hughes 1999; Nakamura 2002)
et al. 2014), racism (Logie et al. 2011), colonialism (Farley et al. 2005), sexism (Bruckert 2015), criminalization (Bruckert 2015), and “humanitarian” concerns for sex workers (Bernstein 2012; 2019) all contribute to a social structure that naturalizes violence against sex workers. There has also been recent research on the history of sex work activism in Canada, highlighting the role sex workers have played in the push for decriminalization and rights (Lebovitch and Ferris 2019; Tremblay 2020; Smith and Mac 2018).

In the second camp, there is a growing body of work on sex trafficking and human trafficking in Canada. The sex trafficking research tends to focus on the domestic trafficking of Indigenous women and girls and typically separates human trafficking from sex work along the lines of consent and choice (Sethi 2010). Research on human trafficking further focuses on how the Canadian state has used anti-human trafficking projects to increase surveillance on Indigenous communities (Kaye 2017; Dorries and Harjo 2020) and the connection between trafficking narratives and carceral feminism (Bernstein 2019).

Health Research and Sex Work

Scholars in the areas of sex work and public health tend to focus on the potential health risks that sex workers face, including the risk of HIV for sex workers (Shannon et al. 2008; Kerrigan et al. 2015); the effects of occupational stigma on sex workers’ access to health care (Lazarus et al. 2012; Benoit et al. 2019; Roche et al. 2014); impact of stigma on mental health (Jiao and Bungay 2019) how sex workers manage stigma and criminalization to access health care and social services (Orchard et al. 2019); the health effects of child custody loss (Kenney 2018); and the benefits of sex workers as peer health advocates (Benoit et al. 2017; Sanders 2006). Further research explores the historic and continued pathologization of sex workers in the health industry (Kissell and Davey 2010). These studies trace the history of pathologizing narratives from
Victorian times when sex workers were pathologized as carriers of venereal disease and as morally unfit (Hicks 2009) and the impact that colonial fears of racial impurity had on the creation of pathologizing narratives towards sex workers (Valverde 2003; Levine 2003). The 20th-century pathologies differed from early colonial narratives and medicalized sex workers professions, claiming they “suffered from hostility toward their mothers and acute disappointment with their fathers, were sexually frigid, had an unconscious hostility toward males, and exhibited lesbian ‘tendencies’” (Kissell and Davey 2010, 5). Today, two pathologizing narratives continue to frame how sex work is understood by health care professionals: The first centers around the idea that all sex workers were abused as children or faced abuse and thus have normalized violence (Farley 2004; Williams et al. 2009); and, the second, argues that all sex workers use drugs and in that way become victims of their own deviance (Dalla 2002; Surratt et al. 2004). The effects of these pathologizing narratives are discussed at length in Chapter Two.

Motherhood, Youth, and Sex Work

Certain sex working subjects face increased stigma and pathologization. Over the last ten years, more attention has been placed on how sex work and motherhood intersect in Canada and around the world. In general, studies have examined how sex working mothers experience and manage the stigma of participating in sex work recognizing that motherhood becomes a symbolic object to delineate between ‘understandable’ rationales for participating in sex work. For example, needing to work to feed your children can be used to justify participating in the industry, creating a hierarchical understanding of which sex workers are ‘acceptable’ (Rivers-Moore 2017; Dewey 2011). Studies have also explored how financial management is impacted by motherhood and sex work. Dewey (2011, 91) asserts the social norms that refuse to allow sex workers into normative ideas of motherhood or work “directly inform[s] money management,” a finding echoed within
my own study. Both Dewey (2011) and Rivers-Moore (2017) found that engaging in ‘acceptable’
consumption habits is one way through which sex working mothers manage stigma and shame. At
the same time, both theorists found that sex work enables social mobility for sex working mothers
(Dewey 2011; Rivers-Moore 2017). This study will build on the work of Dewey et al. (2018, 30)
and Rivers-Moore (2017) to show how sex working mothers frequently face and refuse the
“erasure” of their mothering identities through child custody loss, criminalization, and the
symbolic representation of sex workers as antithetical to motherhood.

While few studies examine the impact of structural barriers and motherhood for sex
working community members, even fewer explore how youth and youth sex workers manage
criminalization and stigma. Most studies that examine youth sex work explore the impact of sex
work on individual health and tend to rely on the problematic concept of ‘survival sex work’
(Chettiar et al. 2010; Marshall et al. 2013) or further pathologize youth sex workers by exploring
the potential for HIV (Mehrabadi et al. 2008; Miller et al. 2011), and drug use (Chettiar et al.
2010). To date, there is little written on youth and sex work in Canada, with two notable
exceptions: Bittle (2013) who examines how punitive policies and legislation aimed at addressing
the ‘issue’ of youth sex work continues to punish youth sex workers; and JJ (2013) who presents
a firsthand account of how youth resist anti-sex work laws and the intersections between
colonialization and youth sex workers.

Communities, Belonging, and Community Well-Being

Having briefly traced the main debates in sex work theory, I turn now to the current
literature on communities and community studies. The term community is used to represent a vast
variety of concepts and thus has long presented difficulties for social scientists. Peter Hamilton
(2013) noted that as early as 1950, sociologists had already identified over 90 different ways that
the term community was being used in western social studies. To establish a benchmark for
discussion in this dissertation, I understand the term community in three interrelated ways: 1. Community as a descriptor of place; 2. Community as a descriptor of shared practice, 3. Community as symbol or discourse. Community as a descriptor of place can be used to refer to a geographic location or a jointly occupied space (such as a city or “condo community”). In public health research, the term community is often used in place of “city.” Similarly, community can be used descriptively to describe a shared set of practices or actions that constitute belonging (Somerville 2011), such as the community of sports fandom or the community of people who use drugs. As Cohen (2013) argues, language can never be simply descriptive, but rather in its descriptions, produces symbolic associations and taps into public emotions. He uses the example of “dirt.” He argues, the term “dirt” does not just refer to the molecules of the earth but rather conjures up associations with “gross,” “bad,” “uncivilized” (Cohen 2013, 14). Community, used as a descriptor of place and/or shared practice, relies on the implicit symbolic associations conjured through the term. Community as a symbol denotes feelings of familiarity, images of home, warmth, connection, belonging and is often used problematically as an unquestioningly positive term (Joseph 2002). The strength of community as a symbol, and the ways through which the term community is used as a descriptor, necessitates its study by social scientists and forms the basis for this dissertation. The three ways of understanding community, as a descriptor of place and practice and as a symbol, all share a common trait of being relationally defined (Somerville 2011). This means that communities are produced through the intra-action of different entities, including, but not limited to, humans, more-than-human entities, spaces, structures, economies, habits, and practices. Communities are also defined by their “boundaries” that mark them as separate from the external Other[s] (Cohen 2013, 12). These boundaries are fluid and constantly shifting as they are reaffirmed and contested (Sommerville 2011; Cohen 2013). Even as communities are defined by
their boundaries, the discourse of community which evokes the perpetually positive ideas of connection and belonging maintains and invisibilizes those boundaries (Joseph 2002).

Defined relationally and through their boundaries, communities are always “imagined” (Anderson 2016). To understand communities as imagined means to recognize that they are socially constructed and arise in particular social and historical contexts through a shared adherence to an understood set of norms (Anderson 2016). As Kalman-Lamb (2020, 5) states, “an imagined community is formed through a popular allegiance to shared norms, even if the individuals sharing these norms have no tangible relationship to one another.” While communities become important and emerge in particular historical contexts, they are often projected backwards to an earlier time to create a temporally elongated sense of belonging (Anderson 2016). Benedict Anderson (2016) demonstrates how the idea of a national community is often projected into the past to create a shared sense of commonality between people who may never meet both because they are separated by time and by geographic distance. For example, a Canadian feels a kinship with a “Canadian” who lived in 1860 despite the fact that “Canada” did not yet exist at that time. Similarly, a “Canadian” who lives in Ontario feels a kinship with a Canadian who lives in Alberta despite never meeting.

The “imagined community” of nationalism emerged, according to Marxist scholars, from the alienation inherent within capitalism and from the “dramatic upheaval to traditional modes of living” brought on by industrialization, global capitalism, and the decline of religion (Kalman-Lamb 2020, 5; Hobsbawm 1992). According to this field of study, capitalism necessitates isolation and individualism, and under capitalism, all human relationships are mediated by the exchange of
capital, making true “species being”\(^7\) (the core of what makes humans - humans according to Marx) impossible (Kalman-Lamb 2020, 4). In its place, the imagined community of nations emerged, filling the void and need for connection that capitalism revoked (Anderson 2016; Hobsbawn 1992).\(^8\)

The argument that the imagined communities of nations emerged from the alienation of species-being under capitalism relies on some of the same logics as the communitarian theory of the 1990s. Communitarian theorists, such as Etzioni (1996), Putnam (2000), and McKnight (1995), similarly argue that we need to “return” to a sense of community that capitalism, professionalization, and modernity have destroyed. Yet, unlike Hobsbawn (1992), who does not celebrate the imagined community of nationalism as an inherent good, communitarian theorists idealize pre-modern day communities ignoring how the history of structural racism, slavery, land theft, and colonialism means there never was an idealistic community for all and erasing the "structural divisions" and "eliminating dissenting voices" (Defilippis et al. 2006, 676). By calling for a renewed adherence to community, communitarian scholars evoke a particular notion of community, one that is decidedly middle-class, white, and decontextualized from the global histories of violence.

Communitarian theory’s conservative and romantic notion of community has been critiqued from all angles with feminists, queer, and postcolonial scholars, emphasizing the inherently exclusionary nature of communities. Communities, as an ‘us’ necessitates an ‘other’ and feminist, and post colonial scholars, have demonstrated that communities are often oppressive

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7 As Kalman-Lamb (2020, 4) argues the concept of species-being according to Marx refers to “real, meaningful relationships that are unmediated by the exchange of capital.”

8 Kalman-Lamb (2020) has extended this logic even further to argue that the rise of late capitalism, the rise of multinational corporations and the shifting demographics of nations, sports and fandoms have risen up as imagined communities to fill the need for community the alienation of capitalism has produced.
to those who do not fit within the ‘us.’ In the context of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, these scholars point to the hegemonic ‘community’ of whiteness and the structurally oppressive co-constitution of whiteness, capitalism, and the imagined communities of nationalism. Feminist scholars such as Bannerji (2000) and Thobani (2007) have argued that the ‘community of whiteness’ often attempts to appear as if it is stepping outside of the us/them dichotomy, most recently through the adoption of “multiculturalism” policies, and yet the adoption of these types of policies only act to maintain the hegemony of whiteness through the “management” of diversity (Mackey 2002, 50).

Feminist scholars have also scrutinized the discourse of community because of the role it can play in entrenching social hierarchies and maintaining systems of oppression. Scholars such as Miranda Joseph (2002) point to how community is frequently represented as the romantic Other to capitalism\textsuperscript{9} with little critical reflection on how the discourse of community is fundamental to capitalism itself. Joseph (2002, 172) calls on Marx’s theory of value to argue that communities are a “supplement” to capitalism in that the value of capital is ascribed through community and because communities organize and manage labourers who create surplus value. Joseph (2002) argues that the discourse of community is often invoked to erase power relations and obscure the necessity for an always external Other. Joseph (2002, 169) further notes the “complex ways” in which communities and community practices “simultaneously enable but can also be enacted to disable the circulation and expansion of capitalism.” In this way, Joseph (2002, 172) highlights how the discourse of community is complicit in the capitalist world system but also offers community as a potential site of “disruption.”

\textsuperscript{9} As Joseph (2002) argues, where community is seen as historical and always local, capitalism is seen as a feature of modernity and explicitly global. Where the discourse of community presents community as a form of connection, capitalism is the signifier of global disconnect. Capitalism is frequently represented as the end of community, erasing the complicity of communities with capitalism.
Joseph’s (2002) critiques of community are echoed by regulation theorists who argue that communitarian scholars ignore the role that communities play as a regulatory arm of the state. As Defilipiss et al. (2006, 680) point out, the “regulationist critique is that community organizations are shaped through their relations with the state and or private foundations, lose their autonomy, and become instruments of state social and economic policy.” Regulationists, have been especially critical of how community has been invoked to enable, justify, and regulate the rise of neoliberal state policies since the 1970s (Defillipis et al. 2006). Community discourse has been evoked to represent the deregulation of the government as a way for individual subjects to have more control over their social policies through smaller NGOs and the non-profit sector.

As local community activists have called for the increase of “community control” as a way to fight against mass globalization and the rising wealth inequality caused by neoliberalism and late-stage capitalism (McCarthy 2006, 86), questions also arise around how and why communities came to be seen as the beacon of equality and as the Other or solution to capitalism and oppression (McCarthy 2006; Joseph 2002). In the neoliberal era, where the state has begun to off-load the welfare responsibilities it previously managed, communities are seen as the natural “recipients for the responsibilities off-loaded by a governmentalizing state” (Herbert 2005, 851). Under neoliberal state policies there has been a communalization of surveillance, governance, and enforcement of norms through community (Herbert 2005, 851). Yet, many of these forms of governance occurring through community are little critiqued because of the association with community as a place of comfort, familiarity, and kinship. Herbert (2005, 852) argues that community has two

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10 Nowhere is this seen more blatantly than in the shift towards community policing in the height of neoliberal policy in the 1970s and 1980s. Community policing proponents represented it as a positive step forward and a way for communities to “come together” to “solve crime.” Community policing has been ultimately criticized for the lack of structural and systemic changes it brought to policing.
functions in relation to neoliberalism, to be a “recipient for devolved authority” and to “legitimate that very devolution.” Ultimately “community in neoliberalism does not work to perform either of the two tasks” because communities cannot fulfil the duties off-loaded by the state and this, Herbert (2005, 852) argues, makes the state suspect in the eyes of community members who feel betrayed by the state.

Within critical community studies there is a general acknowledgement that “far from being the coherent, homogenous, and egalitarian units often assumed […] communities are in reality constructed, unstable, and rife with their own internal inequalities” (McCarthy 2006, 86). Communities remain unsettled sites of contradictions, often characterized by struggles over memberships and by struggles over what the meaning of membership in a community means (Staeheli 2008). Yet, despite the importance of the above critiques of community, too often theories of community over-simplify their complexity, both as ideologies and as forms of collective belonging. While communities are inherently exclusionary, maintain and play a role in hegemonic whiteness, act as regulatory bodies of the state, play a key role in the creation and maintenance of the market, and are formed within (not outside of) the dynamic interplays of capitalism, hegemonic whiteness, and colonialism, communities are also defined and created partially by the “practices of individuals, organizations, and institutions” meaning communities and their possibilities not “pre-determined” (Defillipis et al. 2006, 685-686). Instead, because of the role that communities play in maintaining and upholding the aforementioned structures of power, they also possess the potential to act as sites of disruption and survival for those most harmed by these structures of oppression. Much of the literature on community is further limited in that it assumes a voluntariness to community and community belonging, but communities are also created or formed by the “dispossessed” (Bayat 2007) not because of a voluntary desire to
come together but because survival necessitates community association. In this dissertation, I will explore the complexity of communities as they relate to sex work in NEO, examining community both as a site of exclusion and as complicit in capitalist colonial orders, but also as sites of survival and potential disruption.

**Defining Advanced or Late Liberalism**

Throughout this dissertation, I rely on Nikolas Rose’s (2000, 324) articulation of advanced (or late) liberalism to explore how individuals are governed not “in spite of, but through,” their freedom. Under Rose’s (1999) understanding of late liberalism, subjects are knowable as, and governed through, their freedom and autonomy where they are not simply “free to choose, but obliged to be free” [and] understand and enact their lives in terms of choice” (Rose 1999, 87). Within late liberalism, strategies of governance, or the “conduct of conduct” presupposes that an autonomous individual exists that has the ability to freely make choices (Dean 1995, 562). Freedom then is not the opposite of governance but an essential component of the governing rationalities and logics of late liberalism, where an individual is meant to understand their life as a set of choices that they make. Under late liberalism, the “norms of conduct” are not solely defined by overarching “moral agents” (such as governments) but by “independent experts [and] concerned professionals seeking to allay the problems, anxieties and uncertainties engendered” by our current social system (Rose 1999, 87). For example, living a ‘hygienic life’ (such as washing hands during the COVID pandemic) is not regulated by government ordinances or threats of prison; rather, it is assumed that individuals will want to be healthy and expert advice and consumer products create and shape what it means to be healthy. In this way, a “regime of self” emerges in late liberalism where “competent personhood is thought to depend upon the continual exercise of freedom, and where one is encouraged to understand one’s life, actually or potentially, not in terms of fate or social status, but in terms of one’s success or failure acquiring the skills and
making the choices to actualize oneself” (Rose 1999, 87). As Gordon (1991, 42) argues “the whole ensemble of individual life is to be structured as the pursuit of a range of different enterprises,” and a person’s relation to others or themselves is “given the ethos and structure of the enterprise form.”

The late liberal regime of self that depends on the obligation of freedom must contend with the reality and growing recognition of structural violence as a limit to the freedom of choice of an individual (such as racism, heterosexism, and colonialism). In Canada, recognition of structural violence is built into a “liberal veil” of kindness, multiculturalism, and colonial apologies (Moore and Hannah-Moffat 2013; 85; McElhinny 2016). Thus, late liberal logics in Canada rely on ‘recognizing’ structural barriers (such as colonialism, racism, sexism) and the effects they have on individuals while still individualizing their experiences within these structures as hurdles that the individual must overcome through active choices. Individuals who are “socially excluded” are offered social services and expert advice meant to empower them to become “independent, self-sufficient and entrepreneurial citizens” (Pollack 2010, 1268; Moore and Hannah-Moffat 2013). Yet, as Cruikshank (1999, 68-69) argues:

The will to empower may be well intentioned, but it is a strategy for constituting and regulating the political subjectivities of the ‘empowered.’ Whether inspired by the market or by the promise of self-government and autonomy, the object of empowerment is to act upon another’s interests and desires in order to conduct their actions toward an appropriate end; thus ‘empowerment’ is itself a power relationship and one deserving of careful scrutiny. These empowerment-based forms of governance encourage the individual to exercise their freedom to overcome structural barriers; yet, if they do not correctly exercise their freedom of choice and conform to proper norms of conduct, a subject can still be ‘managed’ through a wide variety of disciplinary strategies from loss of children to CAS, to removal from state financial support to incarceration (Moore and Hannah-Moffat 2013).
Empowerment narratives are intrinsically tied to the late liberal governance of conduct through freedom in that they re-define the structural barriers facing oppressed populations as resolvable through interventions in the *will and knowledge* of an individual (Pollack 2010). As Pollack (2010, 1268) argues, “social exclusion is reconfigured to be ‘a state of mind’ amendable to cognitive restructuring and empowerment.” Under late liberalism, those who work or survive on the margins of society are vilified “because [late liberal ideology assumes] every individual has the freedom to succeed economically, and if they are not succeeding, it is because of their failure to self-manage” (Kojic 2015, 32). Individuals who do not achieve this state of empowerment face strict punitive measures enabled and justified through risk management tools. For example, the representation of sex-working mothers as ‘failed’ mothers limits how sex working mothers can live their lives and work, exposing them to stringent state and community surveillance. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, risk assessment tools used under late liberalism rely on the expansion of surveillance through moralizing narratives that work to actively obscure, but not erase, structural violence while simultaneously responsibilizing a person’s experience with structural violence as a result of a personal failure of choice (Pollack 2010).

The free subject is not the only subject within the rationalities of late liberalism, as late liberal logics simultaneously need and rely on the idea of *victims of other’s choices* to justify criminalization and state intervention (Lerum and Dwokin 2015). This form of benevolent state-enforced control is characteristic of the Canadian state, which has used the idea of victimhood to “literally strip away one’s humanity and agency” and rationalize forced “improvement” regimes throughout history (Lerum and Dwokin 2015, 322). The image of the victim is used to both justify state intervention into ‘victims’ lives, and the idea of ‘potential victims’ is used to increase regulation on populations deemed ‘risks’ to communities. Refusing the victim label often means
ascribing to a certain form of subjeccthood, that of the free subject who has overcome structural barriers. The late liberal subject is produced through “moralized strategies of control” that present individuals who do not properly conduct their freedom as failures (victims) and/or as risks to the rest of the community that must be managed through surveillance and punitive measures (Race 2008, 421). Therefore, late liberalism can be defined “by differential and selective use of repressive power, with gestures towards freedom and choice operating alongside the repression of specific populations marked out as ‘exceptions’” (Rivers-Moore 2014, 407).

In this dissertation, I use both the terms late liberalism and neoliberalism. While both concepts are intertwined, for the sake of clarity, I use the term late liberalism to refer to the underlying ideology (described above) where individuals are knowable, and governed through, their freedom, and I use the term neoliberalism when I am referring to specific government policies and actions that have been put in place since the 1970s. The introduction of neoliberal state policies in the 1970s was defined by a shift from welfare policies towards government initiatives premised on producing worker-citizens through the duality of “workfare” and criminalization (Dolson 2015, 116; Maki 2011; Pollack 2010). Neoliberal policies resulted in a sharp decline in government spending on welfare systems and an increase in spending on policing, fraud regulation, and empowerment projects. Late liberal ideologies “paved the way for new laws and policies that targeted and individualized the poor for their ‘bad choices’ and ‘dependency’ […] thereby justifying state claw backs of welfare and the establishment of new surveillance technologies” (Maki 2011, 52). The reduction in social service spending was justified by moralizing narratives that criminalize those who experience poverty and those who work in pathologized professions as
risks to society (Balfour 2006; Maki 2011). Under neoliberal policies, scarcity is presented as an inevitable rather than produced state of social being, and the “vocabulary of scarcity” is used by governments “to legitimise austerity and its attack on state welfare spending and welfare recipients” (May et al. 2020, 209)

In Ontario, much has been written about the Harris’ government's “Common Sense Revolution” and the austerity measures and shift to deep neoliberal policies that accompanied that time (Evans and Fanelli 2018). While neoliberal policies, such as Harris’ common-sense revolution, were touted as a reduction in government spending since the rise of global neoliberalism, states have seen an increase in government spending on discipline and control in the form of policing, prisons, and surveillance accompanied by decreased expenditures on social services and welfare services (Armstrong 2010). As Pollack (2010, 1268) argues, “government and business herald the importance of de-regulation, yet people living in poverty have actually experienced increased regulation.” In Canada, critical neoliberal scholars such as Todd Gordon (2010, 33) have argued that the rise of “law-and-order policies” in Canada works to ensure the success of neoliberal economic and political goals by criminalizing informal labour markets that enable subjects to refuse or minimize their connection to low-income formal. These informal labour alternatives include sex work and Gordon’s (2010) argument illustrates how police actions

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11 For example seen in tickets for loitering (Douglas 2011); welfare fraud investigations; anti-panhandling laws (Saelinger 2006); the war on drugs (Balfour 2006).

12 In environmental geographies, resources scarcity is understood as “socially and politically generated” in that some populations are purposefully made scarce, while others are able to benefit from the resources of the world (Mehta et al. 2019, 222). For example, on a global scale post-colonial nations in Africa were forced through neoliberal restructuring projects in the 1970s to open up their land and resources to international companies, paving the way for the massive wealth and resource inequity between Global North and Global South countries. The African continent remains a place of resource extraction where populations are forced to live in scarcity as their resources fund and enable wealth in Western nations. A similar example is found in the extraction of natural resources from NEO for the urban centres of Canada.
against sex workers or their clients can be understood as a state response “to people’s public socio-economic resistance to [economic neoliberal] coercion” (Johnson 2010, 20).

This dissertation will bring together the theories of late liberalism, critiques of the discourse of community, and sex work studies to examine the complexity and contradictions in how sex workers are produced as risks to communities, self-govern to access the benefits of community, and survive through community.

Rationale and Overview of Area of Study

This dissertation focuses on Northeastern Ontario (NEO) because of the recent surge in media and community attention on “human trafficking” in NEO and my own relationship to the region. By NEO, I am referring to the Algoma, Sudbury, and Nipissing districts of Ontario, self-dubbed the “near north.” The current discourse that surrounds sex work in NEO tends to conflate sex work with human trafficking and frames any form of sexual transaction as inherently oppressive (see, for example, Migneault 2015; NetNewsLedger 2017; Sudbury.com 2010). This discourse has been refuted by sex work advocates in the region who fight for the recognition of workers’ rights and dispute the complicity narratives that frame sex workers as enablers of human trafficking. There have been several high-profile community initiatives created to study human trafficking in this region. These include an SSHRC funded study by Prof. Rosemary Nagy of Nipissing University, Ontario's Strategy to End Human Trafficking, which began in 2016 and has a liaison program in Northern Ontario, and a grassroots anti-trafficking initiative began by a community member in NEO (Carnegie 2017; NetNewsLedger 2017; TBNewsWatch 2017).

NEO is of further interest because of its position in the national and provincial imaginary. NEO is perceived as both a holiday space, where well-off tourists from Southern Ontario can come ‘reconnect’ with nature and simultaneously a degenerate space filled with poverty and marked by years of resource extraction work. The production of NEO as a wilderness space for tourism has
played a key role in the (attempted) erasure of Indigenous presence and governance structures in this region (Thorpe 2012). In many ways, the language used to describe human trafficking and sex work in NEO replicates the language of resource extraction and environmentalism, an interesting parallel within the settler colonial context.

Finally, my study is situated within NEO because of the relationships I had with sex work advocates in the region and the apparent gap in the literature on sex work in this area. Through personal experience, I became aware of the rampant misinformation about the state of ‘sex trafficking’ in NEO that was being propagated by women’s groups with little evidence to support their claims. My determination to complete this project came from my personal relationships and experiences in that region and a desire to connect sex work theory to undertheorized regions outside of urban centres in Canada.

The Broader Context: Settler Colonial Logics

Communities are not stand-alone entities that exist separate from the socio-economic contexts that they both simultaneously enable and are enabled by (Joseph 2002). Instead, “communities need to be understood as simultaneously products of both their larger, and largely external, contexts, and the practices, organizations and relations that take place within them” (Defilippis et al. 2006, 673). Thus, to explore the multiplicity of ways through which sex workers in NEO experience community: as a punitive force, reparative space, and governing structure, I spend some time in this section exploring the external and internal contexts that communities in NEO emerge from and contribute to.

Canada is a “white settler society” (Razack 2002, 3) that was/is established through the colonial theft of land, acts of genocide, and the continued occupation of Indigenous territories. Settler colonial theorists identify the settler colonization of Canada as “structure, not an event”
(Wolfe 2006, 388), meaning that colonization was not simply an event of the past, but an on-going practice enabled through “everyday machinations” and practices (Rifkin 2013, 33). Settler colonialism is predicated on the “logic of elimination” aimed at Indigenous peoples and their political, social, and economic systems to be replaced by new colonial systems (Wolfe 2006, 388). The settler colonization of Canada was part of a broader global process of coloniality that emerged in modernity, an era defined by the colonization of the Americas, the theft and enslavement of African people and lands, and the rise of global capitalism. Decolonial theorists (Lugones 2007; Maldonado-Torres 2004; Mignolo 2013; Quijano 2000) view “coloniality” as a foundational logic of the global capitalist system and argue that modernity is marked by “imposition” of racial and gender categories "to the benefit of white European peoples" (Escobar 2004, 218; Quijano 2000, 342). Modernity-coloniality depended on the processes of “inferiorizing and racializing people[s]” to justify colonial land theft, enslavement, and other genocidal practices in the Americas (Schick and St. Denis 2005, 302).

The racial and gender logics that underpin colonization are not abstract notions but encoded in law and “integral to the biopolitical state, woven into the web of the social body” (Stoler 2006, 67; Backhouse 1999). The Western state model that was imposed in early colonial Canada formalized the racial and gender binaries and hierarchies that the state called on to ensure its continued domination through law: including ontologies of private property13 (Mackey 2016),

13 The codification of land as “property” that can be bought and sold is a key part of British common law (Byrd 2010, loc. 265; Mackey 2016, 33). British common law gives governments rights over private property, therefore establishing land as property allows the state to claim ownership (Pasternak 2015, 188). This “logic of property” resulted in the Canadian state assuming jurisdictional control over all lands now deemed Canadian, similar patterns happened in America and Australia (Pasternak 2014, 146; Rifkin 2013, 139). Products of the land were deemed resources and commodified, so they could be bought and sold through international capital flows (Nash 2012, 622). The logic of property also justified the establishment of slavery to create labour to make the products and ‘subdue’ the land (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, loc. 808).
Sexual violence and gender violence cannot be separated from colonization, or the theft of Indigenous lands, rather as Smith (2015, 3) argues sexual and gender violence are “primary tool[s] of genocide” enacted throughout Canadian history and into today. Violence against Indigenous women must be understood as a part of the colonial processes of racialization and gendering that marked Indigenous women as “violable” (Smith 2015, 12). As Razack argues, "Indigenous women have, since the inception of the colonial project, been understood as sexually disposable, and social and legal institutions have sustained this logic” (Razack 2016, 3). Sexual violence against Indigenous women was/is also a tool through which white settlers come to understand themselves as “entitled” to stolen land (Razack 2000, 96-97). Indigenous women are targeted because of their ability to reproduce and ensure the continuation of Indigenous nations and systems (Simpson 2016; Dories and Harjo 2020). Historically and presently, Indigenous women face disenfranchisement, forced sterilization, loss of children, and mass incarceration, all of which separate Indigenous women from their communities and act as attempts to eliminate the capacity of their Nations (Dories and Harjo 2020).

The process of racialization and gendering in Canada must also be understood in relation to the social construction of ability. de Leeuw, Greenwood, and Cameron (2009, 290) trace pathologizing and ableist discourses in government documents from the early colonial period into today and demonstrate how Indigenous people have been constructed as “deficient” and

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14 Establishing the land as property and the associated commodification of people and resources both enables and is enabled by the process of mapping, which draws borders and establishes the imaginary jurisdiction of the state in relation to other Western nation-states (McClintock 1995, 27). Through the process of naming and mapping, European colonial relations were legitimized under international law while Indigenous political systems and “grammars of place” were erased (Goeman 2014, 236).
“incompetent.” Johnson (2014, 14, 22) expands on their argument, pointing to how pathologizing narratives become tied to racialized notions of “civilized” and “uncivilized” justifying colonization as the “benevolent” rescue of Indigenous peoples from their supposed deviance and erasing colonial violence as a natural result of “progress.” Similarly, Cameron Greensmith (2012, 19) has argued that the pathologization of Indigenous peoples in the 21st century operates to delegitimize Indigenous land reclamation battles and make settler presence on Indigenous lands “immune to scrutiny” by positioning Indigenous calls for land reclamation as “crazy” or irrational. This process of pathologization, racialization, and colonial violence, shape how Indigenous sex working women are perceived by and perceive community spaces.

In sum, the settler colonization of Canada began and is connected to broader global colonial logics, the creation of racial and gender categories and the pathologization of certain bodies that justified and enabled ongoing structures of settler occupation and violence. In the next section, I explore the settler history of NEO and the history of the sex industry in the region.

The Local Context: Northeastern Ontario

The settler occupation of NEO began in earnest in the 1850s when the profitability of mineral extraction operations in Michigan drove mining companies to explore the resource extraction potential of NEO. In NEO, settler mining companies and land surveyors began to trespass on Indigenous lands in the 1840s, looking for evidence of mineral deposits. The Nations in this region resisted the trespass on their lands most famously through the 1846 petition sent from Chief Shanghainese of the Garden River Nation to the Lieutenant Governor demanding recognition of their lands and reparations for ongoing and future theft of resources (Manitowabi 2018). Chief Shanghainese wrote:
My territory extends to [Michissiwton] there already have they found my rich things, but I know nothing of what is going on; I see the people pass and I hear what is said but I have no certain knowledge. I want always to live and plant at Garden River, and as my people are poor, to derive a share of what is found on my lands […] Already has the white man licked clean up from our lands the whole means of our subsistence, and now they commence to make us worse off, they take everything away from us […] I called God to witness in the beginning and do so now again and say that it is false that the land is not ours, it is ours (quoted in Corbiere 2013)

Chief Shanghainese’s petition fell on deaf ears until an 1849 land defence action against miners in the Batchawana Bay area led to the beginning of the Robinson Huron Treaty Negotiations. In 1850 the British Crown signed treaties with the Ojibway, Algonquin, and Odawa Nations (Whitefish River First Nation 2020). The Wiikwemkoong First Nation, located on what is colonially referred to as Manitoulin Island, did not sign the treaty. The Robinson Huron Treaties are a part of a series of “land transfer treaties” that were signed between the British Crown and Indigenous Nations across what is colonially called Canada, beginning after the Royal Proclamation of 1763 (Manitowabi 2018). Land Transfer Treaties differed from the previous Peace and Friendship Treaties in that the treaties were premised on the Crown’s intent to begin resource extraction and settler occupation of Indigenous lands (Manitowabi 2018).

The treaty established three main obligations from the federal government: 1. The establishment of reserve lands, 2. Annual annuity payments to individuals, 3. Recognition of Indigenous hunting and fishing rights (Manitowabi 2018). The annuity was set at $4 per citizen of each nation in 1874; however, in 2018, the Canadian Supreme Court ruled in favour of the twenty-one First Nation signatories of the Robinson Huron Treaty who argued that the Federal and Provincial Governments, as representatives of the Crown, have failed to increase annuities as required by the Treaty (Carmicheal 2018). The Province of Ontario has since appealed this decision, and the appeal will be heard in July 2021.
The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railroad and the discovery of iron ore in NEO in the 1880s led to the establishment of Sudbury, North Bay, and Sault Ste. Marie, they remain the three largest urban centres today. Early settlers in NEO worked either for Canadian Pacific Railway or in the lumber or mining industries, establishing a white rural, “blue-collar” identity that remains in place today (Saarinen 2013). The rural blue-collar identity that permeates NEO is premised on the celebration of frontier mentalities and the idolization of the masculine conquer of lands (Mackey 2003). Rural identities in settler societies are distinct to the region from which they emerge (Nichols 2013) and yet simultaneously alike in the celebration of manual labour, the evocation of “traditional” gender roles, and a “strong sense of marginalization, powerlessness, and resentment of urban government forms of regulation and control” (Furness 2011, 186). McClintock (1995) and Kalman-Lamb (2020, 7) argue that communities are imagined, in part, through “commodity spectacle” and the reification of “fetish objects” that “come to represent the existence of a [community] where no sense of solidarity previously existed.” In Northeastern Ontario, the fetishized object is found in the wilderness itself (Thorpe 2012) and in the fetishization of the North as a space of ‘traditional’ and ‘small town values’ compared to the looser morality and disconnection that is supposed to exist in larger urban centres.

**History of Sex Work in NEO**

Public health records, personal letters, and police reports show a long history of sex work in NEO. These historical records demonstrate the intersections of racism, classism, and whorephobia that permeated early public health attempts to address the “problem” of the sex industry. Previous research by Bernadette Walicki (2017) unearthed letters between the President of the Council of Women of Sudbury (Mrs. McKessock) and the Police Lieutenant in 1912. These letters highlight
the fear of racial contagion that permeated white settler anxieties around sex work. McKessock writes of “dark” girls who

live a life of shame going once every month to Copper Cliff. About the 15th of every month which is pay day out there, they go up in what is called Little Italy among the foreigners\(^{15}\) and sometimes stay a day and a night—taking all classes of men while they have the price (letter cited in Walicki 2017).

She continues that “[i]t would be a good thing for our town to take them off the street,” declaring further that “you will find among the Chinamen—all dens of vice” (letter cited in Walicki 2017).

In this period, Copper Cliff was a region almost entirely occupied by working-class men who were employed in the copper and iron ore mines. McKessock’s mention of ‘all classes of men’ suggests moral indignation about class pollution occurring through sex work (Saarinen 2013). Further, her mentions of the ‘foreignness’ of the men who were working in Copper Cliff, her use of the word “dark” to describe the women who were engaging in sex work, and her use of racist language to describe “Chinamen” who she charges are operating “dens of vice” demonstrate the white moral panic that was embedded in colonial discussions of sex work at this time. As Levine (2003, 95) argues "the meaning of prostitution as a gendered activity cannot be separated from its meaning as a racialized activity,” in that the presence of sex work became “a weapon wielded in the colonial context as if it were proof of the need for the civilizing mission." In NEO, the presence of sex work in the early 1900s fuelled colonial fears of race and class mixing, and the presence of racialized sex workers was used by white women to call for more heavy policing. Interestingly, you can see in Mckessock’s letters an evocation of community as a further justification for increased policing.

\(^{15}\) An edited collection by Salerno and Guglielmo (2003) discusses the shifting nature of Italian whiteness in North America. In 1912 Italians were marked as white adjacent but still not white, occupying a middle ground in the white imaginations. Class status would also influence Italian racial status, demonstrating the impossibility of separating racialization from class.
where she writes that it would “be good for our town to take them off the streets.” As will be discussed, this sentiment is echoed in anti-sex work rhetoric across NEO today.

McKessock’s letter is evidence that white citizens in NEO were fully engaged in the moral panic around ‘white slavery” in the early 20th century. In their genealogy of the term “white slavery,” Cecily Devereux (2000) argues that the concept of white slavery was connected to the sex industry beginning in 1885 with the publication of the “The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon.”16 Throughout the late 19th and early 20th century, white settlers across the globe17 were perpetuated the racist and unfounded fear that white women were in danger of being forced into sex work by racialized men. Chinese men, in particular, were constructed as predators of white women’s purity, leading to racist immigration laws, including the Chinese Head Tax, 1908 Gentleman’s Agreement, and Continuous Journey legislation (Donovan 2010; Weber 2015). Valverde (2008, 95) argues that the moral panic around white slavery had less to do with the protection of individual white women but instead acted “as a condenser of anxieties about shifting race, sex, and gender relations" in the colonial period (Valverde 2008, 95). ‘Protecting’ white women from engaging in sexual relations with racialized men was about protecting ‘the empire’s maternal assets” (Devereux 2000, 16). Colonial states across the globe passed legislation at this time that was meant to stop “white slavery” and protect racial purity by criminalizing inter-racial sexual relationships (Devereux 2000). As Sarah Carter (2008, xiv) argues "ideas about the vulnerability of white women helped to create and sustain concepts of racial and cultural difference, to legitimize tough action against Indigenous people, and to convey the message of the

16 The Maiden Tribute was an expose of child sex work that published by W.T. Stead in London, England.
necessity of policing boundaries between different peoples.” White women were protected not as individuals but because of their reproductive capabilities, the necessity of white women’s sexual purity to maintain racial purity across generations, and because white women acted as the guardians of white Christian morality (Henderson 2003).

McKessock’s letter and evocation of “the good of the town” demonstrates the presence of racial and gender anxieties and how these anxieties are intertwined with the discourse of community. Further, McKessock’s letters demonstrate that women’s groups in NEO followed much the same pattern described by other theorists (Valverde 2008, Thusi 2015, Devereux 2000) in leading the charge in morality regulation in early colonial NEO. The connection between women’s groups and moral policing is echoed today in the NEO community regulation of sex work through NGOs, a connection that will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

This is not to say that sex work was only policed through informal networks such as women’s groups; by-laws in the region addressed the question of “morality.” In Sudbury, an 1893 by-law entitled ‘By-Law to Preserve Order and Public Morals in the Town of Sudbury” forbade the public display of lewd images, the use of blasphemous language, public exposure, engaging in “lewd play,” begging, visiting or keeping a “bawdy house” on threat fine or imprisonment (By-Law no. 12, 1893). Copper Cliff had a similar by-law passed in 1902 which stated that any person who shall be found guilty of keeping or maintaining, or being an inmate or habitual frequenter of, or in any way connected with, or in any way contributing to the support of any disorderly house or house of ill-fame, or who shall knowingly be interested as proprietor, landlord, tenant or occupant of any such house, shall be subject to the penalties of this By-law (By-Law no. 5, 1902).

These by-laws were informed by the social attitudes of the day. A survey of NEO newspapers from the early 1900s century shows the hegemonic nature of whiteness, the growth of rural identity, and
the predominance of Christianity in this time. Newspaper articles frequently included mention of Christianity, referenced racialized citizens only as ‘foreigners,’ and shared stories of Christians being attacked. For example, an 1893 Sudbury Star shared the story of a group of “Christians” being attacked in Hong Kong by a “gang of ruffians” (n.a. 1893) The use of exoticizing stories of racialized Others as threats to Christianity acts to reaffirm the supposed civility of whiteness and, as Cesairé (2014, 74) argues, works to “justify” colonial conquest and establish the West as the “bar of reason.” The hegemony of Christianity is evident throughout newspaper history in NEO, with the Sudbury Star boasting a “Bible Corner” in each weekly edition (n.a. 1961). Sex work is mentioned at times as a “Great Evil” that is afflicting southern cities but also coming up to the “northern latitude” (n.a. 1893b).

A 1950’s McLean’s article entitled “Sudbury: Melting Pot for Men and Ore” offers insight into the social attitudes at the mid-point of the century in this region (Delaplante 1953). The article extols the virtues of NEO, in particular its rural identity, by describing it as the “fragile, albeit glamorous and hard knuckled, creature [that] is the mine town” (Delaplante 1953, 13). The article boasts about the multi-racial face of NEO while remaining entirely silent about the Indigenous population, instead mentioning that the last census had “42% British, 33% French, 5% Ukrainian, 3% Italian, 3% Polish, with the rest including Germans, Finns and Chinese” (Delaplante 1953, 13). Yet, in the same breath, the article blames the presence of racialized Sudburians for the “raffish” conditions in the town and the fact that it has double the amount of crime compared to other cities its size (Delaplante 1953, 52). The author remarks, “it’s a well-known local axiom that a man can sin […] and be forgiven. This tolerance comes from many nationalities living side by side, each adopting a broad viewpoint concerning the others’ customs, fetishes and idiosyncrasies” (Delaplante 1953, 53). The author includes sex work as a part of the “raffish” nature of NEO and
associates it with the large proportion of working-class men with extra income from the relatively well paying mining jobs. In the article, the police Chief Jack McLaren describes giving sex workers twenty-four hours to leave town or else face charges of vagrancy. The article relies on the reification of working-class whiteness and “lusty, chest-thumping, nonsleeping and rather wicked” characteristics of NEO as set of mining towns while simultaneously locating the source of that wickedness as a problem brought in by outsiders (Delaplante 1953, 52). As the Police Chief notes in the article, “bad eggs from the East” who travel to NEO to work in the mines bring with them crime and immoral behaviour (Delaplante 1953, 52).

The idea of NEO as a hard-working region facing unrest and immorality from foreigners or outside travellers continued to be a matter of concern for the middle-class and for public health practitioners into the late 1900s. Between the 1970s and 1990s, a series of public debates emerged around the sex industry in NEO. The first indication of these debates was a 1976 trial for two men who were charged with “distributing obscene material,” namely “girlie magazines” (Parker 1976a). Newspaper coverage of the trial discussed the “liberalization” of society while frequently extolling the harms of pornography to women and children (Parker 1976b). Letters to the editors blamed the United States for the proliferation of pornography in Canada and called on the people of NEO to stop buying porn “to end the demand” (n.a. 1992, Carmicheal 1992). This debate culminated in an attempt to pass a by-law to end the sale of pornography led by a local Women’s Centre. During this time, a NEO newspaper published an article about a speech given by Andrea Dworkin in Winnipeg that outlined the prohibitionist concerns about sex work (Horner 1984). In 1992, the Women’s centre recommended that a day of protest should be held in the region, and called on citizens to boycott stores that sell pornography calling for the creation of an Anti-Pornography Day (n.a. 1992).
In the 1990s, there was a shift away from the porn moral panic towards a public focus on outdoor sex work and stripping in towns in NEO. A 1990 Special Report by the Sudbury Star examined “Life on the Strip,” referring to an area of downtown that is known for having high levels of sex work. In the article, the authors expound on the presence of “women looking to sell her body for a few dollars” before calling on the city council to invest in the region for the sake of businesses who operate there (Carmicheal 1990). Throughout the 1990s, a series of high-profile stings occurred in NEO involving undercover officers. Police at the time stated that they conducted stings at the request of the public, as Staff Sgt. Murray Matheson is quoted as saying in a 1995 article, “if we get complaints we’ll continue to (conduct stings). And we do get complaints, it’s quite an open operation on Elgin Street, so, we do a little sweeping” (O’Flanagan 1998).

In 1991 the opening of a strip club in one NEO centre led to a tense public debate. The newspaper coverage of the time included letters to the editor filled with outrage about the “immorality” that was coming into town (St. Pierre 1991). In 1998 an MPP introduced a private member’s Bill that increased the penalty for “pimps and johns who exploit young girls” (n.a. 1998a; n.a. 1998b). The city council passed the Bill before the MPP brought the Bill to Queen’s Park but not before a heated debate about whether or not the penalties in the Bill went far enough, with one city councillor calling for the death penalty and another calling for the castration of clients (n.a. 1998b). Newspaper articles that discuss the Bill also call for a local strategy to prevent sex work.

Police stings against sex workers continued to be a common occurrence until the passing of PCEPA in 2014. The joint memory of these sting operations was a frequent point of conversation in the focus groups, where sex working participants would recall who was arrested at each event and which officers were the most forceful. Police also operated a Jane School until PCEPA was
passed; the John School continues to operate with sex workers offered more lenient sentences if they agree to share their stories at the John School. It is with this history in mind that I explore how sex workers today experience, are produced in, and produce, community and its many contradictions in NEO.

A Note on Language

Weitzer (2017, 720) argues that academics play a key role in destigmatizing sex work and that the language used in sex work research is particularly important because “power relations are embedded in language.” In this paper, I use the term sex worker or sex working community member to identify any person who takes part in the sale of sexual services, whether that is in-person sex work, meaning the sale of sexual acts (including but not limited to: oral sex, anal sex, vaginal sex, hand jobs, foot jobs, erotic massages), or online sex work (including but not limited to: pornography, erotic shows, erotic messaging, exchange of erotic images); and in-person performance-based sex work (including stripping, erotic dancing). Where relevant, I will use the term ‘prostitution’ when referring to the legal conceptualization of in-person sex work in Canada. Following participants, I use the term outdoor sex work to denote the sale of sexual services outside of formal organizations or spaces. I recognize that most sex working community members work in multiple areas of the sex industry.

Following sex work labour activists, I use the term sex work to align myself with other researchers who identify sex work as work within a capitalist system (Cruz 2018). I adopted the term sex working community member from my participants, who most often use this term to refer to sex workers when they are not discussing their own experiences. When I began the study, I often used the term “sex trade” to denote the broader sexual economy until it was brought to my attention by a participant that the term is “is loaded with negative and stigmatizing connotations” (Personal Communication). I appreciate their willingness to correct me and, following their advice, adopted
the term “sex industry.” Finally, following Harsha Walia (2020), I use the term “oppressed and repressed” or “purposefully marginalized” to highlight how systems and structures lead to scarcity and inequity. In doing so, I recognize that terms such as “vulnerable” can unintentionally erase structural violence and instead ascribe the state of being vulnerable as an inherent trait of an individual who is facing oppression.
Chapter One

Concerning Research Methods and Power Relations in the Field

In this chapter, I discuss the methodological and theoretical approaches I used to design this research project, analyze data, and present the findings. I begin with a brief overview of some of the main epistemological approaches that underpin this study. Many of the concepts outlined here are expanded on in greater detail throughout the dissertation, and therefore I offer this section only as an introduction to some key concepts. I then present my methodological approach highlighting the benefits of collaborative research relationships and outlining the research design that I adopted in this study. This is followed by an examination of the qualitative coding methods I employed to examine the data using NVivo software. Finally, I will finish with an explanation of how I situate myself in this study.

Epistemological approaches

Notes on Governmentality and Biopower

In this dissertation, I rely on theories of governmentality read alongside settler colonial and feminist theory to understand and denaturalize the relations of power that structure social organizing and subjectification in society. Foucault’s (2007) concepts of governmentality and biopower, and contemporary readings of Foucault’s work (McKee 2011, Million 2013, Roy 2017), are particularly useful tools for understanding the relationship between social service provision, community organizing, state governance, and acts of resistance. Studies of governmentality focus on how an issue or subject comes to be understood and categorized as a problem “through its governance” (Lippert and Stenson 2010, 479). Within theories of governmentality, power is not a thing that can be held by an individual but rather is understood to be “everywhere” (Brown 2006, 67). This is not to suggest that power is equally distributed, but rather that “power is understood
to construct and organize subjects in a variety of domains and discourses” (Brown 2006, 67). The objective of governmentality studies is not to determine “who holds power” but rather to question the “forms and operations of power” (Brown 2006, 67). Foucault’s theories of power do not recognize the “individual” as a naturally existing phenomenon, but rather posit that individuals and the subject are only recognizable within and because of the disciplinary mechanisms that simultaneously perceive the constructed individual as the object of their control (Nilsson 2013, Million 2013). Individuals also become knowable as members of a “population” that in turn are understood and recognized through governing apparatuses such as “science” and health programs (Nilsson 2013).

Biopolitical governmentality in Foucault’s (1976, 241) famous assertion is not just the power to take life but rather “the right to make live and to let die.” Power as the force to “make live” is exercised through “regulatory and discursive forces” (Place and Vardeman-Winter 2013). Regulatory and discursive forces create norms by establishing hegemonic knowledges as forms of common-sense that are reproduced in individual acts of self-regulation (Simons and Masschelein 2006). Knowledge, according to Foucauldian theory, is intimately connected to power in that “structures of power are able to shape the possibilities of knowledge” and it is essential to trace how “power both creates and constrains knowledge within a society” (Hannem 2012, 21). Public health initiatives and social services act as “governmental apparatuses” that are produced by and produce these norms and knowledges (Lupton 1995; Foucault 1976; Dean 2009). As Million (2013, 29) argues, “Western ‘rational’ governance has lifted the processes of life, minute details, and biological facts and incorporated them into data by which our lives are managed and increasingly understood.” It is through these ‘facts’ and ‘data’ that public health initiatives make ‘populations’ knowable. Public health initiatives and other social services such as child welfare
are forms of productive power that delineated the normative way to be, act, look, dress, clean, eat, mother, and have sex. Following settler colonial theorists such as Morgensen (2011, 54), I argue that settler colonialism is a “primary condition” of biopolitical governmentality within Canada. In this way, we cannot understand the production of subjects and the strategies of control that they are formed within outside of the colonial logics of race and gender (Dean 2009; Foucault 1990; Henderson 2003). Race, gender, and other identity markers are not “incidental” to the current social systems and forms of governance that sex workers mediate but fundamental to their very becoming (Kinkaid 2020, 467).

Notes on Resistance

While Foucault’s work offers a language for exploring “the productive nature of power” (McKee 2011, 1) his work has been readily criticized for the ways through which his exploration of governing practices can re-entrench a “totalizing” view of power “that render the individual – as an active, engaged subject - invisible” (McKee 2011, 1; Hannem 2012, 19). As McKee (2011, 1) argues this “totalizing” view of power can ignore the importance of “counter-conduct” and the “messy realities” of governing by relying on a reading of governmentality that conceptualizes relations of power as entirely dominating, and in this way “marginalize the struggles around subjectivity” (McKee 2011, 1). Foucault himself seemed to speak against this charge in his 1982 essay “The Subject and Power” by clarifying that relations of power can best be understood as a set of “actions” that guide the possible actions of others (Foucault 1982, 789). Therefore, power relations “presupposes rather than annuls” an individual subject’s “capacity as agents” (Gordon 1991, 50). Understanding power as a set of actions on the actions of “free subjects” creates the space to think about resistance (McKee 2011, 2): If power is both productive and diffused in nature, resistance cannot be understood as a set of actions that “transcend and overthrow power relations”
(McKee 2011, 3). Instead, following Foucault (1982, 791-792), I understand resistance as the “analysis, elaboration, and bringing into question of power relations and the "agonism" between power relations and the intransitivity of freedom.” In other words, “power is not absolute and only exists relationally – thus where there is power there is always resistance” (Hannem 2012, 21).

Notes on Stigma

Exploring the practices of resistance, or “counter-conducts” of subjects, can expose how “unstable [any] governing project and the relations of power it produces” are (Roy 2017, 870). Throughout this dissertation, I explore how individuals are produced within and resist the experience of stigma or “discredit” and therefore offer a brief exploration of the concept of stigma as it will be utilized in this dissertation (Goffman 1965, 3). Much stigma theory is indebted to Erving Goffman (1965,3), who argues that stigma is produced in the interaction “between attribute and stereotype” (Goffman 1965,4). As Hannem (2012, 15) writes, “an individual possesses a particular attribute […] defined by others, based on stereotypes, as an undesirable or negative characteristic.” The perception of a stigmatized attribute will then lead non-stigmatized individuals to interact with the stigmatized individuals in discriminatory ways that “limit the life chances of the stigmatized person” (Goffman 2017, 133). While Goffman’s work focuses heavily on the impacts of stigma on individuals, Stacy Hannem (2012) has built on his scholarship to explore the social or structural levels of stigma. Hannem (2012, 25) differentiates between “symbolic stigma,” which is the interpersonal experience of stigma that has the intent to “shame” an individual who is perceived as outside of the norm, and structural stigma. For Hannem (2012, 25), structural stigma is “the result of a carefully calculated decision at an institutional or bureaucratic level to manage the risk that a particular population is perceived to present, either to themselves, to the institution, or to society.” These deliberate decisions include things such as the criminalization of
the sex industry or the proliferation of ‘rescue’ narratives by the government. Structural stigma refers not only to the individual experiences of internalized shame but also to the material impacts of institutional and bureaucratic decisions that are justified by the supposed ‘risk’ a group of people pose, whether that risk is actualized or not (Hannem 2012). According to Bruckert and Hannem (2013, 48)

Structural stigma takes hold when assumptions about risk (whether risk to self or to others) become attached to a discredited identity through institutionalized discourse; these notions are manifested in targeted interventions designed to manage the risk posed by the stigmatized group, irrespective of individual circumstances or attributes. Stigma, then, as a function of risk, is transformed from an individual experience of discredit to a collective experience of management and regulation.

Sex working subjects are subjects that have been deemed as risks to society and as subjects that are understood as at-risk themselves from the supposed dangers of the sex industry (Bruckert and Hannem 2013, 48). Therefore, as Bruckert and Hannem (2013, 49) argue, the criminalization of sex work, due to the supposed risk it poses to society, can be understood as an example of structural stigma. Criminalization is not just a singular individual experiencing discrimination or “discredit,” but the management of an entire population who are deemed as risks due to stigma and then must be managed. In this dissertation, I rely on the notion of structural stigma to understand how sex working subjects face both individual “experiences of discredit” and simultaneously experience structural stigma that include “targeted interventions” meant to manage them as risky subjects through criminal, health care and social work interventions, and non-sex working community responses to the sex industry (Bruckert and Hannem 2013, 48).

In exploring the experiences of sex working subjects who are produced within, reproduce, and resist structural stigma, I hope to make visible the cracks and messiness in the governance of
subjects. I argue that, for those whose lives are mediated by structural stigma, simple existence is an act of resistance in that existence is a refusal of the dehumanization inherent within structural stigma (Povielli 2011). At the same time, I explore how sex workers also resist structural stigma by “bringing into question” the violent logics that uphold structural stigma and argue that doing so can create the space to understand acts of resistance as the act of questioning or exposing the logics that violent governing practices are built upon (Foucault 1982, 791-792).

**Methodological Approaches**

I used a mixed-methods approach in designing and implementing this research study. This approach involved conducting semi-structured interviews with health care workers and unstructured interviews, and semi-structured focus groups with sex working participants. A mixed-methods approach was essential because of the relative power differences between groups that participated in the study (discussed further below).

I initially identified three major participant groups, current and former sex working community members that I connected with through a formalized sex work community organization (FSWC), police, and health care workers in NEO. Despite months of negotiations and discussions with police, I was never able to complete interviews with this participant group. I interviewed two health care workers, both of whom had over 20 years of experience working as public health nurses. Finally, I interviewed and conducted focus groups with ten members of FSWC, all of whom are current or former self-identified sex workers.

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18 I had several phone calls, months of emails, and a prolonged contract negotiation with a police department. However, there would be gaps of several months between their contacts and eventually I decided that interviews were not longer possible with the police because I wished to finish the study before my funding ran out (in August 2021).
Semi-structured Interviews and Health Care Participants

Due to the relative power imbalances between these groups, I felt it was important to approach their participation in different ways. For public health participants, I conducted semi-structured interviews with pre-established interview questions (see appendix A). There was little room for negotiation in our respective roles as interviewer and interviewee, and the interviews were formal and led by me. Each participant signed two consent forms, one they kept and one I kept (see Appendix B). The consent forms outlined various potential risks for their participation, namely professional risks because the interviews were conducted in their place of work, and there were potential risks associated with deviating from their workplace’s official policies on sex work.

I chose to use semi-structured interviews to allow for the “conversational and informal tone” typical of semi-structured interviews, creating space for the participant or myself to veer off-topic and or clarify points (Longhurst 2016, 146). As Leech (2002) outlines, rapport is an essential component of semi-structured interviews, and participants need to be put at ease, ensured that the researcher is listening, and encouraged that their answers are important to the study. In order to establish a rapport with the participants I brought baked goods and coffees to our meetings and began each interview with a series of questions that related to them, such as how long they had worked at their job and if they liked it. The semi-structured interview style worked well for a couple of reasons: First, my participants in the health care industry did not have the time to help write the questions or design the study, their participation was limited to the interview time allotted, and none expressed interest in being involved further in the study or in designing the study. Second, I felt that because of the relative power that health care workers hold in the community as “translat[ors of] state power” (Pollack 2010, 1263), there were fewer ethical
concerns about excluding the members of this group in the design and implementation stages of the study because the study would have fewer potential ramifications on their lives and livelihoods.

**Community-Based Participatory Research and Sex Work Participants**

For sex working participants, I used community-based participatory research methods to design, implement, and review the study and decide how the results of the study would be distributed. CBPR methods exist along a continuum of participants' involvement from the design to dissemination of results. Through collaborative efforts and thanks to the willingness of my participants, I aimed for as much involvement as they were willing to offer (Wilson 2018). CBPR has been widely adopted in human geography and public health research as a way of conducting research that minimizes the power imbalances between research subjects and the researcher. It does this by handing control of the design and implementation of the study over to the research participants and making the researcher a vehicle for collecting and merging the data produced by the research participants themselves (Wilson 2018). CBPR is generally defined as a set of research methodologies whose aim is to work in collaboration with research participants to *design, implement, interpret* and *disseminate* the results of the study in a way that *benefits* the research participants. This next section will look at each of these five aspects of CBPR and how we approached them in this study before looking at how institutional ethics reviews create a barrier to fully participant-driven CBPR. I have outlined the process visually through Figure One (see below).

*Design and Implement*
Approaching the Participants

In her study of the methodologies used in sex work research, Harrington (2017) notes that sex work organizations act as gatekeepers in relation to academic studies, offering researchers access to participants and mediating the access. In this study, Jackie, the woman who founded and organized FSWC, both enabled and mediated my initial relationship with the women involved in the study. I am thankful for Jackie’s willingness to work so closely with me to establish this study. I approached Jackie with an initial project idea. My original proposal included over 27

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19 The use of the term women in this study is not exclusive to cis-women.
questions on how women’s experiences in sex work were governed and shaped by community health measures targeted at sex workers (see appendix B for list of initial questions). However, with the help of Jackie, I quickly realized that this approach to research would be both ineffective and problematic. Since a large majority of my study was intended to understand how women claimed agency in interactions with health workers and police, it seemed reductive and counter-intuitive to then lead the study myself and use my questions that had been developed solely by me. Instead, Jackie and I came up with the idea of holding a brainstorming session with participants to co-create the research questions and establish the parameters for the study. These parameters included decisions on how often to meet, for how long, and the creation of an accountability measure for myself. To begin, we held an initial, unrecorded brainstorming session in January 2020, where we discussed the participants’ fears about doing this study, came up with questions, and discussed the concept of consent at length. I intentionally did not record the first brainstorming session because I wanted to make sure all members of the group were comfortable and aware of what they were doing before I began recording sessions. The initial brainstorming meeting not only allowed us the time to come up with the goals and direction of the study but also acted as an opportunity for the participants to ‘feel me out’ and decide how comfortable they felt working with me.

*Interpret*

For researchers who study the sex industry, CBPR is beneficial because it offers “interpretive control” to a community whose stories have often been misconstrued (Harrington 2017). In our initial brainstorming session, we decided that I would conduct the initial coding and write a draft of my dissertation and then bring it back to them for their review and critiques. I was determined to ensure their consent with how I had interpreted the data and their stories prior to any form of
publication or before defending the dissertation. This was both a way of holding me accountable to the community that I cared deeply for, but also as a way of ensuring their safety when they discuss resistance methods and violence endured by state actors (I discuss this issue at more length in Chapters Three and Five). The main issue that arises from interpretive control when it comes to focus groups and shared data is establishing how many of the group members have to consent to the interpreted findings for the group to okay the results of the study. We had this discussion early on the first day, and it was decided that even if every member of the group who was at the focus group sessions was not at the final review of the data, everyone was comfortable and trusted the remaining group members who were there to review and okay the results.

Dissemination of Research

While authorship is generally considered an important tenet of CBPR in the case of sex working community members the ability to credit authorship becomes more difficult in that it can potentially “out” sex workers to members of their community or family who were not aware of their profession. Further, because of the structure of the university, co-authorship of dissertations is not allowed; therefore, I was not able to offer my participants authorship on the dissertation itself, but we discussed as a group the potential of co-authoring future works together if they were still willing to do this. Further, as a way of mediating the tension that is caused by my need to create an academic piece that will be “passable” as a dissertation and the participants’ need for a piece that spells out the research results in more accessible language, we settled in the first focus group on the decision that I would write both the dissertation and I would create a “day planner” with the results in it for their use, ownership, and potential distribution (if they wanted to distribute it).

Benefits
CBPR is also defined by an emphasis on mutual benefits for the research subjects and the researcher (Harrington 2017; Wilson 2018). This was something I was aware of throughout the research process, cognizant that I benefitted substantially more from their willingness to participate, their knowledge, and their labour, whereas the benefits for the community were limited to the direct benefit of payment for time and the potential benefit of future changes to laws and policies surrounding sex work. To try and maximize benefits for participants we spent a great deal of time in our initial brainstorming session discussing what the participants hoped to get out of this research project. Throughout the research project I asked each participant why they agreed to participate, hoping to assess what benefit they were looking for that I could provide. Their answers ranged from the financial benefit of participating to a desire to have their story told to help other women who faced similar experiences and felt alone. I hope that the results of this study will help them achieve some of their initial hopes in entering the study, such as more funding for a permanent space.

Institutional barriers to CBPR

Aside from the institutional barrier of co-authorship that I discussed above, other institutional barriers create difficulties for researchers who want to engage in CBPR, including the regulations passed down from the research ethics board. For this study, one critical barrier was the introduction of my duty to report in the consent forms at the request of the research ethics board. My initial ethics proposal did not include a duty to report, but the research ethics board asked that I include it alongside a series of other provisions that I felt would decrease participant safety. My supervisor and I met with the ethics board, and during the course of this conversation, we discussed how including the duty to report would decrease safety for participants because much of the violence that they experienced came from state actors who would then be receiving the reports. In
the end, a decision was reached that I would include a duty to report in my consent forms that was limited to “clear, serious and imminent risk of bodily harm or death to identifiable persons” [see Appendix for full consent form]. This decision, while not ideal, was a compromise that enabled me to complete the research with full ethics approval.

At the same time, including the duty to report in the consent forms was a barrier to participation, and participants articulated that it made them feel less safe speaking with me. Several participants who had a well-founded fear of police and social workers described feeling hesitant to participate because the consent form stated that I have a “duty to report” violence or abuse of power. One participant, after reading the section of the consent form that included the duty to report, stated that it made her feel like “running out right now.” I explained that the duty to report only applied to potential, future, identifiable, imminent harm, and not past harm or harm done to them. This explanation eased some fears but there continued to be tension. I then suggested that if I felt like we were entering a conversation that my duty to report might force me to do something, I would stop the conversation, shut off the recording devices, and leave the room so that they could finish that discussion and invite me back in when it was safe for them. We never encountered this issue; however, I worried that the ‘duty to report’ could have been potentially detrimental to the safety of participants. At the same time, I recognize that boundaries set by ethics boards offer important protections to participants and researchers. I discuss this tension in more detail below in the section labelled “Considering the Research Process.”

Creating the Research Questions
Having established the benefits of CBPR in this study, I turn now to explain how the process of the study occurred. The following excerpt from my fieldwork journal sets the stage for our first brainstorming session, where we established the research questions:
I entered that brainstorming session with no exact plan other than to introduce myself. We sat around a table and shared subs and pop, I accidentally brought too few drinks, so I ran down the street to pick up some more. I felt nervous, unsure of what my role in that room was. Do I become friends? Or, does that then erase my position of power and create a false sense of safety that they should not feel? I was cognizant that they were all there for me and that I was an outsider looking into a group whose powerful friendships you could feel as each new person entered and were embraced by their fellow members.

When we began and had gone over the consent form, I handed out multicoloured sticky notes and asked everyone around the table to write down as many things as they could think of that they wanted to talk about as a group. What were the issues that they felt were most pressing for us to discuss? The responses were disparate and varied and reflected the multiplicity of the lived experiences of the women. After the responses were submitted, Shirley split the responses into six categories.

In this first brainstorming session, we decided to hold three focus groups together, each three hours long, and conduct individual interviews with all members of the group. To decide on the objectives and goals of the study, each participant wrote down ideas on sticky notes, and I grouped their responses with Shirley, a member of the group who volunteered to help me while the others took a break. Their responses are listed below in the categories Shirley and I created, and they are presented exactly as they were written on the sticky notes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Motherhood</th>
<th>Abuse on the Job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>CAS</td>
<td>JUST BECAUSE WE DO SEX WORK DOESN’T MEAN WE CAN’T BE RAPED AND IT IS ASSAULT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two tier health care.</td>
<td>CAS and Kina</td>
<td>There should be an ESTABLISHED “track” where we can work without HARRASMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Health care workers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>treating SW differently</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because they are SWs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination with the medical field</td>
<td>Being a good mother and still sex working</td>
<td>SEX WORKERS CAN ALSO BE RAPED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>METHADONE DOES NOT = A BAD MOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ASSAULT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOBAL WARMING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Police</th>
<th>Community Building inside the Sex working community</th>
<th>Community building with outside community</th>
<th>Gender, Race, and Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cops</td>
<td>Community that stands together more social groups for vulnerable people</td>
<td>Medical front-Line Workers <strong>NEED</strong> to be more respectful of we won’t COME IN FOR CARE!</td>
<td>Missing + Murdered Indigenous Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>How we keep each other safe, How 2 Be safe while working</td>
<td>Community building will ripple affect for + by sex workers ALL. Ie: police, health care, child services etc;</td>
<td>Native People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The LAW</td>
<td>RESPECT EACH OTHER!</td>
<td>Better Community Relations</td>
<td>Women that are in Sex Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol officers should just leave the girls alone!</td>
<td>Girls <strong>NEED</strong> to show SOLIDARITY about wearing condoms &amp;</td>
<td>Youth &lt;3 (heart with an arrow going through it) LGBTQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacing only increases chances of ASSAULT</td>
<td>stick to prices without UNDERCUTTING.</td>
<td>LOVE</td>
<td>Women going missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Worker Community Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After our break, I presented these categories back to the group and asked if I had missed anything. A few corrections were made; for instance, I initially did not include global warming under motherhood but was told by its author that she wanted it in that category. Further, I was called to include the youth and LGBTQ sticky that I had placed to the side because I did not know how to categorize it. From these initial themes, I suggested a few questions and brainstormed them aloud. I adjusted the questions according to the group’s comments, and we tried to ensure that the questions remained open-ended enough that we could have wide-ranging discussions.

One of the discussions we had after looking at the sticky notes was around the success of their group and how they could be a blueprint for other sex work community organizers. From that discussion came the question, “how and why is this group so successful?” That question morphed into a discussion about belonging, and eventually, we came up with the first finalized question:

1. How does this group build a healthy community? What does community and solidarity mean to you? What does belonging mean to you?
The next discussion we had centred on police and health care and how sex workers enact agency in those interactions. We also discussed how sex workers could teach others about bodily autonomy and ownership. Through those discussions, the following questions emerged:

2. What does resistance look like to you? In relation to police and health workers? How do you make yourself safer in these interactions? What can sex working community members teach others about bodily autonomy?

Finally, we moved to a discussion of motherhood. Jackie suggested we make this the last question because she thought everyone would have a lot to say about it. Many around the table told a story of how they went above and beyond as mothers because they are forced to prove to others (and to themselves) that they were good mothers. After this discussion, the question we landed on was:

3. How does motherhood play a role in your life? How do you deal with internalized stigma and motherhood?

Who to include?

In the brainstorming session, there was a discussion about who should be included in the study; more specifically, should we include cis-gendered male sex workers. One woman said her husband had “turned tricks” with her but that she would not call him a sex worker. In the end we decided to keep the study to those who were present at the first meeting, all of whom identified as women.

All the participants in this study were born and raised in Canada; therefore, the conclusions in this dissertation are limited to the experiences of domestic sex workers in NEO. The lack of migrant sex workers' voices was not intentional; rather, the result of who chose to participate. The
initial invitation to participate did not delineate who could participate based on a history of immigration or residency status. The focus on domestic sex workers had some important implications for how the study evolved and what questions were asked. The conversations we had centred on the experiences of state violence for sex workers who were assumed (in Canadian colonial law, if not in practice) to be ‘legally’ entitled to live in the Canadian state and therefore are not subject to the same forms of violence due to “border imperialism” that migrant sex workers are targeted by (Walia 2013). Migrant sex workers are doubly criminalized and managed by the neoliberal colonial state, seen as both threats to the national ‘family’ and as ‘victims’ who must be saved by the benevolent Western state (Lam 2016). Anti-trafficking discourse also frequently targets migrant sex workers in different ways than domestic sex workers, and these realities are not explored at length in this dissertation (for more, see: Jeffrey 2011; Lam 2016; Lam and Lepp 2019).

Data Collection

Focus Groups

Each of these sets of questions was used as the basis for one of the three focus groups. The focus groups always began with a meal provided by me, and generally, the first hour was spent in casual conversation and eating. After we had finished eating, I passed around consent forms that each participant signed, after which I took out the recording devices and placed two on the table. We then smudged the room and the recording devices at the request of participants before beginning. At the start of each session, I reminded the group of the questions for that week, but the discussions often varied widely.

The first focus group was the more formal, I brought the questions we had created, and I brought sticky notes again and asked participants to write down their answers on the sticky notes to the first question. This seemed controlling and overly difficult, so I quickly dropped that
approach and instead tried to interject as little as possible and let the conversation go where they wanted it to. Even though we had created a set of questions prior to the focus groups, the topics that were covered in each session were divergent, and participants frequently came up with new questions as we talked and asked them to the group. Focus groups were often filled with humour and with heavier emotions and tears. Focus groups tended to be more emotionally charged spaces than interviews, and I credit this to the safety that was fostered in being together as a group.

Participants were compensated at a rate of $20 an hour plus $10.50 for travel per focus group. Participants were reminded during each focus group that they could retract any information they wanted to by contacting me. At the end of each session, one or more members of the group would smudge the room, and everyone was given a chance to say a final thought before ending the evening. I offered to turn off the recording devices for final thoughts and would follow participants’ requests.

Interviews

For interviews, I brought the questions we had created and gave participants the option of answering the questions or talking about anything else they wanted to include. While some participants opted to be asked questions, eight out of ten of them led the interviews themselves, talking to me about any issue they felt was important. The interviews lasted between thirty minutes to three hours, depending on how long each participant felt like staying. I brought food and coffee to the interviews. We typically met at a local community centre, but I also met participants at their homes, in the local coffee shop, and in my hotel room at their request. For interviews, participants were compensated at a rate of $20 an hour plus $10.50 for travel expenses. Each participant signed a consent form before beginning the interview and before I turned the recording device on. Participants were reminded at the beginning of each interview that they could retract any
information they wanted; at times during the interview, participants would ask to have something they said removed and I did so in the transcription process.

The ability to retract information was especially important in this study because of the potential ramifications of disclosing information for sex working participants due to the relatively small population of NEO, which makes it easier to identify folks by their stories. It was also important because of a well-founded fear that publishing certain resistance tactics could expose participants to further state violence, particularly in relation to the tactics used to protect sex working mothers and their children from CAS. Conducting collaborative research requires a level of trust from participants that I would not publish or release any information that they had asked me to retract in a show of solidarity and as a recognition of the risks they are taking in discussing covert tactics with me.²⁰

Data Analysis

From the interviews and focus group sessions, I was left with over 25 hours of audio that I transcribed to protect their identities, amassing approximately 450 pages of research data. Inspired by activist-academics whom I respect and admire, I position this dissertation as a piece of political work. In that vein, my methodology was unapologetically set on reading the interview and focus group data from sex working participants as examples of “political resistance and [I] present sex workers and their work as a deliberate strategy of both survival and resistance” (Jeffery and MacDonald 2006, 317). In this project, I used a hybrid combination of “inductive coding” and “deductive coding” to analyze my data (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006). Inductive coding involves coding without “a pre-existing coding frame or the researcher’s analytic preconceptions,” allowing the analysis to be purely “data-drive” (Nowell et al. 2017, 8), whereas deductive coding

²⁰ See Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of this.
is the process of looking for pre-established codes in the data that is created. I began by familiarizing myself with the data and coding the data line by line in NVivo with some pre-established codes (namely: agency, resistance, community, motherhood, police, health care) and simultaneously searched for and created “nodes” for new themes that as I saw them arise. I then grouped the themes in NVivo by combining nodes to make “sets.” I revisited the data again with my new codes and re-examined the data line by line to establish if there were any connections or relationships between the coded themes. In the end, I had 17 “sets” of “nodes” with a variety of sub-themes within each category (see figure 3).

I then used Nowell et al.’s (2017) process of “defining and naming the themes” and, using these themes, created chapter headings and subheadings. Throughout the process of writing, the headings and subheadings were continuously re-worked as I realized more and more relationships between themes and cut down on the number of subheadings by integrating multiple themes into one subheading. By combining inductive and deductive coding processes, I was able to capture
the intended data that my research participants wanted from the questions we co-created and simultaneously allow for new themes to emerge from the data itself, creating a fuller picture of what life, community building, and resistance looks like for sex working community members in NEO.

**Reviewing the Data**

A little over a year and a half from our last focus group session, I returned to NEO to review the data with the participants of this study. The COVID-19 pandemic made it more difficult to return, and special precautions were put in place to make it as safe as possible. I contacted Jackie, who coordinated the logistics, and we met once again at the community art room we had used for the previous focus group meetings. We met for two afternoons and followed the same format for these meetings as we had for the first focus groups. The first hour was set aside for shared lunch, and the next few hours were set aside to review the data. Participants were compensated at a rate of $20 an hour plus $10.50 for travel costs per day. Nine of the ten original participants joined us for the reviewing session; the final participant was not able to join due to circumstances outside of her control.

Prior to the meeting I created a slideshow that included the quotes I used in the dissertation and a few notes around how the quote was being used, along with the overarching arguments of each chapter. In total, there were 170 slides that we reviewed as a group. We sat in a circle around a TV screen, and I read through the slides leaving space for participants to give feedback on the content. For the most part, the feedback was additional stories that re-affirmed what was said on the slide; I did not record these additional stories as they were not part of the original data. At times, participants asked to have a certain quote changed or asked me to reframe certain things, and I made these changes after the sessions were completed. Participants also requested a copy of
the dissertation which I emailed to each of them. Finally, we discussed continuing to work together to publish some of these chapters in a more accessible language in the coming months.

Considering the Research Process

As someone who has worked on online erotic sites, I found it difficult at times to situate myself in the study and decide how much I wanted to share with participants. I began working in online camming partway through my Ph.D., and I told my participants the first day we began working together that I did online work, and yet it was important to me to share that my experience in the sex industry is limited. I did not want participants to feel obligated to participate based on their perception of me as a colleague when I worked in one of the least stigmatized and least policed aspects of the sex industry and am protected from many of the forms of criminalization and stigma due to my whiteness, class status, and associations with academia.

At the same time, my experience in the industry at times helped to get the conversation started in the form of “interactive interviewing,” where researchers share stories and act as research participants (Ellis 2007, 20). Often, I used my experiences to clarify questions or start conversations. For example, during our first session, I asked the participants to write down on sticky notes things they were looking for in sex working community (SWC). There were a lot of blank stares. So, I used my own experiences to explain what I meant, which led to an interesting discussion about the need for advice in SWCs:

Lindy: What I'm looking for in community. I uh because I do my online work and nobody in Ottawa I know does it. And I want somebody to tell me how they feel with like the men who want me to be a little girl, I don't know how to deal with that…
Devon: Oh I know eh?
Suzie: I had to do that one day
Ellen: Here's what you do. You just say while I understand why you might find this sexually exciting, to me, I find it kind of crosses the barrier […]
This conversation continued for quite some time as different participants weighed in on this topic and eventually led us to a conversation on the importance of informal communication networks for support and advice. My position as an insider-outsider to the community was a present and structuring force throughout the study yet became important at different times.

My fears around disclosing my experiences in the sex industry with participants came from a worry that disclosing my (admittedly limited) experience could still obfuscate the very real imbalance in power that is inherent in any research relationship. This worry was further amplified by other moments of vulnerability on my end that emerged during the research process. I began my fieldwork immediately after a difficult relationship, and at times, my ongoing fears concerning that relationship would slip into research interactions. These moments of vulnerability on my part frequently led to more personal and in-depth discussions, and yet I worried that in these moments of vulnerability I was once again inadvertently hiding the imbalance of power in researcher-participant relationships. While feminist methodologies call on researchers to create research situations that are “grounded in notions of engagement and radical empathy, and additionally, a methodology that highlights agency and creates dialogical, discursive spaces” (Nencel 2014, 76; Manning 2018), the practical application of this methodology is messy. I was often left with ethical questions around how friendship and researcher vulnerability could cross a poorly defined boundary. For example, in our first brainstorming session, there was a sense of formality in the first few minutes, and in my explanation of why I was doing this research I touched on my personal life and experiences. The following excerpt from my field journal highlights this interaction:

*It was our first focus group, and we brainstormed our research questions and came up with a research plan. We had three hours but spent the first hour eating subway and chatting. Jackie suggested we get started and called the group to order. When I stood up and I felt my role in the room shift, all of a sudden I was The Researcher. I started by telling them about myself and somehow was talking*
about Him. I told them the same story I told Jackie a few months before. Laughing, I tell them about something that had happened recently that was making me more nervous. This was met with shouts to “cut him off.” “I don’t want to make him angry” I rationalize. Emily declared from the other end of the table “she still loves him, I get it.” Ellen in the corner yelled out, “just send him to us and we will deal with him” this was followed by laughter and shouts of affirmation. I didn’t feel like The Researcher anymore. I laugh along, feeling better than I have in months, and then change the conversation to our next steps in creating the research questions.

At our break, Emily came up to me with something written on a slip of paper, in big letters, she had written “FUCK YOU ETHAN.” “I love and hate my fucked up-ex too,” she said. I felt so seen I could have cried.

While this moment of vulnerability worked to break down the air of formality that had snuck into the room when I stood up and became the “researcher,” I worried that in breaking down this boundary I was somehow “tricking” my participants into trusting me by revealing too much. I further worried I was obscuring the reality of our research relationship, and through my vulnerability, creating a sense of trust that I had done little to earn. Feminist research has illustrated the “dangerously fine line between care and control” (Womersley, Maw and Swartz 2011, 877). In the field, I was constantly questioning if my attempt at care enacted through vulnerability did the opposite of what I intended, and instead increased my control by blurring and obscuring my position of power and creating a condition of friendship through which it would be difficult for my participants to give consent.

Feminist methodologies call for researchers to “break down the boundary between researcher and participant” (Cuomo and Massaro 2016; 103) yet, throughout my fieldwork, I became aware of the potentially positive role boundaries play in ensuring ethical relationships between researchers and participants, and the role they play in “keeping both […] emotionally and physically safe” (Cuomo and Massaro 2016; 103). While McDowell (1992) argues that when women are studying women, more egalitarian relationships between researcher and researcher
participants can be fostered that are “a valid part of the research process,” I am critical about the idea that we can create the conditions for egalitarian relationships when the institutional power of academia rest solely in the hands of the researchers.

During my field world, I experienced a sense of “betweenness,” caught between a state of nervous vulnerability, seeking connection through shared experiences, and anxious attempts to create boundaries and ensure I was not denying participants their ability to consent by exposing my vulnerability. I was lucky to have a supportive supervisor who reminded me that “no methods are innocent,” and as I reflect on that advice now, I wonder what silences I produced in the research process in my desperate and vain attempt at seeking a fully innocent method (Law and Urry 2004, 402). Etherington (2007 62) writes that in her anxiety to “hold to the feminist ethic of care [I lost] sight of a participant as an independent actor who possesses the power to say what [s]he feels.” In a similar way, in my anxious state of betweenness, I at times denied the agency of my participants as independent actors\(^{21}\) who were able to recognize me as both a researcher and someone that they could advise or connect with based on shared experience. A central question of this project deals with how sex working community members resist stigma and over-policing and reassert their agency in these moments. Throughout our many interviews and focus groups I was inundated with examples from my participants of times where they had claimed agency and resisted narratives that paint all sex workers as passive victims of the society. Yet, I struggled to acknowledge their agency in the moments where my vulnerability emerged, scared that I had acted improperly and

\(^{21}\) Not an independent actors in the way liberalism would have us believe, after all “autonomous agency is a naïve and expedient fiction that sustains the status quo” but rather actors whose subjectivity was constantly becoming within our interaction and the socio-structural processes the mediated our interactions. Individuals are not pre-existing separate and sovereign entities who float around a sea of affect and poorly identified “power relations.” Rather, we are all constantly emerging “through and as part of [our] entangled intra-relating” and; importantly, do not “pre-exist their interactions” (Barad 2007, ix).
had caused harm by obscuring my role as researcher. In doing so, I wonder what possibilities I foreclosed by re-directing the conversations back to “real” research rather than allowing the moments of vulnerability to play out more naturally (Womersly, Maw, and Swartz 2011; McCoy 2012).

The agency of the participants was frequently articulated, not as an individual and possessable quality, but as a group exercise in mutual safety. In our first focus group, we spent an hour reviewing the consent form, and I was pushed on parts of the form that participants felt made them unsafe, in particular, and as discussed above, my “Duty to Report.” Several times throughout that first day, Jackie pushed the women to pay attention to my overview of the consent form, reminding them of their right to question me. Throughout the day, they repeated to each other the line “we don’t give our diamonds to swines” as a reminder of the value of their knowledge and their right to hold me accountable. In their group questioning and in Jackie’s reminders, their agency as a collective force was evident. Feminist methodologies call for us to let go of our “ontologically pre-defined” ideas about what a research relationship should look like (Nencel 2014, 76, see also Nager and Geiger 2007). For me, this meant letting go of the idea that the power relationships in the field were static and unmoving, rather than fluid, relational and defined partially in the moment of contact. While I argue I needed to remain cognizant of the institutional power that I was granted as a researcher, along with my power to leave (Tamas 2011), denying their collective agency by refusing to allow for natural connections based on shared vulnerability, felt like a form of violence as well.

Understanding ethics and consent as a negotiated “process rather than an event” (Etherington 2007, 603) creates space to have ongoing conversations about the unreconcilable questions of care, control, and agency. At the same time, I was wary about how I used this
negotiated process noticing at times I appeared to fatigue participants with constant requests for consent, the sole purpose of which was to reassure me that they still wanted to participate. This became especially clear for me in one early instance with the group. I asked how we could set up an accountability framework, so they could hold me accountable if I unintentionally caused harm. From the far end of the table, Ellen said, “can’t we just text you?” This felt incomplete for me, and I was worried not everyone would feel comfortable texting me and brought that concern up. Ellen dismissively stated that “we can just text you if we have a problem,” there were a series of nods around the table, and we took a break. My overly-care-filled fears about manipulation, ethics, and accountability were overblown at this moment, and the collective agency of the group was put on full display. Agency as a collective force and as a relational process requires that I accept and acknowledge their role in creating the dialectic possibility of agency, something I struggled to do in the field.

In revisiting the interviews through my transcription process, I found myself wishing I had more often allowed the moments of vulnerability to continue and had been less concerned with conducting the “real” research (Nencel 2014). My desire to be both a ‘good/feminist/researcher’ and at the same time a ‘vulnerable/connected/ally’ can be understood as both “kinda subversive [and] kinda hegemonic” (Sedgewick quoted in Greyser 2007, 278). What became moments of power disruption through vulnerability and connection in the field, at the same time, re-affirmed my power as the researcher who mediates when these moments of vulnerability are performed and then makes them knowable to others. To me, letting go of pre-existing or “ontologically pre-defined” ideas about what ‘good’ or ‘real’ research is (Nencel 2014, 79) meant creating the space to ask hard ethical questions and remaining wary of my desires for connection as they permeated my relationships in the field, while not foreclosing the connections that emerge. Through my
experience with this research, I have come to the (incomplete) conclusion that trauma is lonely, research is lonely, and connections made through research should be continually evaluated and kindly examined but not refused.

**Conclusion**
This project emerged through a mixed-methods approach that emphasized collaborative research and the consent of research individuals. The project design, data collection, analysis, and writing were done through different levels of collaboration. Data analysis was premised on attention to scales of violence and resistance and used both inductive and deductive coding strategies to fulfill the research goals of my participants and allow the data to speak for itself. The writing process was conducted with limited contact from participants until I had a draft ready to present to them. Through this collaborative research process, I hope to have respected the wishes and autonomy of my research participants.
Chapter Two

“Money, Man!” The Governing Logics of Sex Work and Sex Worker Resistance in NEO

Communities are produced within and produce the rationalities of inclusions/exclusion. The practices and processes of inclusion and exclusion that define communities are productive in that they “generate and legitimate necessary social hierarchies [that are] implicitly required, but disavowed, by capitalism” and by settler societies (Joseph 2002, xxxi). In this chapter, I draw on Nikolas Rose’s circuits of security (inclusion) and circuits of insecurity (exclusion) to explore how sex working community members in NEO are governed by, and experience, inclusion/exclusion as “contemporary control strategies.” Rose (2000, 331) states that in late liberalism subjects are exposed to the processes and strategies of exclusion based on their refusal or inability to accept the “bonds of civility and self responsibility.” In this chapter I argue that the “bonds of civility and self responsibility” that mark inclusion/exclusion are further informed by the logics of contagion, the pathologization of sex workers, and the gendered and racialized processes of settler

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22 Both capitalism and settler societies rely on, and produce, the hierarchical categorization of people according to “interlocking” systems of oppression such as capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and racism (Razack and Fellows 1997, 336; Hill Collins 1990). For example, settler colonialism depends on and emerged through the “concomitant global system” of racialization (Byrd 2011, 24). Through processes of racialization, Indigenous peoples became marked as culturally inferior, and the settler “logic of elimination” justified genocidal practices as a natural result of ‘progress’ (Wolfe 2006, 387). Settler colonization further relies on the racial logics of blackness that justified the theft of people and their enslavement to be used as labour for the ‘settlement’ of lands (Arvin, Tuck, Morrill 2013, 12). Racial logics also underpin late liberalism where racial difference (more frequently defined as cultural differences since the 1950s shift away from biological racism) justifies the continued colonial occupation of ‘Canada,’ and the forced imposition of neoliberal state policies on post-colonial countries to ensure the West’s continued access to resources and labour from post-colonial states.

23 In Canada, ‘civility’ must be understood in relation to whiteness and the violent maintenance of white civility as an on-going project within Canadian discourse. As Coleman argues “In a very real sense, White Canadians have tried to create civility in their own image: this has been the central project of invader-settler subjectivity in Canada. (Coleman 2009, 222). Yet at the same time civility is ‘contradictory’ in that in order to maintain civility whiteness must violently “supress internal and external threats.”
colonialism. While public health studies often idealize inclusion in communities as the unproblematic goal of public health initiatives aimed at sex workers (see, for example, Brents and Sanders 2010; Luchenski et al. 2018; Marmot 2018), these studies frequently do not contend with the violent history of forced inclusion seen through over-surveillance, state interventions through child and youth services, and Canada’s history of violent assimilation towards Indigenous peoples.

At the same time, exclusion from communities similarly poses dangers to sex workers, seen in a lack of access to health care or other necessities of life. In this chapter, I theorize the processes and strategies of both inclusion and exclusion as forms of governmentality that sex working subjects are formed within, mediate and resist, for survival.

I begin by defining more fully the control strategies of inclusion/exclusion. I then turn to explore how the risk logics of contagion underpin the processes of inclusion/exclusion and the ways through which sex workers manage these rationalities in their relationships with health care workers. I follow this with an exploration of how the logics of pathologization are applied to sex workers with a special focus on youth sex workers and sex working mothers. Finally, I examine how the logics of pathologization are used to both forcefully include and simultaneously exclude Indigenous sex workers and the impacts this has on their ability to access health care. The logics of contagion and the logics of pathologization that I examine in this chapter “sculpt a domain” of possibilities in which a subject can act or else be managed as a perpetually excluded Other (Dean 1995, 564). For sex workers in NEO, seeking inclusion through the performance of a responsibilized and autonomous subjectivity is a survival strategy. Throughout the chapter, I

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24 These forms of management include: mental health institutionalizations, prisons, lack of access to state or community funded services (Rose 2000).
explore how sex workers perform (and critique) self-responsibilization as a survival strategy within this sculpted domain.

A Note on Research Tensions:
This chapter focuses extensively on the interactions that take place between health care workers and sex workers to illuminate the processes and rationalities of inclusion/exclusion. The data that is analyzed in this chapter comes from two interviews that were conducted with health care workers and the interview and focus group sessions that were conducted with sex working community members. My objective in conducting interviews with health care professionals was to examine how the technologies of state power that are embedded within the body of the health care worker are enacted in everyday interactions with subjects who have been identified as requiring state intervention. Health care workers, as state actors or “translators of state power,” through the nature of their work are embroiled in a complex complicity with the state (Pollack 2010, 1263). The history of Canadian healthcare is directly connected to the creation of the settler state and with violence against sex work communities; yet, at the same time, health care workers frequently enter the profession with a vision of ‘caring for’ or ‘helping’ populations that have experienced historical oppression. While an analysis of health policy could have revealed the complicity of the healthcare field with the Canadian state’s objectives around ending the sex industry, I decided to conduct interviews with healthcare workers to understand how the governance of sex workers through healthcare is enacted on an individual level and also to explore how healthcare workers can act in ways that are “subversive” to the current governing structure (McKee 2011, 4).

During our interviews, both healthcare workers were friendly and engaging, happy to talk to me, and both underlined that they felt my work was important, describing their empathy for those who worked in the sex industry. Their passion for their work was evident in the interviews,
and yet a series of ethical considerations arose in conducting these interviews. First, my
determination to prioritize the resistance efforts of sex working participants in the data (as
described in detail in Chapter One) meant I focused my analysis of the health care workers data
less on their moments of subversion and resistance and more on the moments of contact between
them and sex workers that re-affirmed the power of the state. In doing so, I at times rendered the
individual health care workers’ intentions of care invisible and instead underlined their role as state
actors. Acknowledging this leads to broader questions about the ethical implications of conducting
interviews with participants when the intent behind the interview is to understand them not as
individuals but as actors in a broader set of logics that inform the governance of the sex industry.

Second, while two interviews were conducted with health care workers, the data from one
interview is used significantly more in this chapter. This is in part because the interviews were
semi-structured which meant the conversations were able to flow in different directions, and the
connection between settler colonialism and sex work was only discussed at length in one interview.
In choosing to highlight the data from one interview as an example of how settler colonial relations
of power play out in interactions between healthcare workers and sex workers, I once again
identified these participants as state-actors whose understanding of the sex industry is symptomatic
of broader logics within the healthcare system and elided their individual contributions and
potential acts of subversion. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge here that while I use the
moments of contact in this chapter to illuminate how the logics of exclusion and inclusion are
wrapped up in settler colonial logics and practices that inform healthcare in Canada, I recognize
that the healthcare workers are “constrained themselves by institutional realities” even as they
“participate in the creation of them” (Weinberg 2004, 299). In focusing on these moments of
contact, my intent is not to shame individual service providers but rather comment on the broader
narratives and logics that sex workers and health care workers are produced within and simultaneously re-produce themselves

Defining Inclusions/Exclusion: Responsibilized Subjectivities

In “Government and Control,” Rose (2000) argues there are two overlapping, yet distinct, strategic families of control: Circuits of security (inclusion) and circuits of insecurity (exclusion). Circuits of security or inclusion refer to the “family of control practices” where surveillance and the “modulation of conduct to certain norms” is built into society (Rose 2000, 325). Control in Rose’s (2000, 327) theorization is not centralized in governments but rather “flows through a network of open circuits” that mandate access to “consumption and civility.” Control here is not the same as it is defined within theories of discipline society, where a subject’s behaviour is moulded in accordance with the practices instilled through “disciplinary institutions” such as schools and prisons. Rather in Rose’s theorization, control is designed into the very fabric of society through the required surveillance and “modulation” of subjects to access “the benefits of liberty”25 (Rose 2000, 326). For example, in order to purchase a house, a person must have good credit only possible through their enmeshment with banks26 that surveil their purchase habits and through their self-governance to conform to proper consumption patterns (i.e. having access to credit but using little of it). The subject who wants to buy a house must be self-governed and have submitted to surveillance as a necessary pre-requisite of the purchase. As Rose (2000, 323) argues, “contemporary strategies for the government of conduct” do not attempt to “crush and eliminate the capacities for action of those persons and forces they are acted upon” but instead seek to “foster and shape such capacities as order, civility, health, or enterprise.” Within the control strategies of

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25 Benefits of liberty are articulated by Rose (2003) as consumption and civility, defined in this chapter as access to health care and the right to mother and work with less surveillance.

26 The enmeshment with banks only being possible through the verification of a person’s identity by the government and so on and so on.
inclusion, subjects are not governed through the punitive systems of churches, schools, and prisons but rather through their own “freedom” where freedom is defined not as a “refuge from want but a capacity for self-actualization, to be achieved through consumption and obtained through employment” (Vaughan 2002 270).

Circuits of inclusion require, by their nature, exclusion. Rose (2000, 330) defines circuits of exclusion not merely as the ‘casting out’ of those who are deemed “a threat to civility” but also as 1. The processes and strategies “that seek to reaffiliate the excluded” (for example, through employment counselling and drug cessation programs) and 2. The strategies to “manage” those who are deemed incapable of being “reaffiliated” (for example, through prisons and mental health institutions). Rose (2000, 331) argues that the porous boundary between those who are targeted for strategies of reaffiliation and those who are marked as perpetual Others to be managed (through prisons or other forms of punitive control) is drawn according to the “political rationalities” of late liberalism where affiliate-able subjects are defined by their ability to manage their own lives “through their own active self-promotion” (Rose 2000, 331). In this chapter, I refer to this process as the performance27 of the responsibilized subject and argue sex working participants draw on this to evade the dangers of being ‘managed’ as excluded Others by engaging in acceptable consumption patterns, financial autonomy and entrepreneurship, and the psychocentric management of emotions.

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27 Here, I call on Judith Butler’s (2011) concept of performativity as used by Miranda Joseph (2002, 33) where performance is not the “act of a fully constituted subject” but rather the “retroactively constituting enactment of discursive constraints.” The subject then is the “object rather then the subject of constitutive acts” (Joseph 2002, 33). The performative acts do not simply “enact pre-existing meanings” but instead construct meaning through the acts themselves (Joseph 2002, 33).
Tracing the Logics of Contagion and Pathologization in the Circuits of Inclusion/Exclusion

The Risk Logics of Contagion

Fundamental to the circuits and processes of inclusion/exclusion is risk thinking, which makes certain subjects knowable to the state, community members, their peers, and social service providers as risks to communities (Rose 2000). Risk thinking permeates “control professions” such as the medical industry and social work through the medicalization and pathologization of behaviours that do not ascribe to the ideal of civility (Rose 2000, 332). Risk thinking as a “language of description” produces and makes subjects knowable as ‘risks’ and in turn also defines the community that must be protected against risks (Rose 2000, 335). As discussed in the Introduction Chapter, white settler society in Canada has long marked sex workers as risks due to 1. The supposed threat they posed to racial purity through interracial sexual interactions (Devereux 2000; Carter 2008; Valverde 2008), 2. The supposed threat they posed to heterosexual marriages and gender roles (Carter 2008; Valverde 2008) and 3. The “panic” of contagion that is associated with sex workers (Irvine 2008). It is this final category of contagion that I will turn to now.

There is a long history in Canada of a “moral panic” around sex work and disease. In the 1860s, the British Contagious Diseases Act forced any woman who engaged in or was suspected of engaging in sex work to report themselves to the police and undergo an invasive medical exam to look for evidence of venereal disease (Valverde 2008). This Act was imported to Canada in 1865, and while it was rarely enforced, the association between sex work and venereal disease and the production of sex workers as a risk of contagion to communities is evidenced in historical studies of vice and moral reform (see Valverde 2008 and Carter 2008). Sex workers, rather than

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28 Risky subjects are made “thinkable and governable” through the “languages of description” that are produced through policy, scholarly works, medical studies and so on (Rose 200, 322)
29 Where civility is defined by whiteness (Coleman 2008), proper consumption (Rose 2000), and formalized employment (Dean 1999).
the men who purchased their services, were seen as the source of contamination, a trend that continues today.

Health care professionals who were interviewed for this study frequently brought up the supposed risk sex workers posed to the community due to the potential for disease transfer. When I asked Annett, a 20-year veteran nurse of sexual health, if and how sex work contributes to community health she focused on the potential for disease in the sex industry.

Does it [sex work] contribute to the health of the community? In a way no, because if they spread disease. I come from an infection control type of perspective, so if they spread diseases, then it doesn't contribute to the health. [It is] detrimental for the health of the community.

Communities are “imagined” and defined by the risks that they must be protected against (Anderson 2016). In this quote, Annette defines the “health” of a community according to Western ableist notions of health, where health means both to be free from disease but also where health is relationally defined by the presence of an unhealthy Other (Taylor 2017). She further relied on pathologizing and problematic assumptions about sex workers as carriers of disease and calls on the idea that sex workers (more so than any other sexually active person) are sources of contamination. Annette’s comments were not intended to produce harm, yet in defining sex workers as the unhealthy other, Annette’s comments show how sex workers are excluded from the image of a ‘healthy’ community.

Annette went on to describe how the perceived potential for disease that exists in sex work leads to community exclusion. Annette uses the metaphor of ‘cockroaches’ to describe how she understands non-sex working community members views’ of the sex industry.

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30 The same moral panic around contagion in other industries is rarely discussed, such as how restaurants and service industries contribute to the spread of influenza. It will be interesting to see how the discourses of contagion are applied to other professions in the COVID pandemic.
A lot of people see these people negatively. They see them as being, you know [pause] The cockroaches of the street, like, if you will, as an example. Like they're not looked upon very well.

Annette’s metaphorical use of the term cockroaches to explain how non-sex working community members see sex workers is important because the idea of a cockroach both evokes the image of disease and contagion (cockroaches as dirty and impure) and evokes an image of something that should be external infiltrating spaces that it is not invited into (cockroaches as the uninvited guests in indoor spaces that are difficult to remove). By drawing on the image of a cockroach to describe community perceptions of sex workers, Annette demonstrates how the perceived risk of contagion acts as a strategy of exclusion because sex workers' bodies are marked as potential sites of disease.  

The idea of sex workers as sites of infection was further illuminated in our conversation when Annette described STI and BBI contact tracing as “the main thing” she does in relation to the sex industry. In this conversation, Annette identifies sex workers, rather than their clients, as the site of risk and describes how “frustrating” contact tracing can be when sex working community members cannot name all their clients or contacts.

So it's frustrating, and especially if it's somebody from the sex industry, we've had people come in and they've had 20, 40 partners in the last two months, and they only know two of them.

Annette did not describe a similar frustration with other patientss who also have more than one sexual partner but rather described how it was “especially” frustrating if the person worked in the sex industry once again, situating the risk of contagion in the body of the sex worker. Annette’s perception of sex workers as risks of contagion unintentionally erased the historical role sex

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31 Sex working participants also described how in their interactions with health care workers they feel as if they are “a disease” (Shirley) and are thought of by health care workers as people who “spread disease” thus situating them as threats to community health.
workers have played in educating the public on diseases (for example in the early days of AIDs epidemic) and the evidence that shows sex workers more consistently practice safe sex compared to non-sex working publics (Meaghan 2001).

Ivri ne (2008, 3) argues that the “power of emotions naturalizes sexual hierarchies, establishing some sexualities as normal and others as disgusting or unspeakable,” and these public emotions “enforce and reinforce” the political and regulatory systems that control sexuality. Annette’s frustration must be understood, not as an individual failing on her part but as a symptom of a broader social panic around sexually transmitted diseases and the sex industry. This social panic can be seen historically in the 1865 Contagious Diseases Act that targeted sex workers and today in the criminalization of HIV non-disclosure. Since the 1980s and the HIV/AIDs panic that swept North America, sex workers have been represented as risks of contagion to communities due to the supposed increased risk of them having HIV/AIDS (Ferris 2015). In 1998, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that anybody who did not disclose their HIV status to a sexual partner could be charged with aggravated sexual assault whether or not their partner actually contracted HIV through the sexual encounter. In doing so, the Supreme Court effectively criminalized the state of being a ‘risk’ (Mykhalovskiy and Betteridge 2012).

In this study, sex working participants frequently noted how they were made to feel “dirty” or “diseased” in their interactions with health care workers, and participants noted that there was a general assumption that they were HIV positive, forcing them to contend with the double and mutually reinforcing stigmatization of HIV and sex work. Shirley, who previously lived in North York, describes how doctors and nurses frequently assumed that she was HIV positive and then treated her as if she was “a disease” and therefore a threat to others.

In a laboratory environment […] when it was your turn that they had to draw blood. They would come in with the whole gear, the mask, the
gloves. Like the whole like, you know what I mean? It was very. um ... It was very derogatory. It was very uh inhumane [...] I felt like they were treating me like a fucking disease, you know? And it's like, you can't catch it by just touching me or being by me or whatever [...] And if I did have HIV, is this how you fucking treat people? Really? This is how inhumane you treat people. Shame on you. Shame on you. And I'll never forget how some of [...] the nurses at the hospital, North York hospital and everything, you know, the way they would talk to me.

For Shirley, interactions with health care officials were characterized by an overwhelming sense that she was “a disease” and general inhuman treatment to the point that she felt as if she was marked as “untouchable.”

In their study of newspaper representations of HIV/AIDs risks, Dworkin and Wachs (2009, 68) found that "different moral orders" were constructed "depending on the specific interaction between social identities." They found "men whose bodies were subject to a discourse of 'otherness' [...] were not 'redeemed in media coverage' while “men in dominant categories [...] were successfully redeemed in media coverage and avoided the stigma of contagion.” Whiteness, maleness, and wealth meant that the blame for their HIV status was placed on the women with whom the powerful men had had sex. In interviews with participants, a similar pattern emerged in how the label of contagion was applied to sex workers and not to clients or to other non-sex working community members who also engage in sexual activities.

The experience of being labelled a ‘risk’ is not equal across all areas of the sex industry. In my interviews, sex workers who worked outdoors, who used (or had physical marks showing they had used) injection drugs, and/or who were Indigenous were all more likely to be assumed to be risks of contagion. In comparison, sex working participants who worked indoors, did not use injection drugs, and/or were white did not bring up similar experiences of being marked as contagious. For example, Suzie, an Indigenous woman, described how after she gave birth to her daughter, nurses would continually throw out her breastmilk without explanation and feed her
daughter formula without her consent. It was only later that she learned that the nurses assumed
she was HIV positive and, for that reason, would not feed her daughter her breastmilk. This despite
the fact that Suzie’s chart clearly marked that she was not HIV positive, and the fact that medical
evidence suggests HIV positive women are able to breastfeed with minimal risk of transfer to the
baby if they are given anti-viral medications (Thomas et al. 2011). Health care workers marked
both Suzie and Shirley as risks; to their own families in the case of Suzie and to the broader
community in the case of Shirley, thus demonstrating how the risk logics of contagion act as a
strategy of exclusion that mark certain bodies (racialized bodies, drug-using bodies, sex working
bodies) as risks to communities that must be managed and contained.

Risk discourses that govern the boundaries of community inclusion/exclusion are one of
the many “multiple, intertwined rationalities” that “govern individual and collective behaviour”
and produce the domain of possibilities in which subjects can act (Chaput 2010, 1-2). Sex working
participants deal with the risk logics of HIV and sex work in different ways that both further
enmesh them (through strategies of reaffiliation) and that actively exclude them from communities
and access to health care. For some participants, regular HIV testing was a way of managing the
risk logics of HIV and sex work to “prove” to other health care providers that they were not
diseased risks. Shirley describes how she will get tested frequently and ask for physical print-offs
of her negative status to show people who are “being ignorant.” In this way, Shirley is seeking re-
affiliation by performing responsibilization and demonstrating her “own active self-promotion” in
ways that necessitate increased surveillance through HIV testing (Rose 2000, 331). In his study
of the neoliberal governance of HIV/AIDS, Kinsman (2006, 394) argues that “those [who are]
constructed as ‘responsible’ [are] managed through forms of self-regulation and professional forms
of governance of their live.” While “those who continue to be constructed as ‘irresponsible’ [face]
forms of criminal law, policing and public health governance” (Kinsman 2006, 394).

Responsibilization, as one of the control strategies of exclusion, places the onus for conforming to societal norms of ‘health’ and ‘civility’ on the subjects that are marked as deviant32 (Dej 2016). Those who cannot, or refuse to, conform to “the bonds of civility33 and self responsibility” either because of structural barriers or their own unwillingness are then ‘managed’ as risks to communities.34 In actively seeking out HIV testing, Shirley engages in self-regulation as a form of resistance that enables her to avoid the management strategies that are applied to those who are deemed irresponsible, including criminalization and shaming from public health officials.

For other participants, the social, economic, and legal implications of being HIV positive means accessing health care can come at the cost of losing their livelihoods. Suzie describes how many of her colleagues do not get tested because of the potential implications of being positive.

Because, one its hard to get good work out there and stuff like that, so, and some people really just don’t want to know, right? Because there is a lot of, you know, if you have it, you have to tell people, right? So, if you don't know, you can’t get in trouble [laughs] But you see that in the street a lot with a lot of the working girls. They won't go get checked because of that, because they don't know. Because once they know then they have to tell their client. Right. Right? And they're- they're responsible.

32 Deviance is defined by the “proliferation of social rules rather than in the inherent characteristics either of certain behaviors or of individuals who engage in those behaviors” (Irvine 2009, 239)

33 Civility defined by its proximity to whiteness and maleness and by the subject’s active engagement with the formal labour market (Rose 2000; Coleman 2009; Razack 2000).

34 This management is done in specialized ways, for example through the creation prisons to detain those deemed as risks, and through the eviction of people who are labeled as risks to “degenerate spaces,” in Northeastern Ontario these degenerate spaces are commonly understood to be the downtown core of urban centres (Razack 2000).
By refusing to get tested, the colleagues Suzie mentions, also refuse and critique the discourses of responsibilization and instead actively exclude themselves from health care settings so that they can continue to find work and survive in a time where “its hard to get good work.”

The risk logics of HIV and sex work that underpin the strategies of exclusion/inclusion first mark sex workers’ bodies as risks to the community as potential sites contagion and then responsibilize sex workers for their health outcomes, at times forcing them to choose between the right to access health care and the right to work and earn an income.

Pathologization and Responsibilization of Sex Workers

The risk logics of HIV and sex work rely on and emerge from a long history of pathologization where women’s sexualities that fall outside of monogamous heterosexuality are “diagnosed and then treated as a medical condition” (Oeming 2018, 213). As Oeming (2018, 214) argues, pathologization works by “marking certain kinds of behaviour as ‘sick,’ medical authorities, no different from the church or the law, execute a form of social control. In other words, any pathologization of sex […] is and always has been a moral panic in the guise of scientific objectivity.” The pathologization of sex work as an underlying rationale of inclusion/exclusion is combined with the discourses of responsibilization to mark those who refuse responsibility for their pathologies as a perpetually excluded Other who must be managed through more punitive control strategies.

In interviews and focus group sessions, sex working participants frequently described how they were made to feel like they had “some type of sickness” (Jackie, sex working participant) because of their involvement in the sex industry. In one focus group, over an hour was spent describing various pathologizing incidents with health care workers, social workers, and other ‘control professions.’ In this conversation, it became clear that the current pathologization of sex workers in health care settings must be understood in relation to a shift in public health narratives
towards the “social determinants of health model.” This ‘holistic’ approach to healthcare has extended health care providers’ understanding of health and for sex workers has meant a renewed emphasis on examining “how the ‘lived experiences’ of sex workers are mediated by and respond to structural and social level violence and power relations” (Shannon et al. 2008, 912; Kerrigan et al. 2015). The social determinants approach can be seen as a step forward in de-individualizing experiences of ill-health, yet for sex working participants, it also inadvertently works to pathologize sex workers based on lived experience. They describe experiences of pathologization where their lived (or the assumption that they have lived) experience of drug use and childhood abuse was used by medical professionals as moralizing explanations for women’s involvement in sex work. Samantha, Ellen, and Devon describe how this plays out in interactions with health care workers:

Samantha: [describing a health care worker’s attitude] Oh, well, if you know, if you're selling your body or selling your sex,
Ellen: You must be a real junkie.
Samantha: You must be, must be on drugs or must be. Yeah. There's some.
Yeah. Something wrong with you. You were abused or.
Devon: Yes, that's [it] I hate that. I hate that.

The pathologization of sex workers based on presumed experiences with abuse or drug use described here by sex working participants was in line with how health workers who participated in the study viewed sex workers. In interviews with health care workers, they frequently described sex workers’ “addictions” and drew direct lines between “abuse” and women’s labour in the sex industry. 35 For example, Annette became very solemn before explaining that sexual abuse led

35 Interestingly, health care participants found little usefulness in the concept of the ‘social determinants of health’ model and described it as something that comes from “the top” but has limited practical application even as they used aspects of the model to answer my questions. For example, Bethany-Anne (a long time sexual health nurse) discussed how unstable housing affects an individual’s ability to access good health outcomes yet recalled how they “roll our eyes when we see [the social determinants of health] we're definitely the hands-on clinical front line.”
many women to drug use which then led them to sex work. For Annette, engagement with the sex industry was based on a need to fund drug use that she saw as coping mechanism used by individuals who had experienced abuse. This narrative that Annette draws on combines the historical pathologization of the sex industry as a morally damaging industry that people would not willingly choose to work in (Oeming 2016) with the current holistic approaches to health care that emphasize an individual's lived experiences.

Sex working participants experienced this pathologization of sex work according to the supposed lived experiences of drug use and abuse alongside discourses of responsibilization that, having recognized their (real or presumed) experiences, forces sex workers to become accountable for their continued pathology due to experiences outside of their control. In one focus group, Shirley, Ellen, Dee Dee, and Jackie described these contradictory logics of responsibilization:

Ellen: They [talking here about social workers] were so intent that there has got to be something wrong with you.
Shirley: I think it could sometimes go either way[…] because in drug treatment centers, because you'll get “oh, now you're making excuses for your behavior.” [laughter around that table].
Ellen: Yeah [laughter]
Shirley: So its like, oh okay, first you tell me, well, this is why I am, this is what made me, so when I use- so then when I come to terms and quote unquote, accept it and start saying it. Now. Now you throw in my face, oh now I'm making excuses. So what fucking way do you want it?
Dee Dee: You can't fucking win, yeah
Ellen: oh my god
Jackie: You can't fucking win.
Shirley: Which fucking way do you want it?
Samantha: That's so true. Wow.
Jackie: You can't, you can't win.
Shirley: Which way do you fucking want it?
The new pathologization of sex workers, not for their actual engagement in the sex industry but because of their “lived experiences” that supposedly forced them to work in the industry, when
coupled with the logics of responsibilization render invisible the same structural barriers that the social determinants of health model is meant to capture. Sex workers are first told to recognize how their use of drugs or their engagement with the sex industry is a result of their lived experiences, only to be forced to take responsibility and “stop making excuses” once they attempt to adopt the language of pathology put on them.

Those who refuse, or cannot, take responsibility (according to the health care workers ideas of responsibility, meaning to leave the industry or stop using drugs) are then marked as a perpetually excluded Other and further pathologized as “incompetent” or “incapable” opening them up to more punitive control strategies such as imprisonment, institutionalization for mental health, and loss of the right to mother. Shirley, who has been held against her will in a hospital for mental health reasons and had previously had her children apprehended by the state, described how child protective services used her lived experience of abuse in the foster care system to mark her as “incapable” or “incompetent” as a mother.

[describing herself talking to a hypothetical social worker] I'm not a product of my fuckin upbringing and I'm not going to have you tell me that [I’m incapable] because of what I went through and the shit that I went through as a child… that you guys did not protect me from, that I also was a foster child who also was abused in your system. They didn't protect me- I'm a product of you. Who's going to take ownership for that? I am not a product of my fucking experiences in life. It does not define me. It does not make me incapable. I'm not incompetent. Yeah, I got some mental health issues. I don't know what the fuck it is, but I'm not incompetent

The new pathologization of sex workers according to lived experiences is combined with the discourses of responsibilization to mark those who refuse self-responsibilization as a perpetually excluded Other who must be managed through more punitive control strategies, including in Shirley’s case institutionalization.
To manage the risks of being marked as a perpetually excluded Other, sex working participants in this study frequently highlighted their personal responsibility and autonomy, adopting responsibilization narratives. In a focus group, Ellen, Devon, and Samantha described a frequent and repeated conversation they would have with social workers and other public service providers and how they would respond by emphasizing the financial autonomy granted to them through sex work.

Ellen: you must have been abused. No.
Devon: No!
Ellen: You must have trauma. No.
Devon: No!
Samantha: Well, why are you working? well..
Devon: Money, man. Yes.

Throughout my fieldwork visits, participants consistently emphasized the monetary gain and autonomy that they were granted from sex work and described how they would directly refute pathologized accounts by emphasizing their autonomy and self-responsibility in making money.

For example, Samantha, who acknowledges childhood sexual abuse and used drugs throughout her adult life, describes how she was “conditioned” by society to assume that there was something wrong with her for having worked in the industry and described how she would respond and critique to that idea by emphasizing money:

It was like, oh, well, I must have done this because I'm doing this [sex work], you know, that that's kind of conditioned in you through society. Right? And I really did [believe it]. You know? And turns out, lo and behold, all these years later, after working through all my trauma, abuse, neglect, abandonment and all that shit, I still like sucking cock, and I'd still rather like to get some cash for it if I'm going to do something anyway, well fuck.

By stressing her work as a way to “get some cash” and by performing the entrepreneurial and responsibilized subject, Samantha actively refuses and resists the pathologizing logics of
inclusion/exclusion that paints sex workers as ‘incompetent’ or sick due to their own, real or supposed, lived experiences with abuse and/or addiction.

The pathologization of sex workers as damaged and in need of intervention is heightened when the sex worker in question is underage. In Western society, youth is understood as antithetical to sex work in that youth are viewed through puritanical lenses as symbols of sexual purity (Fischer 2011). Almost all the participants who took part in this study began working when they were under the age of 18. Their reasons for entering sex work and their experiences as young sex workers varied; however, all participants who worked as youth argued that the biggest threat to their lives, livelihoods, and safety were state actors in the form of truancy officers, CAS, and the police.36

It is important to note, that there was a real sense of anxiety in discussing the topic of youth sex work as participants acknowledged that the presence of youth in sex work can act to delegitimize the profession and stories of youth as sex workers are often coopted by prohibitionists to support anti-sex work agendas. In Canada, policymakers, women’s organizations, and non-sex working community members often call on the image of the sexually exploited child to further anti-sex work legislation, and the protection of women and children is evoked as a justification for

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36 All participants in this study used creative resistance strategies to escape child protective services, truancy officers, and police when they were working as youth. For example, Ellen realized that Catholic Children’s Aid (CCAS) had different rules for their officers than CAS and lied early in her life about being Catholic in order to be placed until CCAS control. As she describes “They weren't allowed to put their hands on you. So I used to lie and say I was Catholic so that they'd come and pick me up instead, and then I'd run away on the worker, and they couldn't do nothing. One guy leaned down and grabbed my shoe. I got out at the gas station and I started to go. And he goes "where you going?" And then I go, “Well, thanks for the ride I’m leaving " and he ran after me and he bent down and he grabbed my ankle and he took my shoe [laughing] and he was standing there with my high heel, like "now you're not going nowhere." And I just took off the other way, ran down the street and he's going "What are you doing?" and I'm waving down traffic and some guy in a truck stop. He was running after me going "Wait. Don't go." And the guy in the truck, I go "Go, go, go. It's my crazy boyfriend. Go." [laughter]
the continued criminalization of the sex industry (Bittle 2013). This narrative was especially prominent in Bill C-36 where the Canadian government argued that the objective of the bill was to “to protect communities – in particular, women and children – and persons who engage in prostitution.” In order to “save” youth who are working in the sex industry, the Canadian state enacts a series of strategies including “secure care legislation and enhanced child welfare schemes, permitting authorities to detain young prostitutes for their own “protection,” programs to encourage youth to end their involvement in prostitution, and (largely unfulfilled) promises to criminalize male ‘sexual predators’” (Bittle 2013, 279). While sex working youth, scholars, and advocates have argued that the current representation of youth sex work as exploitation is harmful to youth sex workers and a continuation of colonial ‘rescue’ narratives (JJ 2013), the equation of youth sex work and exploitation remains a prominent part of Canadian political rhetoric. Under Canadian law and in popular discourse, youth sex work is always understood as “sexual abuse” (Bittle 2013, 279). Yet, while the sexually exploited child is a hyper-visible part of anti-sex work legislation, the experiences of individuals who are youth sex workers is often invisible (JJ 2013). Other scholars have examined how official government responses to youth sex work “reaffirms the state’s coercive control of young women engaged in sex work” through child protective services and youth ‘empowerment’ projects that women can only take part in if they will identify as a ‘victim’ of the sex industry (Bittle 2013, 280). In NEO, non-governmental organizations that advocate for “victims of human trafficking” frequently use images of sexually exploited children to advocate for tougher anti-sex work laws. For example, a local anti-trafficking initiative hosted a march and published images from the march on their Facebook page, including images of children holding signs saying “I am not for sale” and “real men don’t buy kids!” The problematic conflation of women and youth in sex work policy-making and anti-sex work campaigns acts to
infantilize women who are engaging in sex work, positioning them as similar to children in their inability to make their own life choices and in their lack of agency (De Shalit, Henen, and van der Meulen 2014).

For many participants, entering the sex industry at a young age was a way to manage the produced scarcity of neoliberal state policies that had effectively cut funding to “care” oriented programs for youth in poverty while increasing incarceration rates, and they drew on the narratives of personal responsibility and entrepreneurship to resist pathologization (Klodawsky et al. 2006). As Ellen describes, the court system, child protective services, and police are “so intent that there's got to be something wrong with you” when you engage in sex work as a youth. When faced with this pathology in court, Ellen would highlight the entrepreneurial and monetary benefits of the sex industry:

I'm like, no, it's just a good way to make money. I found it was a good way to make money. Everybody else is shoplifting or dealing drugs or whatever. And I felt, well, I'm 14 in Toronto and I don't want to be a street kid. So being as I was already sexually active, why not just go suck a cock and make 50 bucks and go get a hotel room. What the hell do I want to sit in front of the big slice for? Public order? Ellen, who was a crown ward from a young age, later used this same emphasis on the financial independence granted to her by the sex industry to petition the courts to have her crown wardship dropped.

I went to court when I was 16 and petitioned the court to drop the crown wardship. And when the judge said, what did you want to do with your life? I stood up and said, I want to be a prostitute. I swear to fucking God,

37 Ellen not only rejected the pathologization of her work, but also identified the pressure that sex workers face to leave the sex industry for the good of “public order.” In Canada, where sex work is described in law and in political rhetoric as a “harm” to “community” and social order, sex workers of all ages must continually exist within and resist the pressure to leave an industry that they benefit from because of the assumption that the sex industry harms communities. Ellen, like many participants, refused to bow down to this narrative and rejected the assumption that her work caused harm to a community and that she should leave the industry because of social pressure.
man, I stood right there in the court and I said, I want to be a prostitute, your honor. *I make good money.* The only problem I have is you guys keep grabbing me because I'm a runaway and taking all my stuff out of my apartment because it's proceeds obtained by crime you know? But other than that, I- I'm doing fine. And they ended up dropping my crown wardship.

By performing the responsibilized subject and emphasising monetary gain, Ellen was able to get her crown wardship dropped and escape the carceral-based existence that characterized her experience as a crown ward. While neoliberal state policies increased her experiences with incarceration by allocating more spending towards prisons and police in Canada, by adopting the logics of responsibilization she was able to gain recognition in the courts. In many ways, my results echo the findings of Dej (2016) who found that unhoused community members adopt the narratives of responsibilization and “adopt empowerment narratives” that individualize their experiences with homelessness as a resistance method against those same narratives. My data further echoed the findings of Moore and Fraser (2008, 3035), who demonstrate how current harm reduction discourse in health practice inadvertently “divert[s] policy and practice away from structural issues” and “inscribe[s] a neo-liberal subject” to people who use drugs. The logics of pathologization and responsibilization that underpin the strategies of exclusion/inclusion are mediated by youth sex workers through the performance of responsibilized subjectivities that help mitigate the risk of being marked as a perpetually excluded Other who must be ‘managed’ by the state through incarceration or child protective services.

Sex working mothers face similar forms of pathologization to sex working youth in that sex work and motherhood are seen as incompatible in Canadian society. Sex working mothers must “cope with the threat to identity inherent in society's diametrically opposed perceptions of sex worker and ‘good mother’ and simultaneously manage the coexistence of the roles and identities of mother and sex worker” (Dodsworth 2014, 99). Aside from the internal threat to
identity posed by the pathologization of sex working mothers, they also must contend with control strategies of re-affiliation enacted through interventions by child and youth services. The perception that sex work and ‘good’ motherhood cannot co-exist means sex working mothers face increased community and state surveillance, and their children become symbols of public concern. Robbie Gilligan’s (2009) concept of “public child” is a useful theoretical lens through which we can examine surveillance as it relates to sex working mothers. The public child refers to a child whose private world has in some sense become public business, attracting attention because concern has been aroused about his or her care or safety. The nature of this concern eventually leads the apparatus of state control, governmental or nongovernmental, to intervene, often placing the child in the care of the state, away from its home and the care of its parents (Gilligan 2009, 265).

For sex working mothers the social perception of their profession as incompatible with motherhood automatically makes their children “public children,” exposing them to processes and strategies “that seek to reaffiliate the excluded” (Rose 2000, 332). These processes and strategies are diverse and expansive. In NEO, one CAS website lists some of these strategies that include “intensive assessments and service plans, contacts with numerous other professionals and service providers as well as ongoing supervision of the child while he/she remains in the family home.” To manage these processes of re-affiliation and the surveillance38 that accompanies them, sex working mothers perform the responsibilized and entrepreneurial subjectivity.

38 To manage community and state surveillance, sex working mothers described a series of safety tactics outside and above the adoption of responsibilization discourses that they would use to protect themselves and their children from scrutiny while on the job. For example, participants describe how they will work later hours or work away from the main strip to avoid being seen by community members who know them as mothers and may out them as sex workers. Working later or in more remote areas decreases the risk of CAS, community members, and police interfering in their family life, but it also increases the potential for violence and reduces how much money they can make. Some sex working mothers such as Shirley and Jackie would leave the city altogether to work in other locations to avoid community members knowing about their profession, meaning they were further away from supports and forced away
In this study, sex working participants were acutely aware that social perceptions about their profession marked them as ‘bad’ mothers or as mothers who were a risk. As Jackie described it, being a sex working mother was like “wearing a scarlet letter” in mothering spaces. Several participants echoed Jackie’s statement:

Jackie: Everybody can see that you used to be a hooker or you used to do this or whatever, whatever, whatever. And somehow you just don't fucking measure up.
Shirley: Or you hear that you can't make a housewife out of a whore.
Emily: You can't turn a whore into housewife
Shirley: And it's like [exasperated sigh] really?
Jackie: like you're never gunna fucking measure up no matter what. You don't belong wherever you are. like I didn't belong at fuck- my son's school, it was always something about me […] somebody is going to fucking out me or I'm trying to hide and protect my identity as a sex worker.

To manage the surveillance and the sense that they cannot “measure up” as mothers, participants adopted the discourses of responsibility to demonstrate how sex work made them good mothers by enabling them to ensure their children were provided for. For example, Emily emphasized how her participation in the sex industry enabled her to care for her children and maintain their survival.

I was breastfeeding my daughter one night. Wendy W. was at my house. And uh I was on top of [street name] and there was no milk coming out and Baby was crying. And I was like, "what the fuck is going on?" I'm a new mom "what the fuck?" And she looked at me and she was all like, "You're not lactating." I had no money. She's like, "I'll, watch your daughter." Kay? I knew what I had to do because I was already-survival. But I - you know what I mean? If I didn't know and if I didn't know what to do at that time and you had no money, your kid would have starve. So thank God that I knew how to suck dick, and I knew that I can

from familiar areas and known clientele. As Shirley describes it “I was very selective and I always went far, far, far away from home to work. I never did it in my backyard and I never brought it home ever.” Most participants described hiding their profession from law enforcement officials and people who may recognize them as mothers as their top priority, putting their own safety at risk to ensure their children would not face interference from the state.
go on a corner and pull a fucking trick and so my kid was not hungry. Imagine if I, and I think like that, imagine if I didn't even know that.

Devon: Back then?
Emily: My daughter would be crying and hungry. Thank God that I knew how to survive in a different way, that people don't see that.

Emily’s pride in her skill set and her ability to care for her children through sex work came across clearly in this interaction and was echoed by many participants who would highlight how sex work could be used as a social mobility strategy. This is in line with the findings of other sex work theorists such as Rivers-Moore (2010), who noted that sex work is an effective way to climb the social ladder and purchase items for children that could otherwise be out of certain community members’ price range such, as braces and designer clothing. Jackie described how sex work gave her the ability to care for her child, who had a difficult medical history and had extra expenses she would not have been able to afford without sex work.

So he had to have a lot of surgeries and inserts in his shoes and [...] all of that stuff costs money and time. And so sex work afforded me the ability to, the flexibility to work when I needed to work and not work when he needed me to be there for those things (yeah) and to be able to pay for things that I wouldn't have been able to pay for.

Consumption literature illustrates that the process of becoming a ‘mother’ is intricately tied to consumption patterns (Boyer and Spinny 2016; Taylor et al. 2004). From the onset of pregnancy and throughout the child-rearing years motherhood is created through the accumulation of ‘things.’ The social component of acquiring these objects (seen through baby showers, and hand-me-down sharing) mark women as part of the “institution of motherhood” (Lacy 2015, 1), and the very objects themselves denote their identity as ‘mother’ (Taylor et al. 2004). What kind of mother you are, a good mother or a bad mother depends in large part on the consumption patterns that you engage in. For sex working mothers, claiming space within the institution of ‘good’ motherhood means proving their ability to be good mothers by engaging in respectable “consumption patterns” (Rivers-Moore 2012, 212; see also, Rivers-Moore 2010, Dewey 2011).
These practices and performances of ‘proper’ consumption also work as safety making-tactics to manage external surveillance and the constant threat of state interference. Being able to ‘prove’ your ability to provide societally-defined ‘good’ homes is a key part of managing motherhood as a sex worker. Emily, describes how she would always ensure her children were dressed ‘nice’ in case child protective services came to her

My kids always dressed nice, to the tee. Like, my kids always have the best of the best. I'm sure of that, that's because of, you know what I mean, of what happens if the society fucking comes to your house and you know what I mean? like...

Participants articulate how they go “above and beyond” (Jackie) what they observed other mothers doing in order to ensure they are perceived as ‘good mothers.’ Proving their ability as mothers by purchasing expensive clothes and toys for their children “just in case” child protective services showed up. Engaging in respectable consumption habits is a way to perform the responsibilized subject in a way that reduces the potential for intervention from state actors such as child protective services.

Engaging in acceptable consumption patterns\(^{39}\) to mitigate the potential for state intervention also offered sex working mothers a way to manage shame that is produced through the stigmatization of the profession. As Jackie asserts:

I had to justify all the guilt and shame and stigma I felt because of the way that I was earning the money. So I would spend it on really fucking ridiculous things for my kid or whatever to try to get a sense of what I was doing to make the money.

\(^{39}\)This also creates a hierarchy in the social perception of sex work and within the sex industry. Where those who do it for their children are seen as “good” whereas those who do it to pay for other areas of life, especially drug use, are seen as “bad” sex workers. This hierarchy is similarly described by Rivers-Moore (2017) and Dewey (2011).
Megan Rivers-Moore (2010, 723) describes how sex workers in Latin America “are keenly aware of the stigma associated with their work, and call upon ‘the moral stability of motherhood’ (Paxson 2004) to distance themselves from condemnations of sex work.” Devon describes how making more money than other women helped her manage stigma, shame, and feel “above,” other mothers “but not” at the same time:

Like me [...] I felt above, but not. Know what I mean? Because I knew I was making more money than any fucking parent out there. Sex working mothers are made into ‘public’ bodies because of their motherhood and the perceived disconnect between motherhood and sex work, exposing them to surveillance and forceful ‘strategies of re-affiliation’ through the involvement of child protective services. To manage these processes of re-affiliation and surveillance, sex working mothers perform a responsibilized subject by highlighting the monetary gain of sex work as something that allowed them to mother well and by engaging in respectable consumption patterns to mitigate the risks of over-surveillance and manage shame.

**Pathologization, Indigeneity, and Inclusion/Exclusion**

So far in this chapter, I have traced how the logics of contagion and the logics of pathologization inform strategies of inclusion/exclusion through the responsibilization of subjects. I have noted how these processes of exclusion mark subjects as risks to be managed and the effects of that on sex workers (namely loss of access to health care and risk of institutionalization or incarceration), and how surveillance (through medical testing and CAS) and self-governance (through performances of responsibilization and autonomy, and acceptable consumption patterns) are built into circuits of inclusion. I turn now to explore how Indigenous sex workers experience and respond to the logics of pathologization within these circuits of inclusion/exclusion in their interactions with health care workers and other social service providers.
The processes of racialization within settler colonialism rely on the pathologization of Indigenous peoples as “inherently diseased” or as “irrational” and simultaneously position white settlers as “legitimate and necessary agents of care, protection and improvement” (de leeuw, Greenwood, and Cameron 2010, 283; Greensmith 2012; Johnson 2014). As Greensmith (2012, 19) argues "by connecting Indigenous peoples to pathology, settlers can continue to understand themselves as the rightful inhabitants and owners of Turtle Island." Today, the pathologization of Indigenous peoples continues to frame how white settlers understand their own relationship to land and Indigenous people (Greensmith 2012).

Indigenous women have experienced a long history of pathologization throughout Canadian history. Settler colonialism, as a gendered project, relies on the heteropatriarchal production of citizens through the management of sexuality in law (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 2013) and through the use of sexual violence as a “technology of domination” (Razack 2000, 98; Smith 2015; Brodsky 2016 ). The pathologization of Indigenous women as “immoral” (Carter 2008, 13) and as “polluted with sexual sin” (Smith 2015, 10) justified racist laws that both forcefully (attempted to) assimilate Indigenous peoples into the Canadian state through policies such as Bill C-31, and simultaneously marked Indigenous peoples as risks to the Canadian ‘imagined community’ of white racial purity that had to be managed40 (Razack 2000). As Andrea Smith (2015, 10) writes, “in the colonial imagination, Native bodies are also immanently polluted with sexual sin [and] because Indian bodies are 'dirty,' they are considered sexually violable and 'rapeable' and the rape of bodies that are considered inherently impure or dirty simply does not

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40 This management took the form of spatial management (ie the creation of the pass system and reservations), the assimilationist attempts to destroy family systems (seen in the residential school system and 60s scoop).
count.” The violability of Indigenous women in colonial logics extends to colonial understandings of Indigenous “lands [as] also inherently violable” (Smith 2015, 12).

Settler colonialism is also a gendered project in that white settlers imposed specific gender norms onto Indigenous communities and pathologize any aberration from Western gender norms to re-affirm of their own ‘civility’ (Henderson 2003). The perceived ill-treatment of women in Indigenous communities was used by settlers to measure “the Canadian West’s heightened form of ‘civilization’ […] against those ‘backward societies’ in which women remained ‘beasts of burden’” (Henderson 2003, 171). The ‘rescue’ of Indigenous women from their supposed ill-treatment at the hands of Indigenous men was used as a justifying factor for colonial intervention, even as sexual violence by settlers was a strategy of colonization. This pathologization of Indigenous women as inherently violable and “polluted with sexual sin” (Smith 2015, 10) and the co-pathologization of Indigenous men as “bad and vicious” (Henderson 2003, 126) produce(s) a colonial subject that is represented as in need of saving from themselves (Clark 2016, 2).

The strength of settler narratives of pathologization was evidenced in my interviews with health care workers, who at times echoed these pathologizing narratives by drawing on the idea that a culture of inter-familial violence on Reserves leads Indigenous women to work in the sex industry. For example, when asked how race played a role in the sex industry in NEO, Annette emphasized Indigenous women’s experiences with trauma and abuse as an entry point to working in the sex industry:

Well, I can tell you that...What I’ve seen personally is most of the sex industry workers we have here are Aboriginal. And I would say 90 percent

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41 Henderson (2003) writes how settlers interpreted Indigenous women’s more active role in society (that went beyond the domestic labour-specific gender roles of white women) as abusive towards women, justifying colonial violence to ‘rescue’ these women from their supposed ill-treatment.
of them have been sexually abused [...] and they're mostly all on drugs. Heavy drugs.

When I asked her to clarify if she saw a connection between Indigenous women’s experience with abuse and the history of Canada, she emphasized the inter-familial nature of the abuse and Indigenous reserves:

Lindy: And is there any sort of I suppose um work that's done between the connection of the history of Canada and um this prevalence of um [Indigenous] peoples who are, have experienced abuse?
Annette: I dunno, I have no idea. It would be an interesting study like because a lot of them, they'll say it's within the family, there's a lot of incest, even, like an uncle or a brother. You know, that's sort of the thing is… because they're on reserves or like… I don't know.

Annette’s answer drew on the historical pathologization of Indigenous communities as sites of violence for Indigenous women and firmly established the origin of that violence in reserves and in Indigenous families.

Annette’s answer must be understood not as an individual opinion but in relation to what Clark (2016, 3) calls the “shock and awe” discourses of Indigenous trauma in public health spaces that Annette is subject to and produced within. Annette described later in the interview that she had “received multiple days” where she and her co-workers would learn about residential schools and the history of violence experienced by Indigenous peoples, emphasizing that “the topic is brought up … often.” These education days, that focus on Indigenous trauma, illuminate how health care workers are produced to understand Indigenous people as traumatized individuals through “trauma discourse, policies and practices that perpetuate statistics of horror and shock in order to justify child protection intervention and ongoing colonial control and intervention” (Clark 2016, 3). In our interviews, Annette referenced the trauma discourses that Clark (2016) described:
What these people have been through, like with sexual abuse, (right) a lot of times that puts them into drugs because they want to numb themselves, in order to get the drugs they have to do that [sex work].

In recognizing the broader histories of violence against Indigenous people, remarking on “what these people have been through,” she demonstrates an understanding of Indigenous sex workers as “at-risk” populations that require intervention due to their histories of trauma. Tuck and Yang (2014, 22) argue that the settler process of marking Indigenous peoples as “at-risk” peoples places Indigenous people “as on the verge of extinction, culturally and economically bereft, engaged or soon-to-be engaged in self-destructive behaviors which can interrupt their [...] seamless absorption into the economy.” This settler “move to innocence” (Tuck and Yang 2012, 10) works to invisibilize the structural violence of settler colonialism and “continues to create a colonial subject who requires intervention, support and saving” (Clark 2016, 2). Annette, as an individual health care provider, is produced within, constrained by, and reproduces particular structures of settler colonial knowledge/power, in this case “shock and awe” discourses of Indigenous trauma (Clark 2016, 3). Her actions and language around Indigenous trauma cannot be individualized to her but must be understood as a symptom of the broader settler approach to Indigenous peoples in the healthcare system. An approach that ‘educates’ health care workers on Indigenous trauma in ways that [perhaps inadvertently] reaffirms the power of the Canadian state to intervene in Indigenous lives through state actors such as healthcare providers.

Where historically, and into today, Indigenous women were pathologized for their supposed inherent state of sexual excess, “at-risk” narratives based on Western trauma models create a new form of pathology where Indigenous women are seen as ‘sick’ and in need of rescue by the very systems that are complicit in the violence against them. As Clarke (2016, 6) states “we have moved from a space and place of nonrecognition of the harms of colonialism, to what I would argue is misrecognition of these harms through the frame of trauma.” Million (2020, 105) further
contends that the discourse of Indigenous trauma and abuse “begins to be narrated as a prerequisite to self-determination. If the Indigenous don't heal, they may not be able to self govern.” Trauma narratives, while potentially a step towards a public health recognition of the history of settler violence, can also depoliticize violence against Indigenous women because trauma is "about health rather than justice" (Million 2020; 78) and can be considered a strategy of re-affiliation that attempts to forcefully enmeshes Indigenous women into western healing models. Annette’s discussion of the sexual abuse experienced by Indigenous women can be understood as part of a broader discourse of trauma that depoliticizes the violence Indigenous women experience and makes them knowable to health care workers as traumatized/ “at-risk” subjects that “require intervention” (Clark 2016).

Sex working participants noted that the racialized logics of pathology that emerged in their interactions with health care workers were often hidden under class-based language. In one particularly emotional focus group, Dee Dee, an Indigenous woman, described the attitude she has experienced by members of the NEO health care community. Dee Dee’s interpretation of their thought pattern is eerily similar to the early colonial idea of white women as ‘fallen’ and Indigenous women as naturally promiscuous, but using the language of poverty:

[Talking as a fictional health care worker] “You guys [Indigenous women] are, you guys come from a poor background. we're white. They [white women] come from a rich area. Like you know, they had all the support, but they just turned bad. But you guys [have] always been poor.” Because some Natives don't have the proper clothing like me. And I always had hand-me-down growing up. And like you know, it was hard. […] and it really fucking kills me to fucking see my race fucking being treated like shit. Cause what? We're brown? [crying]

The idea that white women “just turned bad” even though they had all the support, while Indigenous women have “always been poor” echoes the colonial pathologization of Indigenous women as naturally inferior, using discourses of class. In a “colourblind context” class is used to
mark difference in such a way that it refuses to recognize the presence of racism and colonial violence (James 2008, 103). Dee Dee continues to be marked in health care settings as deviant, having “always been poor” in relation to her white peers who “just turned bad,” yet the emphasis on class makes it difficult to articulate this as racism even as she knows it to be racism. The race-based pathologization of Indigenous women that Dee Dee experiences continue to structure Indigenous sex workers’ relationships with social service professionals yet is obscured by class-based discourses.

Sex working participants noted that in everyday interactions between health care providers and Indigenous sex workers, the at-risk/trauma discourse plays out through patterns of paternalism. Indigenous participants frequently noted that health care providers would adopt a paternalistic attitude towards them, assuming that they were incapable of making decisions or knowing how their bodies felt or what their bodies needed. Suzie and Dee Dee, both Indigenous women, relayed similar stories of having nurses not believing their knowledge about their own bodies. As Dee Dee explained:

I had to go for blood, because I had track marks on me, I got race stigma uh like you know, [...] put downs, shame and they would say, "oh, don't worry. I'm getting blood. Don't worry, Just, just relax. Don't worry" And it's hurting and I'm like I'm ready to hit nurse. And I'm like, you know, now I'm... My emotions kick in, I wanna hit this nurse, she's not pulling it out. I'm just ready to [tock!] [imitates voices] "But don't worry, I'm getting blood." Meanwhile, she's pinch right through a nerve. [sound of collective ohh] And yeah, you're in a vein after the nerve. Like, you don't fucking know what you're doing to me. I know what you're doing to me cause it's my body, I feel it.

Dee Dee drew a direct line between the nurse’s refusal to listen to her when she expressed pain, and the “race stigma” she experiences in health care settings. The fact that she could feel pain was ignored by the nurse, who instead insisted that she knew better and dismissed Dee Dee’s request for her to stop. Suzie shared a similar story where the nurse refused to believe her own knowledge
about her body and instead treated her like she was “an idiot” because of the evidence that she used drugs.

But there's this one bitch there. She doesn't listen. She won't even listen to me to say I need butterfly clips because I have really tiny veins. I can't use the eight gauge needles. They blow my veins all the time. She'll grab them. She'll hit the veins. She'll actually hit it. But she blows it, cause the needle's too big, right? And it's like, if you would just listen to me. Like just because I have track marks doesn't mean I'm an idiot. Don't you think I would actually know better, like? [chuckles]

For Dee Dee and Suzie, the pathologization of Indigenous women as subjects in need of intervention who do no know what their bodies need constructs a domain of possibility they must mediate to access health care. Dee Dee refers to the form of self-governance required to access health care, as “learning to smile back.”

But uh yeah, the racism, it-it's terrible. Me being native. I get a lot of it. I get the look downs. I'm still, I'm learning to smile back.

In order to access health care, Dee Dee must perform a particular subjectivity, the subject who contains their emotions and manages how they are externally perceived. The concept of psychocentrism is a useful lens for understanding how strategies to re-affiliate construct, and are experienced by, ‘deviant’ or pathologized subjects within the circuits of inclusion/exclusion. Under the logic of psychocentrism “human emotion and ways of being are framed exclusively as artifacts of individuals’ bodies and minds, and are thereby stripped of social, historical, political, economic, and cultural context” (Dej 2016, 118). In health care settings, Dee Dee’s anger, frustration, and rage are not understood as the natural reaction to structural and interpersonal racism; rather they are depoliticized and used to further pathologize her as an individual who cannot ‘control’ themselves. In learning to smile back, Dee Dee is able to access health care only by the “modulation of [her] conduct to certain norms” (Rose 2000, 332).
Showing too much emotion or acting in ways that are not deemed acceptable has serious consequences for Indigenous participants, from loss of individual choice over their healthcare to loss of children to child protective services. For example, Suzie describes how she had to work hard to hide her emotions during her post-partum stay at the hospital even as she experienced racism and was told that “people like you shouldn’t have children.” As she states:

Yeah. So like it's there's like, they're [...] looking at everything they could to call CAS about, right? They were looking for excuses and they would do everything they could to make me get mad. So I couldn’t yell. Because if you yell at a staff member they can ban you from the hospital. Abuse, right? [...] 

Lindy: So how did you deal with that? Like what did you do? 

Suzie: Cause I just basically had to keep it inside, like I couldn't say anything, right? Cause I couldn't say anything cause I knew if I said anything, it'd be like, you know?

For Suzie, hiding her emotions despite the nursing staff attempting to actively make her “mad” was an act of self-preservation, a way to safely access health care, and a way to ensure her daughter was not removed from her care. Indigenous mothers, in particular, Indigenous sex working mothers, are forced through structural racism to perform the responsibilized subject through the carefully orchestrated display of their emotions.

The pathologization of Indigenous women through trauma narratives and “at-risk” discourses work to mark Indigenous sex working women as incapable of making their own decisions or knowing what their bodies need. This pathologization continues the colonial justification for intervention into Indigenous women’s lives as necessary for their own ‘healing’ violently, including them in western medical models. Yet, exclusion offers its own danger in a lack of access to health care and potential for child apprehension. Therefore, Dee Dee and others are forced to perform the responsibilized subject by managing their emotional reactions and ‘learning
to smile back’, knowing that expressions of anger would be re-pathologized as individual failings rather than as justified reactions to settler violence.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the processes and strategies of inclusion/exclusion as forms of governmentality that sex workers are produced within and produce. Inclusion offers the “benefits of liberty” defined in this chapter, namely as the right to health care and the right to mother and work with less surveillance. Yet, inclusion also requires the modulation of subjects to particular norms defined by whiteness, psychocentrism, and performed responsibilization by subjects who demonstrate their capacity for self-management through acceptable consumption patterns and monetary autonomy. Inclusion also means the modulation of subjects to the norms of whiteness that define Indigenous peoples as at-risks to themselves and in need of ‘healing’ through trauma models that depoliticize violence against Indigenous women. At the same time, I argued that sex workers frequently performed the responsibilized subject to mitigate the control strategies of exclusion, such as attempts to re-affiliate subjects through over-surveillance or state intervention in the form of CAS, or through the management of those who are deemed perpetual Others through more punitive control systems such as prisons and institutionalization. For sex workers in NEO, seeking inclusion through the performance of a responsibilized and autonomous subjectivity is a survival strategy, even as they critique this subjectivity. In the next chapter, I turn to look at how sex workers mediate the control strategies of exclusion that are enacted by police through attempts to re-affiliate sex workers with ‘empowerment’ policing projects and through the violent spatial management of sex workers who refuse empowerment and are therefore marked as risks.
Chapter Three
The Late Liberal Liability Waiver: Responsibilization, Policing, and Erasure of Harm

“The state could not legislate morality, but it could legislate in order to prevent harm’ (Cruikshank 1999, 47)

“Self-imposed censorship through education and guidance, has more to recommend it than the illegal and controversial actions of self-appointed censors. If there is one lesson that has been learned in the progress of civilization it is that it is impossible to legislate public morality.” (Letter to the editor concerning an obscenity trial, Sudbury Star April 1961)

Introduction
In 2017, the RCMP notified the public that they had arrested 14 individuals in connection to an anti-human trafficking sting operation dubbed Operation Northern Spotlight. During Operation Northern Spotlight, police teamed up with NGOs, social workers, and community outreach teams to “meet with individuals suspected of working in the sex trade against their will, or who are believed to be at high risk of being trafficked” (RCMP 2017, emphasis added). After interviewing over 320 individuals the RCMP and its 57 police agency partners “removed [six individuals] from exploitative situations.” In an accompanying press release, the RCMP quoted a partner organization who stated that in Operation Northern Spotlight:

our first priority is always the safety and wellbeing of those individuals who are at risk of being exploited and harmed in heinous human trafficking situations. The police are essential in achieving this objective. We’re not talking about adults willingly partaking in the sex trade. We’re talking about

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42 Northern Spotlight was roundly condemned by sex work advocates across the country who released a joint statement against Operation Northern Spotlight through the Canadian Alliance for Sex Work Law Reform.
vulnerable women, girls and others being abused and forced into committing sexual acts for someone else's profit” (RCMP 2017, emphasis added).

This press release and Operation Northern Spotlight more generally are demonstrative of the recent shift in social and political discourse that recognizes (some) sex workers as active and willing labourers in the sex industry and simultaneously calls for more active policing to rescue vulnerable women, most often identified as Indigenous women and girls, from the risk of being “trafficked.” The recognition that sex workers are active labourers in the industry is a hard-won, if incomplete, victory for sex work advocates who have long called on the public to recognize sex work as a legitimate form of labour. Yet, while police and political actors articulate their recognition of the agency of ‘willing’ sex workers, policymakers justify the continued criminalization of the sex industry by arguing that it poses an inherent “risk” of harm to women, children, and communities. This can be seen most clearly in the preamble of The Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA) that states that “the Parliament of Canada recognizes the social harm caused by the objectification of the human body and the commodification of sexual activity” (PCEPA 2014). In this chapter, I will read these three interrelated phenomena (the recognition of some ‘willing’ sex workers, the continued condemnation of the sex industry as a risk of community harm, and the push to increase policing to address the domestic trafficking of Indigenous women and girls) alongside the shift towards responsibilization/empowerment crime control models to explore how sex workers in NEO

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43 For example, in 2017, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau released a statement about the “pernicious problem” of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in Canada. In an accompanying press release Trudeau identified Indigenous women who were “lured to urban areas” as the most at risk of being trafficking. See Julie Kaye (2017) for a more in-depth discussion of how the idea of vulnerability and risk in anti-human trafficking discourses have become tied to Indigenous women.
experience crime reduction strategies and the implications of these discourses within settler colonial spaces like NEO.

I will begin this chapter by defining responsibilization-empowerment policing, using Agamben’s concept of *homo sacer* to bridge the gap between critical criminology and settler colonial theory while highlighting settler colonialism as a primary condition of governmentality in NEO. I will then offer a brief history of the legal status of sex work in Canada and the rising moral panic around human trafficking to contextualize the current crime control strategies that sex workers are subject to. This will be followed by an examination of how sex workers in NEO experience police ‘empowerment’ strategies as productive forms of biopolitical governmentality, with a particular emphasis on the ways through which the responsibilization-empowerment policing models are managed by sex workers. I then use Agamben’s (1998) concept of “states of exception” to contend with the coercive power of responsibilization-empowerment policing; drawing particular attention to how police violence against sex workers is enabled and justified when sex workers refuse empowerment strategies and then become identified as ‘risks’ to communities that must be managed. Finally, I delve into the implications of responsibilization-empowerment narratives on sex workers, tracing how responsibilization-empowerment strategies end up re-casting sex workers who refuse to leave the industry or participate in police ‘empowerment’ efforts as complicit actors in the creation of social harm. I argue that within the settler colonial context of Canada, narratives of human trafficking and violence against Indigenous women are mobilized by governments in a way that erases state complicity while placing the blame for colonial violence on sex workers. In sum, I argue that the shift towards responsibilization-empowerment models of policing, coupled with the rising moral panic around domestic trafficking and the social recognition of sex workers as active participants, works to create a late liberal
“liability waiver” (Bay-Cheng 215, 283) where violence against sex workers is represented as either their fault or a necessary function of maintaining safe communities through policing. Within these discourses, sex workers are cast as complicit actors in the creation of social harm in ways that erase the structural violence of colonization on Indigenous women.

**Responsibilized-Empowered Subjects and the Logics of Late Liberalism and Settler Colonialism**

As discussed in the last chapter, within the rationalities of late liberalism subjects are governed by, not despite, their freedom (Rose 1999). Under these logics individuals are understood to be “bearers of reason and autonomy” and those who are socially excluded “are perceived to be unable to fully exercise such autonomy” (Roy 2017, 870). Governmentality “undertaken by agents as diverse as activists and the state” attempts to mobilize an individual’s autonomy and freedom to increase their participation in society for the “common good” (Roy 2017, 870; Cruikshank 1999, 43). Barbara Cruikshank (1999) refers to this as the “will to empower” where the “the poor and powerless” are reconstituted “as acting subjects” (McKee 2011, 5). The “failure” of a subject to act according to socially defined rules of conduct “mark the terrain of state intervention” that is justified under the guise that it will “prevent harm” to communities or broader society (Cruikshank 1999, 44). “Self-acting” subjects reap the benefit of social inclusion, and “those who fail to act” are then subject to social programs meant to “enhance the capacities of the individual to act voluntarily for the common good” (Cruikshank 1999, 43). Empowerment can be understood as “interchangeable” with responsibilization because the will to empower relies on the creation of responsibilized subjects who can gain “emancipation” and inclusion when they act according to the social norms of proper self-governance (Moore and Hirai 2014, 8). Responsibilization-empowerment discourses invisibilize how subjects are deliberately “socially and culturally excluded” through “the disciplinary constitution of subjectivity” that is informed by settler logics
of race, gender, and ability, and instead exclusion, and any violence that occurs due to the subject’s state of exclusion, becomes understood as a result of the individual’s failure erasing social and political liability (Moore and Hirai 2009, 8).

Responsibilization-empowerment discourses are perpetuated and take shape through a wide variety of social actors, yet in this chapter, I will examine these discourses in relation to crime reduction and policing strategies. Within policing, responsibilization-empowerment programs can be understood as “strategies of re-affiliation” targeted at those who participate in criminalized activities (Rose 1999). Responsibilization-empowerment policing tactics read the potential for ‘risk’ alongside the discourse of ‘needs’ to identify those subjects who are amenable to re-affiliation. In the 1990s, criminologists identified the prevalence of ‘risk-thinking’ within legal systems and argued that crime management is premised on identifying and separating those subjects who are considered ‘risky’ from the rest of the population (see, for example, Garland 2002; Feeley and Simon 1992). Yet, responsibilization-empowerment policing is not singularly focused on the potential risk of a subject rather an “offender’s risk (factors which led the offender into criminal behaviour and the criminal record) and needs (areas in the offender’s life/lifestyle, which, if changed, can reduce the risk of re-offending)” are read alongside each other to identify those subject who have “narrowly defined intervenable needs” and then becomes “targeted [for] therapeutic interventions” (Hannah-Mowfat 2005, 29; 35). These strategies of re-affiliation are productive in that they construct a subject who, can gain a “renewed membership into the ‘moral community’” through therapeutic interventions targeted at a free, choice-making subject (Donohue and Moore 2009, 322). Yet, even as police empowerment strategies can be understood as productive forms of power premised on the production of an individual free-subject, they are “rooted in” coercive forms of power embedded in the symbol and body of the police officer (Roy
As Roy (2017, 871) argued within the will to empower “subjects are increasingly forced—through punitive and even carceral means—when they do not comply with what is presumed to be in their best interest” and in that way the will to empower can also “operate in a straightforwardly coercive way that is usually attributed to the state alone.”

Responsibilization-empowerment regimes are produced within and produce larger relations of power. In Canada, we cannot understand responsibilization-empowerment strategies in policing outside of the structures of settler colonialism and the ways through which the law has been utilized to enact and sustain colonial systems. As Morgensen (2011, 54) argues, settler colonialism’s “power remains naturalized” if it is not theorized as a “primary condition” of how power is mobilized, enacted, and operates within the Canadian state. Agamben’s (1998) theorization of power is a useful lens for bridging the gap between critical criminologists’ theories of empowerment and settler colonial theory. Agamben (1998) argues that the “central figure of modern politics is the *homo sacer*” who acts as the alterity to the autonomous subject and proves the state’s monopoly on power through the “sovereign ban” whereby *homo sacer* is expelled to the time-space “of exception” outside of the state, and there can be killed without consequences (Johnson 2017, 25). According to Agamben (1998) the sovereign power of the state operates through the ability to ban the *homo sacer* to the time-space “of exception” but also through the ability to make (empower) *homo sacer* into a citizen, thus proving the state’s power to “exercises control over the biological body” (Johnson 2017, 33). Within settler colonial theory, the power of the settler state is seen through the state’s ability to enact lawfare, broadly defined as the use of “legal instruments, [and] the violence inherent in the law, to commit acts of political coercion, even erasure” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2007, 144) to fulfil the settler logics of elimination of Indigenous peoples (Crosby and Monaghan 2012). Lawfare has the capacity to reduce people to
“bare life” and place them in the state of exception whereby they are subject to the power of the law but are not protected from the limits of the authority of the law (Agamben 1998). In Canada, lawfare has been enacted to ban Indigenous peoples to spaces of exception outside the law, where they have been subject to the violence of the state and yet it is not conceptualized as violence because they were not recognized as persons under the law (Wilson 2020; Pratt 2005; Morgensen 2009). However, as Agamben (1998) also notes the sovereign power of the law is productive in that it reifies its authority through its ability to make homo sacer into a citizen, thus proving the state’s power to “exercises control over the biological body” (Johnson 2017, 33). In Canada, the forced enfranchisement of Indigenous peoples into Canadian citizenship was accompanied by violent social programs that were meant to produce Indigenous peoples as ‘proper’ citizens through education, the breaking of familial relations, and the attempted erasure of Indigenous social and political systems (Simpson 2016, 16; Carter 2008; Tuck and Yang 2012; Razack 2015). These social programs relied on the will to empower through the attempt to mobilize Indigenous peoples’ individual choices yet simultaneously rendered invisible how these choices were constrained by the threat of the sovereign power of the state to enact violence against Indigenous peoples without consequence. Therefore, we can see within Canada how the power of the state operates in both productive forms (to produce citizens) and through the banishment of certain individuals to the state of exception to fulfil the colonial logics of elimination (Wolfe 2006).

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44 As Wilson (2020, 16) points out Canadian colonial law quite literally stripped Indigenous peoples of their humanity by refusing them the right to be considered persons under the law in the Indian Act and yet they were still subject to the power of the Canadian law as ‘wards of the state’ (Indian Act 1906, S.C. c. 81, s. 2(c)).

45 As Moreton-Robinson (2015, 172) argues citizenship is method of subjection and domination because it grants the state the power to invoke their jurisdictional sovereignty over the “citizens.”
Responsibilization-empowerment strategies are examples of the productive power of the settler state to “make live” by producing a particular type of citizen-subject (Foucault 1976, 241), one that is defined by their supposed freedom to make choices that will enable their inclusion in the social body. Yet, those who fail to act according to the prescribed ideals of citizenship are then subject to the power of the state to ban them to the state of exception, where violence is allowable and justified as necessary for the common good. Therefore, we can understand these two forms of power, the ability to make live through the power of the state to produce citizens, and the ability to let die through the banishment to a state of exception as “not incidental but productive and fundamental” to empowerment policing within settler states (Pratt 2005, 1053). To understand how responsibilization-empowerment policing is experienced by sex workers in NEO, it is important to explore the legal context through which these policing strategies emerge, and it is there that I turn to next.

A Brief Socio-legal History of Sex Work in Canadian Law

Sex work has a complicated history with/in Canadian law. Prohibitionists have relied heavily on the law to “save” women who they believe are being victimized by sex work (see, for example, Bindel 2017). However, as Sarah Hunt (2015/2016, 26) argues (and as discussed above) “despite our appeals to law to address violence, law is itself dependent on violence for its power.” In Canada, the law has been used to demarcate Otherness and enable and justify the theft of Indigenous lands (Backhouse 1999; Hunt 2015). Therefore, when considering the legalities of sex work in Canada it is important to understand the role of the law in justifying, naturalizing, and enabling violence against Indigenous peoples and other racialized people for the sake of the Canadian state.
Canada inherited its legal traditions from Great Britain through the colonization of North America, which resulted in the attempted erasure of existing legal orders and the imposition of binary gender roles that were codified into law (Boyer 2009). In the early colonial period, settler public and legal opinions on sex work were intimately connected to the processes of colonization and the imposition of new legal, social, and economic orders in what is currently called Canada. As Laura Anne Stoler (1989, 636) argues that “the regulation of sexual relations was central to the development of particular kinds of colonial settlements and to the allocation of economic activity within them.” During the fur trade era, interracial relationships between settler men and Indigenous women were deemed acceptable and allowed under colonial rule (Boyer 2009). However, with the establishment of permanent settlements and the arrival of white women into the colonial spaces, racial anxieties around the creation and maintenance of a white empire meant there was a shift in how interracial relationships were viewed (Levine 2013). In her historiography of Indigenous women and the law, Yvonne Boyer (2009, 78) demonstrates how Indigenous femininity became synonymous with “prostitution,” and it was common to see newspaper headlines that both hyper-sexualized Indigenous women and shared sensationalizing stories of Indigenous women being “sold” for “blankets” or other goods. Between 1878 and 1892, a series of provisions were added to the Indian Act that punished Indigenous women who sold sexual services, banishing them from their communities by making it illegal for anyone to house an Indigenous woman who was suspected of working in the sex industry (Boyer 2009). These provisions similarly criminalized Indigenous men for “pimping” and “purchasing” the services of sex workers, and yet, as Boyer (2009, 79) points out, there were “few attempts” to punish non-Indigenous men who were participating in the purchase of sexual services. During this time, popular discourse painted Indigenous women as immoral and hypersexual and Indigenous men were presented as abusive
and as threats to both Indigenous women and white femininity (Anderson 2002; Henderson 2003). These racist depictions of Indigenous women enabled white men who sexually assaulted Indigenous women to escape legal repercussions, and the narratives that Indigenous women were being “pimped out” or “sold” by Indigenous men were used as a justification for colonial intervention coded as benevolence (Anderson 2002; Sikka 2009).

At the same time, a growing moral panic around white settler women being sold into “white slavery” in the colonies contributed to social stigmas around sex work and strengthened social purity movements in urban centres (Valverde 2008; Fristch et al. 2013). Mariana Valverde (2008, 79) argues that social fear and panic surrounding prostitution in urban centres can be traced to a broader fear of “fallen cities,” which were cities defined by the presence of sex workers and seen as less economically viable and socially secure. As discussed elsewhere in this study, the social fear of “white slavery” has also been attributed to larger colonial anxieties around racial purity and empire where white women were valued for their ability to literally, and figuratively, reproduce colonial orders (Devereux 2000; Levine 2003; Valverde 2008). The conflation of Indigenous femininity with hyper-sexuality and the white femininity with sexual purity continues to impact how sex work is regulated in Canada (Razack 2002).

In 1892, the Criminal Code came into effect, and the provisions surrounding ‘prostitution’ were removed from the Indian Act and placed in the Criminal Code. In 1869, the Canadian government passed the Vagrancy Act, which criminalized ‘prostitution’ and “pimping.” The Vagrancy Act made it possible to detain women who were perceived as "being a prostitute" regardless of whether they sold sexual services (Valverde 2008; Fritsch et al. 2013). While proponents of the Vagrancy Act argued that prohibition would save (white) women from the evils
of sex work the law did not target clients because ‘prostitution’ was still seen as a necessary, though disdainful, part of life (Levine 2003).

Few changes were made to the Criminal Code in reference to ‘prostitution’ until the late 20th century. In the 1970s the Vagrancy Act was removed from the Criminal Code and was replaced in 1972 with section 195.1, which prohibited the solicitation of prostitution in public places. In the 1980s, sex workers’ calls to end criminalization became more mainstream and led to the 1983 "Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution” or the "Fraser Committee." The Fraser Committee recommended that the government reduce the restrictions around brothels and third parties. However, the Fraser Committee’s recommendations were ignored and instead the Progressive Conservative government replaced section 195.1 of the Criminal Code with Bill C-49, which made it illegal to communicate for the purpose of engaging in prostitution. A series of Supreme Court challenges were levied against the "communication" bill; however, the Supreme Court defended the Bill and argued it did not infringe on the Constitutional rights of sex workers (van der Meulen et al. 2013). The Court’s position changed in 2013 with Canada v. Bedford where the Supreme Court ruled that the communicating law was unconstitutional and gave the government one year to redefine the laws. In response, the Conservative government released Bill C-36 "The Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act," and it was codified into law in 2014. Under PCEPA it remains illegal to communicate for the purpose of selling sexual services in certain public areas [subsection 213(1.1)] and to obtain sexual services for consideration or communicate for the purpose of purchasing sexual services in any public space [s. 286.1]. It also continues to criminalize third parties through the criminalization of the procurement of sexual service [s. 286.3] and advertising [s. 286.4] by third parties and the criminalization of receiving a material benefit from the sale of sexual services for third parties [s. 286.2]. PCEPA has been
heavily criticized by sex workers and sex work advocates who argue that it increases the risks of the sex industry and re-entrenches the separation of sex workers from communities (Bruckert 2015). Sex working participants in this study unanimously rejected the pseudo-decriminalization of the sex industry found in PCEPA. As Shirley stated “when they did that Bill 36, they didn't really fucking help us whatsoever […] Changing the wording that means the same damn thing doesn't make change.”

In April 2021, an Ontario Supreme Court judge ruled that aspects of PCEPA (sections 286.2, 286.3(1) and 286.4) were unconstitutional. While this ruling has been lauded as a “partial victory,” sex work advocates are moving forward on another court challenge that began in March 2021 and could lead to legal future legal changes (Schofield 2021, par. 12). The Canadian Alliance for Sex Work Law Reform launched an Ontario Supreme Court challenge against the sections of the criminal code that prohibit impeding traffic [s. 213(1)] and public communication [s. 213(1.1)] for the purpose of communicating for the sale of sexual services, purchasing of sexual services [s.286.1(1)], materially benefiting from the sale of sexual services [s. 286.2(1)], recruiting clients [s. 286.3(1)], and advertising sexual services [s. 286.4] (Schofield 2021). They argue these sections

46 The changes in the new law not only meant police began to show up differently in sex workers’ lives, but also introduced a new level of danger for sex workers because the increased police attention on clients has deteriorated sex worker-client relationships. Suzie described how the change in the law changed her relationships with clients saying “if you’re a working girl right, you get released and your John goes to jail… well, you know they’re [the client is] gunna get mad. Are they going to get mad at the cops? No…. [laughs]” So where the previous law allowed for a sense of comradery between clients and workers because there was a perceived equal assumption of risk, the 2014 changes meant sex workers saw an increase in violence from men posing as clients who hold sex workers responsible for their arrest and criminalization. Similarly, participants noted that the new law led to an increase of fraud from women who pose as sex workers and then when they meet a client pretend to be police and extort the client for money. One participant was recently physically assaulted by a man who was mad he had been extorted by a non-sex working community member who posed as a sex worker and then as a police officer, in her own words he beat her up because “one hooker is as good as the next” and he was angry at being taken advantage of.
of the criminal code continue to impede sex workers’ rights to “security, personal autonomy, life, liberty, free expression, free association and equality” (Schofield 2021, par. 13).

Empowered or Trafficked: PCEPA and Changes in Policing

Government officials presented PCEPA as a legal change that would benefit sex workers by ending demand for the sex industry and therefore ending the potential for exploitation. After PCEPA police turned to new “survivor-centered” and “empowerment” based models of policing (**** 2020). Sex workers under PCEPA were redefined as subjects who required state intervention through benevolent policing to address their ‘needs’ that led them to become social risks as sex workers. Participants identified two main ways that the new law affected their relationships with police: First, the law transformed the language police used to describe their interactions with sex workers, from arrest and detention to ‘empowerment’ and ‘outreach’ and yet there was little change in how police treated sex workers and police displacement tactics and the potential threat of violence continued to frame their relationships. Second, the law led to an increase in police attention on “human trafficking” which both increased state and community surveillance of sex workers and simultaneously marked sex workers as complicit actors in the human trafficking ‘problem.”

From Arrest to Outreach: Empowerment Policing

With the introduction of PCEPA, police began to adopt the language of empowerment in their interactions with sex workers, calling themselves “outreach workers” and building partnerships with social service organizations. Within NEO, police approaches to the sex industry shifted from an arrest-centric approach to a “therapeutic” interventionist approach (Moore 2011, 47 Citation in question is to a website of a police service in the region. The website name was removed to protect the location that the study took place in.)
Police no longer engaged in outdoor stings or arrested women in large, targeted operations. Instead, police began working hand in hand with social workers using catfishing techniques (coded as “outreach”) to access sex workers and their clients. As Jackie described:

They'll [police] pose as clients or they'll pose as a sex worker […] Some girls show up at a hotel room say to see a client and it's cops. It's typically cops and social workers that are like, “are you in trouble? Are you OK? Do you need to be rescued?”

These catfishing-outreach approaches are exemplary of responsibilization-empowerment intervention in that they are premised on the identification of “intervenable” needs and therapeutic intervention to address those needs (Hannah-Mowfat 2005, 29; 35). Yet, participants argued that the needs identified by police differed drastically from the needs they identified, namely the creation of safer working conditions. Since PCEPA continues to represent the sex industry as a source of social harm that is incongruent with proper participation in ‘society,’ responsibilization-empowerment policing initiatives aimed at the sex industry maintain the objective of producing responsibilized subjects who act to leave the industry.

The chasm between sex worker-defined needs and the needs identified by police becomes clear in times when sex workers call on the police for their support, only to be met with silence. Suzie shared a story about a time when a client robbed her at a hotel; when she called the police to report the robbery, she was charged with trespassing, and her robbery claim was never investigated. The robbery was not conceptualized as a crime nor investigated by police because

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48 This is not to say that therapeutic interventions did not occur prior to PCEPA, only that they became more common. Prior to PCEPA police in NEO ran “Jane Schools” that sex workers could opt to attend in lieu of incarceration.
49 Although stings targeting the sex industry directly no longer occur, participants noted that outdoor stings continued under the guise of ‘drug raids.’
50 The language of “outreach worker” is demonstrative of responsibilization-empowerment governmentality in that the job of the outreach worker is to connect with and re-affiliate individuals who are deemed socially excluded. Outreach programs are productive forms of power premised on producing self-governing, free subjects who are “ready” to participate in society (Kryda and Compton 2009, 145).
Suzie was represented as an active subject who chose to work in the sex industry and therefore was made responsible for any outcomes of this choice. This exemplifies the paradoxical nature of responsibilization-empowerment policing: While responsibilization-empowerment “appear[s] to subscribe to an emancipatory agenda” as it draws on the late-liberal narrative of choice and an individual’s capacity to “take control of their own lives,” the very concept of empowerment is paradoxical in that “the individual who takes responsibility for herself ends up […] following the directions given by others” (Moore and Hirai 2014, 8).

As Moore and Hinai (2014, 6) point out, most theories of empowerment and responsibilization tend to view “responsibilization as a totalizing, top-down strategy that creates a hierarchical form of governance” and ignores the “ability to act” of those who are subject to responsibilization-empowerment regimes. In this study, participants articulated both a recognition of the shift in policing and described different tactics they adopted for managing the shifting terrain of policing in NEO, demonstrating their ability to “act otherwise” in the face of empowerment policing strategies (McKee 2011, 1). Two main approaches emerged in our conversations; First, participants described how they would appropriate the responsibilization-empowerment discourse to create safer interactions with police; and second, participants described how they would engage in the active ‘subversion’ of this discourse (Roy 2017, 877).

For some participants coopting the language of pathologies, needs, and responsibilization was a management tactic to improve the outcomes with police. In her study of drug treatment courts, Dawn Moore (2011, 319) argued that empowerment programs within the criminal justice system transform the ‘criminal’ into the ‘client.’ Whereas criminals are “wanton and hopeless, better warehoused on account of their dangerousness” clients are “choice making, free subjects” who have pathologies that can be ‘corrected’ through social programs (Moore 2011, 319; 322).
Participants were aware that being identified as a pathologized ‘client’ can mitigate the potential for incarceration and described how they would actively draw on pathologizing narratives to present themselves as subjects in need of intervention rather than criminal risks to be managed. Melissa, who was arrested for robbery, drew on the language of addiction to reduce the threat of incarceration and transform the interaction with police from that of arrest to therapeutic intervention. As she describes it,

I got arrested a few times too. And then the cops were like, because I was honest about my addiction with them they pretty much treated me okay after. But I wasn't no- a sex worker, so they didn't judge me because I would say I stole it for my addiction. So they kind of understood.

By drawing on the language of addiction Melissa managed to mitigate the situation and instead of being identified as a sex worker, and a criminal was understood by police as someone in need of support and intervention. In other instances, when faced with catfishing tactics, participants describe how some sex workers will ‘accept’ police rescue initiatives and identify as a ‘victim’ to evade arrest or to be able to access social services that are only available to “victims” of trafficking (Bittle 2013). Bittle (2013) and Bernstein (2019) have noted that the high human trafficking numbers that police and governments use to justify increased police spending and surveillance of the sex industry can be in part attributed to police ‘rescue’ operations where sex workers agree to identify as ‘victims’ to escape arrest or detainment, this finding was echoed in this study’s data.

While adopting the language of responsibilization can help mitigate the potential for incarceration, other participants describe the ways through which they would subvert the discourse when faced with court-mandated responsibilization-empowerment interventions. When Suzie was ordered to speak at a John School in exchange for her arrest records being expunged, she recognized the intent (to deter clients through stories of harm) and actively subverted this narrative:

Lindy: They made you talk at John School? Wow.
Suzie: They'll never ask me back again [laughs].
Lindy: What did you say?
Suzie: Well, it's not so much what I said, it's what I didn't say. I didn't say I was abused. I didn't say I was a traffick victim. I didn't say I was forced into it, right? That's again, you know what I mean? So.
Lindy: And you think that's what they wanted you to say?
Suzie: That's what they wanted me to say. Because that's what John School is. It's to show how bad [elongates word] it is to pick up sex workers, right? (right) So if I'm going in there saying "yeah like I chose the profession" and like they're like "naw". You know what I mean? like [laughs] It's not like, not giving them the info-vibe they want. (Right). Yeah [laughing]

As Suzie acknowledged, in refusing to engage with the narrative that it is "bad" to "pick up sex workers," she actively disrupted the mandated responsibilization-empowerment strategies of John School that use education rather than incarceration to police the sex industry.

Other subversion tactics included naming the coercive nature of these strategies and drawing attention to the power of police to enact state-sanctioned violence if sex workers refused to comply with police demands. FSWC made a public effort to condemn the police for adopting the language of outreach, pointing to the constant potential for state-sanctioned violence that existed in the body of the police officer:

Jackie: And they [police] wanted to actually be doing outreach. We're like, "you cannot. You can not [voice louder] call your initiatives, outreach. You can't do it."
Shirley: Oh hell no […]
Jackie: We told them that they cannot. Our our-our community outreach workers really made it clear because it actually, we've done so much work between us […] the actual outreach teams to build trust. [Police are] not going to go into community now and be like, "we're outreach workers. We're doing outreach." […] And like um you know, approaching women that are working outside.
Lindy: You can't be an outreach worker if…?
Jackie: If you're going to arrest me or shoot me.

By drawing attention to the potential for (allowable and legal) violence that exists within policing, FSWC drew attention to the boundary that exists within responsibilization-empowerment
governmentality. As described above the will to empower works to “regulate individuals by empowering them […] it can also operate in a straightforwardly coercive way” (Roy 2017) by enacting punitive measures to subjects who refuse these empowerment regimes. In recentering the ability of police to “arrest and shoot,” Jackie and FSWC made visible the power that police have to use punitive, carceral, or violent force to ensure the compliance of subjects to empowerment strategies.

For many participants, police violence was not an abstract idea, but a present and ongoing reality even as police adopted the language of care, outreach, and empowerment. Many participants actively scoffed at the idea that police were engaging in forms of empowerment policing. As Shirley explains “so when they- when they ask so do you have grounding with your local police service? Fuck no. [laughs] No. no, no, no, no, no.” Others, such as Lisa described how police were “trying” to transform their relationships with sex workers and yet continued to be aggressive and violent without consequence:

Uh I think they're trying to do the outreach stuff like they're trying to follow suit with like, [the city of] Victoria or whatever. (Yeah). Some of the bigger cities. But like, like, again, like whenever I see a police officer and they're arresting, they're aggressive.

The ongoing violence that participants experience from police can be understood as a direct continuation of empowerment-responsibilization regimes where the “failure” of a subject to be properly empowered “mark the terrain of state intervention” or violence justified under the pretence that it will “prevent harm” to other members of the community (Cruikshank 1999, 44). Within crime control models, “community is represented as […] a group of individuals that is ‘law-abiding’, while subjects designated as ‘criminals’ are portrayed as external threats that come from beyond its boundaries” (Mopas and Moore 2011). Those who are understood as criminals and subject to responsibilization-empowerment policing must either conform to socially defined
proper behaviour for the sake of the ‘community’ or be managed as external risks to the purity of community spaces (Mopas and Moore 2011). When criminalize subjects are understood as outside of communities (and blamed for it due to their own supposed choices), they are then conceptualized as “outside of the law” and therefore become subject to the power of the law to “punish, contain, or constrain” them (Mopas and Moore 2011). While empowerment regimes could be understood as a step away from punitive forms of power, punitive power is integrated into the will to empower in that those who cannot, or do not, become empowered to act according to culturally coded correct behaviours “are simultaneously “problematized” and subject to punitive interventions” because of the supposed risk they pose to community (McKee 2011, 6).

What is defined as a ‘risk’ is “based on cultural understandings of purity and defilement,” and risk-aversion tactics or governance strategies produce structural and symbolic stigma for the group which is defined as ‘risky’ (Hannem 2012, 25). In Canadian law, the sex industry is identified as a site of “social harm,” situating the sex industry, the physical spaces that outdoor sex work takes place in, and those who work within the industry as potential risks. Communities read the idea of socially-defined “health” and “safety” along side signifiers of “risk” to exclude certain “people and behaviours” that are seen as posing risk to the community (Fischer and Poland 1998, 195). The use of risk-aversion techniques in preventative policing “presupposes [risk prevention’s] opposite-the elimination or removal of risk, through practices which target the homogenization and purification of specific spaces through a politics of vigilance and displacement” (Fisher and Poland 1998, 196). The sex industry is seen in policy and political rhetoric as antithetical to community well-being, and therefore, sex workers are subject to responsibilization-empowerment regimes where empowerment means leaving an industry that has been represented as a source of social harm in policy or facing the potential for state-sanctioned violence. Sex workers who refuse
to become ‘empowered’ are then excluded from the community that police “protect” and instead the sex industry, and sex workers by extension, become an object that police must protect the community against (Ferris 2015).

As Razack (2000, 96) argues it is important to denaturalize not only the logics that mark certain subjects as violable or as ‘risky’ but also the spatial ways that these logics are mapped onto certain spaces. Responsibilization-empowerment policing strategies rely on spatialized logics that invisibilize the violence that is inherent in these policing tactics because this violence takes place in spaces that are marked as ‘degenerate’ or ‘risky’ where state, and other, violence is naturalized as an inevitable character of the space itself. State violence is further rendered allowable within spaces that are marked as ‘degenerate’ because this violence is understood as necessary to maintain the spatial purity of other community spaces from ‘risky’ subjects.

For sex working participants, police and community expulsion posed the biggest threat of potential harm. Sex workers in NEO argued that the representation of the sex industry as a source of community harm stands in stark contrast to their own experiences and ignores how state management of the industry through laws, police services, and community exclusion perpetuates harm against sex workers themselves. Jackie recalled with frustration what activists have long been telling NEO police services and community members:

Jackie: you're [NEO police] making things more dangerous for people. You're fucking, you are what, you're talking about these fucking predators that are coming in and picking women up off the street, you know, posing as clients [as] being the problem. Fuck, one of our biggest problems is the police services and non-sex working community members. They're the ones that are the most threatening. People have rapport with their clients. And yes, you get predators that'll show up as potential clients or whatever. Right? But the majority of the violence is
non-sex working community members, neighbors, the NIMBY’s\(^\text{51}\) and police services.

As Jackie describes, safety in sex work is most affected by its “the mode of governance,” in particular, policing strategies that encourage community exclusion and enable police violence (Sanders 2016, 6). Community exclusion is not an accidental side-effect of the governance of sex work in NEO but a deliberate and systemic practice enabled and supported by police services through methods of expulsion. Participants described how police engage in displacement tactics that result in an increased risk of violence to sex workers as they are pushed away from mainstream community spaces. For example, Jackie describes how police attempt the displacement of sex working community members from the “strip” through deliberate acts to ‘mock’ or harass working women:

> They'll drive up and down the street, honk their horn at women that are trying to work, call them out.

Humiliation acts as an effective displacement tactic that police use to both deter potential clients and actively embarrass the women who are trying to work. These humiliation tactics encourage and produce stigma against sex workers and are so effective that they can result in sex workers leaving the industry and losing their source of income. Lisa, described how stigma and humiliation forced her out of the industry and into a more financially precarious living situation:

> Lisa: why I won't do it is because people are gunna see me. Its [...] the stigma (mmh yeah) [starts laughing] if there was no stigma and it was [...] seen as a [gets serious] like a service then it'd be okay, you know?
> Lindy: It like you said, you're good at what you do (yeah), so then it'd be like

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\(^{51}\) The term NIMBY refers to Not In My BackYard. It is used most often by anti-poverty advocates to describe community members who will advocate against community development projects citing unfound fears that these projects will increase crime, lower their house costs, and increase social unrest.
Lisa: I'd be rich! (yeah) I wouldn't be on welfare fuck [laughing] [I would] line them up on a treadmill. Let's do it. I can take my teeth out [both laughing]. I'd be fucking laughing

Police displacement tactics premised on humiliation and embarrassment perpetuate and enable stigma that results in sex workers leaving the industry and entering financially precarious states. NEO police not only engage in humiliation to remove sex workers from community spaces; police presence in and of itself around sex work contact zones also acts as a displacement tactic. Yet, participants recalled how they frequently resist the attempted displacement by police; Ellen describes the actions she would take when police presence affected her ability to work:

Ellen: I used to go knock right on the window. When they park in the parking lot in the garage there [laughter], I would go walk up and knock on the window and say, "listen, man, can you move? You're really fucking me up. [laughter] I'm serious. I'd say "look it, if you could move"

Devon: I've asked them to move too

Ellen: “and let me get one, and then I'll go fucking home”

Devon: yeah

Ellen: “And then that way, you know, its not a problem, man. But if you just sit here, I'm stuck out here, dude, like come on”

This strategy was particularly effective, and Ellen noted that “nine times out of ten” the police would either go or present her with an alternative. However, the alternatives policed offered were based on Ellen becoming invisible and worked to perpetuate community exclusion symbolically and physically. For example, police would ask Ellen to make herself invisible to other community members by walking away from the main street where she was visible to passers-by making it a safer place for her to work:

Ellen: Or they'd stop and say, "listen, just walk down a little further because we can see y'all in the cameras. And if they can see ya [on] the cameras, we have to come and say something to ya."

Jackie: Yep

Ellen: “So just go walk down there where they can't see and [we’ll] leave you alone,”
Jackie: Go into a space that's a little darker and all fucking less connected to community and then work there because otherwise we can see you on the camera like what the fuck? You know?

Policing displacement tactics like the one Ellen describes place sex working community members at increased risk by “enhancing opportunities for exploitation” (Hubbard, Matthews, and Scoular 2008, 138) and reduces sex workers’ ability to safely negotiate with clients. As Jackie describes, police presence actively limits sex workers’ ability to make the work safe for themselves and their clients because sex workers and clients are forced to screen each other for the potential presence of police before moving on to other negotiations:

Sex workers …and clients are so worried about getting arrested that they're not screening for all of the potential risks other than the first one being "am I or is my client going to get arrested?" So once that's established that, you know, neither one of the people are police, the people are actually going away from their center where they're feeling safe, and that's where negotiation is happening, away from where you're feeling safe, where you have a community, where you have lighting and stuff. So now you've already taken, say, 20 minutes out of your time to get there and then they're going to start negotiations. So, your ability to actually set your boundaries has been compromised.

Police displacement tactics and presence in areas where sex workers meet with clients pushes sex workers and their clients to conduct negotiations away from spaces where the worker has community and a sense of safety, increasing the risk of violence from abusive members of the public posing as clients.

These displacement tactics operate to situate sex workers, both symbolically and physically, outside of the community that police are meant to “protect” so that sex workers become subjects controlled and managed by that law and yet excluded from the protection of the law (Amram et al. 2019). In this sense, sex workers can be understood using Agamben’s *homo sacer*, where sex workers are “figures existing on the threshold of the sovereign state, excluded from the
law yet subject to its power” (Hubbard, Matthews, and Scoular 2008, 149). Sex workers live in a “state of exception” whereby the regulatory practices that are meant to monitor how police operate in society no longer protect them and police violence against them is allowable because of their perceived risk to community justified in federal legislation (Agamben 1998). All participants described instances of police violence ranging from explicit forms of violence in the form of physical abuse, to threats of violence and verbal harassment on the streets. Physical violence from police could take extreme forms. Ellen describes one such experience:

Basically, they were doing a sweep, they were grabbing girls anyway, and then when they happen to get me, yes, [Officer A] they took me up in behind the Ryerson hotel on Abby Street and just fucking fed it to me eh? […] and then it, then it started and they punched me out twice. They beat me up. [Officer A] punched me soooo fucking bad they turned off the camera when they brought me into the police station. And then they charged me on top of it. […] I couldn't walk they'd beat me up so bad I couldn't walk (holy shit) and they end up, yeah, they end up dragging me into the cell and they had done a sweep that night and there was like 10 girls in there and Amy J was in, she's dead now. but I remember they dragged me in and Amy just sat up and went “Holy fuck,” [laughs]

Because of the degree of violence during her arrest Ellen ended up “walking” when the evidence of this violence was brought up in court, and the charges against her for soliciting did not stick. Officer A, that Ellen is discussing, continues to work on the force and has been promoted several times; he now works in the top tiers of the police service. His continued career and promotion demonstrate how violence against sex workers, even violence that is acknowledged by the court, remains allowable, and officers who commit violence against sex workers are not held accountable because sex workers are seen as external risks to the community and must be managed and removed.
Sex workers are also understood as external to communities because of their supposed refusal to engage in forms of “proper” femininity (Hallgrimsdottir et al. 2006; Tempest 2019). Participants in this study frequently articulated how they were perceived in society as outside of femininity because of their participation in the sex industry. Several times throughout the study, participants would reference the saying “you can't make a housewife out of a whore” to demonstrate how non-sex working community members saw them outside of femininity’s standard of the ‘housewife.’ Sex workers’ perceived externality to femininity means that violence from police took on particularly gendered forms that acted to humiliate the women. Ellen describes how during an arrest one of the officers made her continually spread her legs to the point that her skirt ripped and she was exposed in public:

I had a miniskirt on and it was all ripped because they had, I was like this [imitating standing with legs apart] and they made me, he kept going “Spread your legs,” and he made me spread em so far that my miniskirt ripped

Shirley described a similar story of gendered police violence during an arrest. She had just given birth to her fifth child via cesarean when officers stormed her home to arrest her and her husband. During the arrest, one of the officers discharged his gun and it hit the wall next to Shirley’s head. She was then beaten and repeatedly kicked in the groin by one of the officers:

Shirley: I was in such bad condition when they brought me to the jail. They had taken all kinds of pictures because they didn't want to be liable of the condition I came in. *I had his fucking boot mark in my inner thigh because he was trying to kick me in my crotch.* Oh yeah. I - I probably kind of edged him on too, "I'm like you fucking pig beat your wife like this too, you get off on this, eh?" Oh yeah. I took it. Like that was... I couldn't feel the blows. (Yeah.) I seen the blows coming. And his other fellow officers had to come and grab him off of me. (wow) That's how much he was losing it on me. (wow) […] So this guy had some fucking psyche issues
Lindy: and you had just given birth?
Shirley: big time. And I just had a fucking caesarean (wow) and I took it. I took it. I took it. (holy shit) Oh, yeah, you should've seen all the bruises and the handprints and the -and the uh broken blood vessels and the boot prints. All that, its all documented.....so ...he had to come up with a story... How his gun went off.
Lindy: And his boot mark got on you?
Shirley: Yeah... No, [...] who cares about the abuse? He's got to explain to his high officers “why did you discharge your weapon?” You - That's what you have to document that. (Right.)

When Shirley told officers during her interrogation that she would sue them for their unlawful violence and arrest tactics, the officers scoffed at her, claiming "who's gunna believe a criminal drug addict like you?" Shirley later went on to successfully sue the police service; however, her husband was deported during this arrest, and she did not see him again. Her story exemplifies how sex workers, like racialized and other criminalized members of society, exist outside of the law and how the violence that they face at the hands of police is not conceptualized as violence because, in her words, “who cares about the abuse” committed against sex workers and those seen as outside of community.

The violence that Shirley and Ellen described are just two examples of the many stories of police violence that emerged during this study. The gendered violence committed by police towards sex workers continues once the women are incarcerated. Participants described how correction officers would take advantage of sex working women who were incarcerated. In one particular situation, a sex working community member was incarcerated and “the guards were giving her chocolate bars when she was in the hole to have sex with her because she just wasn't all there man. You know that.” (Devon)

For NEO sex workers, the police represented an arm of the state that can enact gendered violence but are also a group of people who are making their livelihood off patrolling, surveilling
and arresting the women who worked in the sex industry. As Wetizer (2017, 725) argues “if the national legal context is one where prostitution is criminalized, the legal order itself compounds stigmatization and the authorities have a vested interest in treating sex work as deviant.” Participants saw a clear police investment in viewing sex workers as deviant and as risks that need to be surveilled. Shirley, who in her own words has “always been cocky with cops,” would frequently remind the officers that their very livelihood relied on the criminalization of sex work.

Shirley: Meh no, they weren't on our side. That's for sure. It's like, you know what, motherfuckers? If it wasn't for us, you wouldn't have a paycheck. [both laughing]
Lindy: Did you say that to them?
Shirley: Yep
Lindy: That's so funny,
Shirley: If it wasn't for people like me, you wouldn't have a paycheck. So how's your surveillance? How long? A year and a half. Oh, how much you get paid for that?

Participants noted that for many officers, the criminalization of sex work is essential for the furthering of their jobs. Throughout this study, numerous stories emerged of one officer using his reputation as a frequent arrester of people who use drugs and/or work in the sex industry to further his career. For this officer, when criminal elements were not present, he planted criminalized objects on those he arrested to demonstrate his exceptional ability to arrest. To sex working community members, police are not a form of safety but rather a group of people who actively profit off of and make the sex industry more dangerous. Police both push sex workers into areas of community exclusion and engage in forms of extreme gendered violence made possible because of how state governance strategies and stigmas position sex workers in a state of exception, excluded from state protection.
The simultaneous use of ‘empowerment’ tactics and violence justified in the name of community safety that characterized participants’ experiences with police must be read alongside the current emphasis on ‘ending human trafficking’ in Canadian political discourse. Sex work advocates have argued that the passing of PCEPA effectively “enshrined” the “persistent conflation of sex work and trafficking” and is used to represent the sex industry as an inherently harmful industry, especially to women and children (Lepp 2017, 241). Over the past thirty years, there has been extensive public and political attention on “sex trafficking” or “human trafficking.” Elizabeth Bernstein’s (2019) recently published genealogy of “human trafficking” effectively illustrates how the term, and its accompanying ideas of victimhood and exploitation, have better served the aims of international humanitarian organizations and governments than sex workers and their allies. For Bernstein (2019, 212) the increased interest in “ending” human trafficking needs to be understood as a part of a “specifically neoliberal form of governmentality” characterized by “carceral feminism, militarized humanitarianism, and redemptive capitalism.” In the 1990s, human trafficking stories began to emerge in Canadian public discourse (Lepp 2017). High profile raids in large Canadian cities like Toronto connected “human trafficking “with “organized crime” and linked sex work-related charges to immigration charges, solidifying the problem of human trafficking as an ‘external’ issue defined by the need to defend borders and simultaneously “rescue” at-risk immigrant women through deportation and arrest (Lepp 2017). Canada signed onto a series of international treaties and protocols in the late 1990s and early 2000s aimed at addressing the “issue” of human trafficking such as the Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking Protocols and the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Sociologists have noted that since the 1990s Canadian immigration regulations premised on “criminalizing ‘undesirable Others’” have been strengthened.
by anti-trafficking rhetoric with prominent politicians claiming that “Canada’s immigration system should not be used or abused to exploit vulnerable people” (Lepp 2017, 232). In the mid-2000s a shift occurred in government rhetoric and there was a new emphasis on the “domestic trafficking” of Indigenous women and girls (Lepp 2017, Hunt 2016, Kaye 2017). A series of police and government initiatives were created to tackle domestic trafficking of Indigenous women and girls that have been heavily criticized for the emphasis on law enforcement (Lepp 2017, 239). These initiatives rarely differentiated between human trafficking and sex work\textsuperscript{52} and included the “I’m Not For Sale” campaign and the introduction of a series of National Action Plan(s) to Combat Human Trafficking.

Sex workers in NEO were highly critical of the panic surrounding human trafficking and saw it as another way for the government to intervene in their lives since the pseudo-decriminalization in 2014. Lisa, who has worked in and out of the sex industry for over 15 years argued that the emphasis on human trafficking is another form of government control.

Lisa: is just another way of the government controlling people. You know what I mean? And they have all this money for sex trafficking. Well, it's just bullshit. It's just a fucking joke. No, just a government fucking joke.”

Many participants recognized that coerced sex happens, a reality that is not attached to the sex industry, and took issue with the recent moral panic surrounding human trafficking as a rampant problem of the industry. Instead, they called attention to how coerced sex is a societal problem that

\textsuperscript{52} Human trafficking narratives in Canada often focus on “sex trafficking” and ignore other “less titillating” forms of coerced labour. As Rivers-Moore (2014a, 1) argues “a great deal of trafficking takes place outside the sex industry, in less titillating segments of the labour market. Quite a lot of the time, trafficking victims are men in jeans bent over in fields picking strawberries or wearing hard hats and nailing support beams onto a building. Farm workers and construction workers don’t fit as easily into a narrative of needing to be saved by earnest white people. They also make for less interesting posters: less exciting, and definitely less sexy.” The moral panic surrounding “sex trafficking” has been effectively produced by feminist organizations, governments, and NGOs fueled by a combination of white saviourism and anti-immigrant sentiment.
effects all members of society and is enabled by the acceptance of gender-based violence. Lisa expressed anger at the government for producing the moral panic around “sex trafficking” when the language for rape already existed:

Never mind this trafficking stuff because rape is rape and assault is assault and blah blah blah blah you know what I mean? (yeah yeah) never mind the trafficking thing.

As Rose (2000, 322) argues, the “language of description” makes social problems “thinkable and governable.” Crime control ‘experts’ such as police, academics, and social workers “establish—through emotions—the relationship between [the imagined community] and the imagined criminal Other” (Mopas and Moore 2011, 184). In defining all sexual coercion as human trafficking and equating human trafficking with the sale of sexual services, the social allowability of gender-based violence is erased, and instead, the blame for the sexual coercion becomes associated with the sale of sexual services. This conflation further limits sex workers’ ability to access the law if they have been harmed during the course of their work. When sex work is equated with human trafficking, sex workers are forced to use human trafficking laws to report abuse from clients, meaning they do not have access to other harassment and violence legislation that workers in non-criminalized industries do. Lisa’s focus on gender-based violence and the importance of naming rape were echoed by other participants in a later focus group:

Shirley: I don't call or believe it should be called human trafficking.
I like the new, new thing that it is rape […]
Samantha: It's what?
Shirley: With human trafficking
Dee Dee: It's rape,

By using the language of rape participants were able to draw attention to the existence of sexual coercion and gender-based violence while separating sexual coercion firmly from the sex industry. In her study of human trafficking narratives, De Shalit et al.’s (2020) has noted that in the past five years there has been a shift in social discourse surrounding trafficking. Whereas previously,
physical force or economic need were used to deem a woman a victim of trafficking, now, there is new attention on emotional coercion. Police, governments, and NGOs have begun to frame human trafficking victims as emotionally abused women who have been taken advantage of by people they trust or love, most often boyfriends or husbands. This new attention to emotional coercion means that “the bonds of trafficking are as much invisible and emotive as they [are] physical” (De Shalit et al. 2020). Participants in this study frequently called out those discourses for the ways through which they continued to centre the sale of sexual services rather than the social acceptability of violence against women. Dee Dee described how the social focus should shift away from the sex industry and instead address the root problems of abuse and violence against women and address the structural barriers to leaving abusive partners:

The situation is, is to help these girls get a, get a better place and not- they don't have to be abused and uh be raped or. Like you know, they don't have to uh go and deal with a fucking asshole ... That wants to fucking abuse you and, give you drugs and do whatever he wants to you anytime he wants to, put you out in a frickin little cabin there and send all the guys in, like no, it's not for you to be doing.

Despite sex workers critiques of the narrative of human trafficking, police in NEO continue to rely on the idea that there are “unknowing victims” of human trafficking and perpetuate the idea that sex workers can unknowingly be trafficked and in need of intervention. In 2019 police in NEO held a three-day conference on “the growing concern of human trafficking” (McKenzie 2019). During the conference one expert witness stated that

Police are now on the verge of finding different ways to identify the actual victims, because people don't come forward, it's not like people call the police and say 'I'm a human trafficking victim please help me [...] police ID victims because they had trouble with using substances or someone reports seeing some activity at a hotel or massage parlor or there's outreach to people on streets but we're thinking that this is probably widespread across the entire country (McKenzie 2019).
For participants in this study, there is a real danger in police identifying women as trafficked victims using drug use, their work location (massage parlour or hotel) and third-party reports to intervene in the lives of sex worker’s under the guise of rescuing victims of human trafficking. In part because these “identifiers” (such as drug use and work location) are influenced by race and class\textsuperscript{53} and increase surveillance along gendered, classed, and racialized lines.

The recent moral panic surrounding human trafficking is not only dangerous because it transforms how police treat sex workers, increasing surveillance to ‘rescue’ victims, but also because the moral panic combined with the pluralization of policing has meant increased surveillance from a wider variety of community organizations. In 2019, one NEO police service began working on a new anti-trafficking initiative named “Project Empower” which uses a “multi-agency collaborative approach to helping survivors and potential victims of sexual violence and human trafficking” (**** 2019).\textsuperscript{54} Project Empower is focused on educating community members to look out for “signs” of human trafficking, including everything from an individual appearing “disheveled or withdrawn,” to the existence of “branding (i.e. tattoos),” to the fact that a person has “no fixed address or identification,” and may be “travelling with minimal luggage (possibly one large shoulder bag), or that they “miss school or drop out completely, and rarely spend time with friends and family anymore.” Community members are encouraged to call the police if they see anybody in the community who is showing these “signs,” signs that could also signify a wide variety of other factors such as poverty (no fixed address) or artist expression (tattoos). The police

\textsuperscript{53} Butterfly Asian and Migrant Sex Work Alliance in Toronto has published several studies on how Asian sex workers in massage parlour are identified as trafficked victims by police due to their work location and race and face deportation and loss of earnings (Lam 2016).
\textsuperscript{54} Citation in question is to a website of a police service in the region. The website name was removed to protect the location that the study took place in.
service in question presented their awareness training across the community resulting in increased surveillance from other community members in the lives of sex workers.

For sex workers, the communalization of surveillance means that hyper-surveillance comes not only from state actors such as police, but from other members of the community. This heightened form of community surveillance can be understood using Dawn Moore’s (2011, 257) concept of “therapeutic surveillance” that she defines as a “surveillant assemblage which is neither technocentric nor dystopic but rather intimate, pastoral and productive.” Therapeutic surveillance can be both experienced as, and emerge from, a deep sense of community care. However, as Moore (2011, 257) notes, “care and control are neither easily not helpfully distinguished from each other. Rather we must train ourselves to recognize that benevolence and coercion can be two sides of the same coin.” Sex working participants who work out of doors described how they are made hyper-visible as risky subjects through community surveillance. As Dee Dee, who has worked outdoors, argued, police in NEO are increasing the stigmatization and community surveillance of outdoor sex workers using trafficking narratives:

Cause, they're making it look like the girls on the street are being trafficked. (right) And it's not that, and it's not them being trafficked. Rather than making the community safer for sex workers, the pluralization of law enforcement duties combined with a heightened moral panic around human trafficking leads to increased surveillance for sex workers, further controlling how they can show up in community spaces without being perceived as a trafficked victim and risking further police intervention.

At the same time, as noted above, while police services in NEO have come to rely on the image of the ‘unknowing’ victim of human trafficking, there has been a simultaneous push within NEO police services to recognize the agency of sex workers. For example, one NEO police service website states that “generally when a person engages in sex work, they make the choice to do so.
Sex workers keep the money earned and can decide to exit if they choose” (*** 2020). While sex work activists in NEO have long called on the police to recognize their agency, the new recognition of the agency of sex workers has emerged alongside a renewed emphasis on the supposed intrinsic harm of the sex industry and the conflation of the sex industry and human trafficking. The paradoxical framing of the sex industry as exploitative combined with a presentation of sex workers as willing agents acts to produce sex workers as complicit participants in a fundamentally harmful field. This effectively redirects attention away from how structural barriers create the conditions for violence in the sex industry and places the blame on sex workers for human trafficking and other exploitation (Bernstein 2019; Kaye 2017). As Shirley explains:

The consensual sex worker carries that cross, and they get the blame. They get the finger-pointing. Right. Particularly the one that is standing outside on the corner. (yeah) You know, they... carry the most blame [for human trafficking] and the most derogatory comments and the stigma and the shaming (yeah) and are pushed more in the dark. For sex workers in NEO, police recognition of their agency coupled with increased police and community attention on human trafficking works to position sex workers as ‘to blame’ for the ‘problem’ of human trafficking. 

Sex working participants also saw a direct link between the current conflation of sex work and human trafficking, the blaming of sex workers for social harm, and the current government inaction on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). Lisa, for example, 

55 Well known feminist scholars have perpetuated this narrative that sex workers play a role in continuing global patriarchal violence (Kaye 2017). Sherene Razack (1998, 360, 340) has argued that the sex industry is “always violent” because of “its sources in patriarchy, white supremacy, and capitalism.” Razack (1998, 355, 354) suggests that sex work clients enact “hegemonic masculinity” and argues that proponents of the industry ignore the “collective impact of [a sex worker’s] action” articulating that scholars must see sex worker resistance not as “resistance to systems of domination” but as the “accommodation” of these systems. This positioning of sex work as inherently violent unfairly calls out the sex work industry as especially harmed by patriarchy, white supremacy, and capitalism rather than viewing all forms of labour as constrained by the structures of patriarchy, white supremacy, and capitalism, and erases the anti-capitalist and anti-patriarchal potential of sex work.
thought that the sudden increase in anti-trafficking spending was a response to “the murdered and missing Indigenous women.” Over the last ten years, Indigenous activists and allies have been pushing the government to acknowledge and address the number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and the role colonialization and colonial structures played in their deaths. This led to a national inquiry in 2016, which “determined that colonial structures and policies are persistent in Canada and constitute a root cause of the violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people” (National Inquiry 2019). As part of its response to the Final Report, the Federal government invested $57.22 million between 2019 and 2024 in the National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking, stating that “human trafficking is strongly linked to the disproportionately high rates of violence against Indigenous women and girls and that the extent of human trafficking and victimization of Indigenous women is grossly under-reported” (National Strategy, 2019). Nearly $14 million of that amount is funnelled towards the National Human Trafficking Hotline, which sex workers have criticized for increasing their exposure to community surveillance. The 2019 government response to the Report and actions on human trafficking through investments in police services can be understood as a part of a long history of the Canadian government investing in programs that actively re-instate the state’s power to surveil and police rather than examining the root causes of violence against Indigenous women (Hunt 2015, 32). For example, during the drafting of PCEPA the overrepresentation of

56 The pathologization of Indigenous sexuality was used to justify the creation of the Indian Act (Hunt 2013, Smith 2015). Sexual relationships that deviated from the European norm of patriarchal monogamy such as divorce, or having children with multiple partners, were deemed illegitimate and any women who had multiple partners were considered “prostitutes” rather than wives (Carter 2008, 10). The introduction of the Indian Act was touted as a way to “save” Indigenous women from their illegitimate marriages by enforcing monogamy (Kelm 1999). Through the pathologization of non-western sexualities the Indian Act attempted to disrupt existing Indigenous political, legal, and social orders and justified colonial expansion and theft of Indigenous lands (Carter 2008; Roome 2005; Kelm 1999; Miller 2000).
Indigenous women in sex work was used as evidence of the “damaging nature of prostitution” and used to justify the continued criminalization of sex work to ‘save’ Indigenous women (Goodall 2019, 248). This occurred even as witnesses against the Bill argued that using police as a “solution” to violence against Indigenous sex workers would only increase their danger and precarity (Goodall 2019). Similarly, the 2010 federal budget allocated $10 million “to address violence against Indigenous women. However, much of this funding was directed toward programs that would better track missing persons and increase police surveillance, rather than addressing the root causes of violence” (Dorries and Harjo 2020, 211). Rescue narratives premised on “saving” Indigenous women from trafficking through increased policing, ignore how police themselves have played a role in the genocidal practices leading to MMIWG (Dhillon 2015) and have ramifications for Indigenous sex workers. Indigenous sex working participants noted that they were frequently treated as objects of rescue to appease white guilt:

Suzie: At the other end of the spectrum, where they have to rescue you. Right? You need to be rescued because you're indigenous. Like there's some moral failing that they have because "I'm white. and I had this, I'm going to have to help them rescue you." It's like people that go and do that um what do they call, um volunteering, vacationing, like when they go to Third World countries You know, to build a school or whatever. Not because they want to help build a school, but because they want to put those feel-good selfies on their Instagram account. Right? They're not actually there to help. They're not. They're just there to, like, make themselves look good or feel good. Right?
Melissa: Put it on their resumes
Suzie: But they're not really helping. That's what I find. I find you get that end of the spectrum, too. Like, I remember working and a lot of times, I'd get stopped by people and they'd be like, I'd get in the car, and they'd be like "how much money is it for you to go home for the night"
For Indigenous participants, the rescue narrative did little to address the structural violence they face in life, namely anti-Indigenous racism, and the structural effects of settler colonialism, but rather continued to frame them as objects to be rescued.

The National Inquiry has since given the Federal Government a “failing grade” on their response because the government did not address root causes of violence; including the dehumanization and over-sexualization of Indigenous women (Stefanovich 2020). Participants in this study noted that to be an Indigenous sex worker meant dealing with the societal perceptions of Indigenous women as hyper-sexual, often leading to wage gaps between Indigenous and white sex workers. For Indigenous sex workers, the history of hypersexualization has resulted in rate cuts mirroring broader wage discrepancies in Canadian society where Indigenous women on average make 35% less than white men (Canadian Women’s Foundation, 2018). Dee Dee described how societal perceptions of Indigenous women as hypersexualized has resulted in lost wages for her:

There’s some of them [clients] that will take advantage of you and figure out they can get it for free. [...] But like you know, we get, they figured they can get less money, they can go for less money, like you know, 20 bucks. Like you know and its it's an 80 - 100 to an 80 dollar fucking trick and you only got twenty bucks? Well that's a waste of my fucking time. Like you know what I mean?

For Dee Dee, the stereotype of Indigenous women as hyposexualized creates a barrier for her to access full financial benefit from the transaction and be paid the going rate for her services. As she states, she is often offered nearly $60 - $80 dollars less than white sex working community members because she is Indigenous. For Indigenous sex workers, the wage gap is significantly more than the average wage gap for non-sex working white women workers in Canada (13%) and

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57 The National Inquiry called on the Federal government to create a national campaign to address the hypersexualization of Indigenous women that leads to violence.
for non-sex working Indigenous women workers in Canada (37%), demonstrating how stigma, mixed with racism and hypersexualization of Indigenous women acts to reduce her bargaining power in interactions with clients (Canadian Women’s Foundation, 2018). The hypersexualization of Indigenous women is not accidental but part of a long history in settler colonial Canada where “Indigenous lands and peoples” are understood “as violable” (Smith 2015, 10). It can be traced to early colonial practices, where colonial health authorities presented Indigenous women as promiscuous and a threat to white men’s morality and sexual virtue (Carter 2008; Roome 2005). As Andrea Smith (2015) argues in “the colonial imagination, Native bodies are also immanently polluted with sexual sin” (Smith 2015, 10). The perceived threat of Indigenous women’s hyper-sexuality was used as a justification for racial segregation through the Pass system in Western Canada and as a justification for settler violence (Carter 2008; Roome 2005; Henderson 2003).

Rather than addressing root causes of violence, such as the hypersexualization of Indigenous women, the Canadian state has situated MMIWG as a problem of individual “crimes” connected to “human trafficking” and by extension the sex industry through PCEPA. In doing so, the state refuses to take accountability or see the structural violence that enables and supports the murder of Indigenous women. Instead, through narratives that recast genocidal state practices as “individuated, judiciable act[s]” of singular violence and by connecting MMIWG to the sex industry the state actively removes its own complicity (Simpson 2016, 3). The representation of the sex industry as inherently violent or damaging diverts attention away from how colonization (Rose 2020), state-mandated resource extraction (Kuokkanen 2008), and state violence through policing (Palmater 2016) enables violence against Indigenous women (Goodall 2019). Positioning the sex industry as exploitative and as connected to MMIWG works to further shift attention away from the genocidal state policies and instead positions the sex industry as a scapegoat of the issue.
of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (Kaye 2017).\textsuperscript{58} By situating sex work as site of exploitation for Indigenous women, and by recasting sex workers as complicit in that violence through representations of sex workers as active and willing members of the industry, the Canadian state both justifies increased spending and surveillance on the industry to “rescue” Indigenous women and erases the state’s own complicity in creating and maintaining the colonial structures that have led to MMIWG.

Conclusion
In this chapter, I traced how responsibilization-empowerment policing is experienced and managed by sex workers. I demonstrated how recent changes in the legal status of the sex industry have transformed the symbolic relationship between police and sex workers, with an increased emphasis on empowerment, without fundamentally changing how police treat sex working community members. In NEO, responsibilization-empowerment police tactics are presented as therapeutic and emancipatory yet rely on the potential for state-sanctioned violence enabled through the police officer. I explored how responsibilization-empowerment policing in NEO has resulted mainly in a change to the language police use, yet police displacement tactics and forms of outright violence continue to frame sex workers’ interactions with police. This violence is justified because sex workers who refuse empowerment, defined as the choice to leave the industry, are represented as external threats to communities through PCEPA. The legal definition of the sex industry as a “harm” to communities means sex workers become caught in a relationship with the law where they are subject to the power of the law but not protected from the limits of the law. Finally, I argued that the recent emphasis on the agency of sex workers, while a step forward,

\textsuperscript{58} Kaye (2017, 27) argues that there is a violent irony how the settler state uses anti-trafficking legislature to “address” the violence faced by Indigenous women in a way that erases how the very existence of the settler state itself created the “space of dispossession where so called “at-risk” persons emerge.”
must be read alongside the renewed political rhetoric on the harms of the sex industry and MMIWG. In doing so, we can identify how the Canadian state escapes complicity in the genocide of Indigenous women and girls by placing the blame on the sex industry, and by extension, on sex workers themselves who are represented as active and willing participants.

The ongoing vilification of the industry within public policy, coupled with the turn towards empowerment policing, the never-ended threat of state-sanctioned violence, the renewed calls for accountability around colonial violence against Indigenous women, and the mobilization of the discourse of agency by settler governments creates a complex web that sex workers in NEO become ensnared in. Yet, the complexity of this web and the ways through which the discourses of agency, empowerment, and harm are mobilized by carceral feminist agencies and settler governments is often obscured in public discussions of the sex industry. This leaves sex workers vulnerable to repeat acts of harm as their lives, stories, and experiences are mobilized to erase settler state accountability, further harmful policing practices, and paint a picture of sex worker complicity in ongoing colonial violence. In the next chapter, we will turn to examine how sex workers in NEO manage these forms of community exclusion and policing tactics through the creation of formal community organizations.
Chapter Four

“Community is so fucking important:” Moving Beyond Co-option and Resistance in Sex Work Community Activism.

Feminist theory and community studies have been simultaneously embroiled in almost identical debates around the possibilities and limitations of feminist and community organizing within and through neoliberal state policies. On one side, critics of recent feminist activism (Fraser 2004, Roy 2014) and community organizing (Joseph 2002) argue that both practices are either outrightly complicit with or co-opted by governments, NGOs, and other actors to further the neoliberal state agenda and rationalities of late liberalism. On the other side, there is a (sometimes cautious) hope in feminism and community as sites of togetherness and belonging that can resist neoliberal state policy (Dow 2009; see for example: Etzioni 1996; Allard and Ferris 2015). In this chapter, I follow the work of Defilippis et al. (2006), Eschle and Maiguashca (2018), and Korolczuk (2016) to refuse the resistance-cooptation dichotomy established within these debates as I explore the experiences of one formal sex work activist community (FSWC) in NEO.59

I begin this chapter with an outline of the main debates around resistance and cooption in both feminist and community literature, paying particular attention to the critiques of professionalization. I then turn to investigate the beginnings of FSWC and analyze the limits and possibilities of professionalization as it relates to activism within marginalized communities. Next, I explore FSWC and sex work community building as a form of activism that engages sex workers in consciousness-raising as a way to resist stigma and politicize individual experiences of violence. I then explore how consciousness-raising can lead to overt acts of collective resistance through the

59 Sex working relationships, activisms, and communities extend beyond formal activist organizations and are explored in more detail in the next chapter.
process of community space reclamation. Finally, in the last part of this chapter, I examine FSWC as an example of an activist community that is imagining and creating different forms of transformative justice. Throughout this chapter, I argue that sex work organizing in NEO, exemplified by FSWC, is both produced within and reproduces the logics, limits, and structures of late liberalism while simultaneously acting as a form of resistance within the discontinuities and contradictions of these rationalities.

Co-option or Resistance in Feminist and Community Studies: Refusing the Binary
Within the fields of community and feminist studies, there has been an overwhelming preoccupation with tracing how feminist activism and grassroots community-building efforts are either co-opted by or are deliberately in allegiance with neoliberal state policies. In this section, I will trace the main debates in community studies and feminist theorization to better understand how FSWC, as a form of feminist community building is produced within, reproduces, and resists late liberal logics within settler colonial NEO.

Communities as Sites of Resistance or Cooption:
Defillipris, Fisher, and Shragge (2006) have identified three main conceptualizations of community within academic literature. In the first camp, are the “skeptics and critics” who argue that the community acts as a regulatory arm of the state through the production of a particular type of subject. These theorists argue that the practices and discourses of community are a necessary component of capitalism in that they naturalize social hierarchies and produce both productive and reproductive labourers for the benefit of capital (Joseph 2002; Roy 2017). In the second camp are skeptics who point to the oppressive nature of communities and the inherently exclusionary premise of communities as social formations that are defined by their boundaries. Scholars such as Miranda Joseph (2002, viii) articulate how the fetishization of community can obfuscate how “capitalism and, more generally, modernity depend on and generate the discourse of community
to legitimate social hierarchies.” Even ‘radical’ community structures that are purposefully created to resist the violence of capital, such as mutual aid networks, can reinforce “problematic deservingness hierarchies” and fall into traps of saviourism and paternalism (Spade 2020, 46). Within the third camp are those who rely on a purely romantic notion of community and see community as a “return to the local” that can disrupt overarching power dynamics without recognizing the role communities play in enabling and naturalizing the current social structures (Etzioni 1996, 149). The first two camps of skeptics have spent a great deal of time attending to the ways through which the discourses of community are mobilized by neoliberal states to justify the dispersion of government responsibility in the name of “community-led” processes (Brady et al. 2014, 52). These critics demonstrate how the symbolic ideals of community play an important role in the justification of neoliberal policies such as the dissolution of federally funded welfare programs that are replaced by third sector organizations who are purported to be more connected to the ‘community’ negating the need for state-led social programming (Defillipis et al.2006).

The idea of community and its relationship to capitalism and state is complicated by these critiques, and yet communities can also act as sites of resistance to neoliberal or otherwise discriminatory state policies particularly for oppressed populations (Ahmed and Fortier 2003; Cossyleon 2018; Halberstam 2003). As Joseph (2002, ix) argues communities have a “complex complicity with” capitalism in that they produce a particular kind of subject, and yet also offer the possibility of resistance to capitalism. Joseph’s argument is echoed by Defillipis et al.(2006, 673) who find that “communities, because of their central place in capitalist political economies, can be a vital arena for social change. But they are also arenas that are constrained in their capacities to host such effort.” By moving away from the dichotomous understanding of communities as sites of cooption OR as sites of resistance it becomes possible to theorize communities and community
activism with more nuance and attend to the pitfalls and potentials of community activist work within the current social systems.

**Feminist Activism beyond Cooption and Resistance**

An almost identical debate is currently being waged within feminist theory around the potential for feminist activism within the era of neoliberal governmentality and late liberal logics of individual freedom. In a contentious 2009 article Fraser, argued that second-wave feminism was actively colluding with, or co-opted by, neoliberal capitalism because of its focus on the “recognition” of different identities rather than the redistribution of wealth. Fraser (2009) further argued that second wave feminism created a feminist subject who ascribes to the rationalities of late liberalism in that they are self sufficient, entrepreneurial, and best understood as an “individualized consumer” and in this way is “mobilized to convert continued gender inequality from a structural problem into an individual affair” (Rottenberg 2013, 420). Aspects of Fraser’s thesis have been roundly debunked by post-colonial feminists who contend that Fraser’s argument lacks empirical rigour and overemphasizes “northern feminism” eliding the struggles and resistances of feminist activism in post-colonial nations (Aslan and Gambetti 2011). Fraser’s critique of the second wave feminist emphasis on ‘identity politics’ has been further condemned by scholars who argue it creates division within the feminist movement and erases the work of feminist of colour who have articulated the intersections of racism, patriarchy and capitalism (Funk 2014). In opposition to Fraser, a series of feminist scholars have begun to highlight and “foreground” feminist resistance against neoliberal capitalism, in particular by emphasizing “survival activism” of oppressed communities and broadening the definition of resistance and activism to include the on-the-ground feminist movements that take place outside of boardrooms or governments (Eschle and Maiguashca 2018, 230; Bassel and Ememejulu 2017).
Despite the highly contentious nature of these debates both within feminist theory and community studies, there is a shared concern among many scholars about the dangers of professionalization (Roy 2004; Brady 2014; Korolczuk 2016). In particular, feminist scholars and community studies both demonstrate an overarching fear of how the “NGO-ization” (Roy 2004, 36) of activism can depoliticize feminist or other radical calls to action and uphold neoliberal state policies. Professionalized activist groups are “characterized by their paid staff, relatively formal structure, and accountability to those who fund them—usually international agencies or private foundations” (Lebon 2013, 762). Within critical community studies, the emergence of NGOs has been seen as a step away from state accountability that places the emphasis for community care and social service provision on a poorly funded and ill-equipped “third sector” (Defillipis et al.2006; Brady 2014). Within feminist theory, three main critiques of professionalization have emerged: First, critics argue it has led to the depoliticization of movements (Roy 2004), second, it has co-opted the struggle for radical social change into the neoliberal state’s agenda (Korolczuk 2016), and third, that it has replaced local knowledge and grassroots leaders with “professionals” whose expert advice can be used to further marginalize dispossessed communities and their local knowledges (Brady 2014). These critiques of professionalization and NGO-ization are important and make visible some of the pitfalls of organizing and resisting within the current social frameworks. Yet, as Hodzic (2014, 222) argues, these critiques are limited in that they “understand NGOs as a fall from Eden—a teleological decline from an idealized age of revolutionary feminist activism to the contemporary era of professionalized organizations that function as donors’ peons.”

Following Hodzic (2014) and Korteweg (2016, 217), I argue that there is “no prior un-co-opted subject, unpolluted by processes of co-option” and so the question of feminist and sex work activism and resistance through community building should not center around how to evade
cooption into late liberal or settler colonial logics but rather explore how and when feminist community building practices are “productive of liberation versus when engagement moves us toward increasing inequality and exploitation.” As Korteweg (2016, 218) argues, “this requires an analytical stance that sees liberation as a moving target, defined through political engagement grounded in the freedom to imagine new ways of being and acting." In the next part of this chapter, I will examine some of the critiques of professionalization that feminist and community studies have named. Paying particular attention to the issues of depoliticization and gatekeeping through an overreliance on experts’ knowledge. At the same time, I will examine some of the potential benefits of professionalization and explore how the formalization of FSWC enabled its members to establish new ways of being and surviving even as FSWC existed and was contained by the overarching social structures of late liberalism and settler colonialism.

Creating a Formal Sex Working Community Group: FSWC’s Story in NEO

FSWC in NEO can best be characterized as a semi-professionalized community activist organization, and its history and story offer insight into the tensions, pitfalls, and benefits of formalized organizing. FSWC was created by Jackie, who was hired by one of the long-standing government-funded violence against women organizations in NEO (VAW). Jackie was hired as a person with “lived experience in sex work” for the purpose of creating a paid working group for sex working community members. The working group met on a regular basis to create art, discuss the impacts of public policy on their lives, and address violence facing sex working women in NEO, each member of the group was paid for their time there. The pay structure of the group and the fact that it was initiated by a government-funded VAW organization characterizes FSWC as a professionalized feminist organization. As we will see, the professionalized beginnings of FSWC
are demonstrative of limits of professionalization within feminist organizing. In an interview, Jackie described to me how the group first formed:

There was a job opening at [a government-funded violence against women organization]. They were looking for somebody with lived experience [that] was what they wanted, to design or to help them develop like an advisory committee for sex workers. It was a two-year contract, was full time, was more money than I'd ever made, like legit money, you know, with benefits and all that shit. So I [started working at this organization] and I honestly thought like it was gunna be this beautiful, like I was just going to like, build community with all these women's organizations to support sex workers and sex workers rights (yeah) and the rights to work safely and all that. And it was the opposite of that. Like it was just such a dangerous place for me for about a year.

Jackie goes on to describe how in the first year she worked there she was berated by people who worked for violence against women organizations in NEO for not ascribing to the idea that sex workers are victims, and for rallying against a billboard that was posted in town:

People were like basically telling me, one person in community was like, "you're a fraud". Basically, telling me I was a fraud. My experience wasn't relevant because I wasn't an outdoor sex worker. I didn't have experience with outdoor Sex Work, which I don't. I've never worked outside. That's not been my experience. Um But yeah, so I was a fraud. um.. holy fuck. And then she uh, all the women's organizations were like because I guess my my ideas were so different than this idea of the victimization or the victim […]

Lindy: So you weren't victim enough because you hadn't worked on the street? And so therefore your ideas…?
Jackie: Yeah. And all my po- politics around it were not like, you know, at that time […] that big billboard was up [that said] "real men don't buy girls." And I was like “What the fuck is this shit?” And my organization that I was working for at the time had their name on the billboard and so I was at work going "What the fuck is happening? Like what the fuck is happening right now?"
Jackie goes on to describe the personal toll this took on her mental health and how difficult it was for her to push against the idea that all sex workers were victims or that sex work was inherently harmful within this organization:

I was called into my boss's office so many times and reprimanded for like speaking against the Real Men Don't Buy Girls campaign, because our organization's logo is on it. Just speaking, even on my own Facebook page, they fucking pulled up a sheet and highlighted what I'd said on my own Facebook page. So I was like, Oh. Oh yeah. There was just so much shit. I was a complete fucking puppet or they were trying to make me into this puppet. And this particular organization didn't know how to frame itself as an organization that supports sex workers. [...] It was just really bad. So here I am, a woman with lived experience in Sex Work of like 20 years in and out of the sex industry since I was like 15, 16 years old, trying to fucking get some legs in this work and just getting fucking daggers thrown at me, like, it was so violent. And it wasn't from sex work community, it wasn't from the sex industry, it was from the fuckin institutions and the organizations that were set up to help people. [...] It was really fucked up. [...] So it was the end of my first year, I had started planning a December 17th event. End of my first year, and I had contacted all the Sex Work organ- or not, all the violence against women organizations. I had ordered a hundred or some red umbrellas that said sex workers rights are human rights. And then and, you know, I'd organized a march Sex Worker's march. [...] And then I go, I start to get e-mails. "We can't participate. We're concerned that this is an act of violence against police. This supports violence against police." Um
Lindy: Wait! What? People said that they thought a sex workers rights are human rights march…
Jackie: Red umbrella. The red umbrella it was the red umbrella. [...] That it promoted violence against police [...] that it was anti-police, it was anti-police So yeah, I should have kept all those fucking emails, dammit, anyways. So the march was canceled because uh FSWC was supporting violence. Then at the end of the first year of December 17th, was my march, my parade or whatever, not the parade, the march, was canceled [and then] all the women's organizations decided that they were going to host a dinner for sex workers with their families Dec. 17. So, Im like, "great. Here's the list of people from our organization that would like to attend," women that were actually working in sex work who'd like to attend. We were sent an email. We [FSWC] were not allowed to attend.
We were not invited. [...] And I can - I really like anybody that wants to start a sex work organization. I would totally want to go to bat for them 100 percent because it's hell trying to get that started. Being a person with lived experience, sitting at a table, pushing back against and just legitimating your own experience and being the only one at the table… Jackie’s story is illustrative of the main concerns identified around professionalization as FSWC faced efforts to depoliticize their mandate and calls radical social change, and the tensions between “professionals” and grassroots knowledge led to gatekeeping of community organizing.

**FSWC, Depoliticization and Professionalization**

One of the largest critiques of the professionalization of feminist organizing is that formal or professionalized organizations or community groups are dependent on external funding models, which can result in the depoliticization or deradicalization of the organization’s mandate. As Liinason (2021, 108) argues, “funds from states and donors impose material and ideological constraints” on professionalized feminist organizations. In Jackie’s story, we can see the deliberate and systematic depoliticization of FSWC as they remained reliant on and constrained by the funding provided by the VAW organization that hired Jackie. This depoliticization of the movement is most clear in the VAW organization’s refusal of the Red Umbrella March and the transformation of the March into a community dinner. The Red Umbrella, acts as a symbol of resistance against violence against sex workers and purportedly was first used in Venice in 2001 before being formally adopted by the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE) in 2005 (Strohmayer et al. 2017). The ICRSE describes the symbolism of the red umbrella on their website: “Red is a color of beauty and an umbrella is the resistance to sky’s and humans’ attacks. It symbolizes protection from the abuse and discrimination faced by sex workers everywhere but it is also a symbol of our strength.” (ICRSE n.d., par. 4). While the symbol of the red umbrella is not specifically about critiquing police, it does call attention to violence in the sex industry that participants in my study attribute mostly to police. FSWC’s Red Umbrella March
was meant to be a reclamation of community space and a call to recognize the rights of sex workers. Instead, Jackie’s efforts to organize this march were coopted, and it was made into a community dinner that transformed the intention behind the event. While the March was about calling for a radical change in the social recognition of sex workers, the community dinner was a continuation of the status quo where sex workers were merely seen as objects of pity or rescue.

The VAW organization’s demand that Jackie shut down the March can be understood using Bernstein’s concept of the feminist carceral turn. As Bernstein (2019) argues there is a long-documented history of how neoliberalism has targeted and criminalized “survival strategies” of marginalized communities, yet “the significance of feminism’s own widening embrace of the neoliberal carceral state” is less frequently studied. The carceral state is a term used to define the shift in governance strategies that emerged with the fall of the welfare state and institution of neoliberal state policies. Where the welfare state “aims to provide benefits and the redistribution of resources especially to the most vulnerable parts of the population, the carceral state focuses on activities of surveillance, arrest, and incarceration, often targeting the same sectors of the marginalized population who are recipients of welfare benefits” (Kim 2018, 220). The feminist carceral turn was first named by Bernstein (2005) who argued that feminist politics in the 1980s and 1990s inadvertently became “agents of the state” in their “reliance on the carceral system of police, prosecutors, courts, parole, probation, jails, and prisons for the protection of women” (Kim 2020, 310). Law (2014) describes carceral feminism as “an approach that sees increased policing, prosecution, and imprisonment as the primary solution to violence against women.” In this way, carceral feminism can be defined as a coming together or joining of feminist movements with police services that have ramifications for racialized, sex working women, criminalized women and impoverished women. The feminist carceral turn has been well documented in relation to
domestic violence by Leigh Goodmark (2018), who traced how feminist calls for greater policing of domestic violence ended up further harming women, particularly racialized women. It has also been well documented in relation to prohibitionist feminists calls for increased policing of the sex industry and “sex trafficking” by Bernstein (2019) who shows how the influx of government funding for policing initiatives targeting “sex trafficking” do little to better the working conditions for sex workers and instead end up increasing police surveillance and violence against sex workers. Kaye (2017) and Hunt (2016) have similarly argued that in Canada, carceral feminism and calls for the increased policing of the sex industry in the name of ‘rescuing’ Indigenous women end up further cementing the settler colonial relations of power that position Indigenous sex workers as ‘wards’ that must be rescued through greater colonial intervention in the form of policing. Kaye (2017) and Bernstein (2019) both attribute the rise of carceral feminism60 in part to the rise of neoliberal state politics that resulted in a reduction in spending on welfare programs and a growth in state funding for policing initiatives often wrapped up in the language of gender equality or community safety.61 In NEO, the feminist organizations’ refusal to participate in a Red Umbrella March because of their support for police is emblematic of NEO feminist organizations’ “embrace of the neoliberal carceral state” in that they chose to actively suppress sex workers’ voices around violence within the industry (including at times police violence) and instead created a community dinner that had no political emphasis (Bernstein 2019).62 This incident exemplifies the potential

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60 Participants frequently spoke out against ‘feminists’ who did not support the sex industry. As Shirley explained in one interview “And it's like you goddamn hypocrites, you're not fucking feminists. If you were a feminist, you'd be supporting sex work [hitting table], but you don't, you bash it. So therefore, no, you're not a feminist”

61 As discussed in the last few chapters, under the logics of late liberalism and the policies of neoliberalism, a subject is ‘empowered’ to properly self-govern or else face the threat of state violence and exclusion as ‘homo sacer’ who exists in the ‘state of exception’ subject to the violence of the law but excluded from the protections of the law.

62 Canadian prohibitionist policy makers and community members have long argued that sex workers are victimized by the inherently harmful nature of the industry (Farley 2004; Weitzer and Ditmore 2018). The
dangers of professionalization of feminist resistance strategies in that there was an active co-option of FSWC’s efforts to draw attention to the violence that sex workers can experience. What was meant to be a moment of social rupture that disrupted the idea of sex workers as victims and demonstrated the strength and resistance of the sex work movement was transformed into a community dinner.

While professionalized feminist organizations are accountable to the people that the organization serves, they also are typically held accountable to their funding partners (Roy 2004). Accountability to funding partners can both actively depoliticize and deradicalize organizational mandates and agendas but can also act as a form of gatekeeping. Gatekeeping can take the form of purposeful exclusion, as was the case with the community dinner that both depoliticized the work of Jackie and other sex workers but also excluded certain sex workers whose narratives did not fit with the ‘victim’ ideology being mobilized by VAW organizations at that time. At the same time, as Brady (2014, 42) suggests, professionalization can also lead to the gatekeeping of knowledge through an over-reliance on ‘experts.’ An emerging tension exists in feminist activism: On one hand, the professionalization of many feminist spaces has meant external “experts” are often brought into community spaces as required by funding organizations to demonstrate the necessity

perception of the sex industry as an inherently exploitative industry has been used to justify the criminalization of sex work, with policy makers calling on the image of the sexually exploited female victim to justify continued criminalization of the profession. For the past 30 years anti-prohibition theorists have argued that framing sex workers as passive victims of society unfairly obfuscates how all forms of labour are exploited under capitalism (Cruz 2018) and how structural barriers to safe working environments create the conditions for the possibility of violence within the profession (Vijevarasa 2010; Bernstein 2012; JJ 2013; Bittle 2013; Lam 2016). Despite this, in NEO and in wider Canadian society sex workers continue to be framed as exploited victims particularly by anti-sex work advocates and community support organizations.

63 Rivers-Moore (2018, 852) similarly discusses how the NGO-ization of social welfare in Costa Rice forces sex working women to perform “pragmatic penance […] the performance of victimhood when strategic and beneficial” in order to access the services provided by NGOs.
and efficacy of certain actions (Brady 2014). On the other hand, there has been a push to recognize and value the knowledges that come from “lived experience.” Sex working participants noted that social service and women’s organizations frequently benefitted from, or relied on, the existence of sex workers and sex workers knowledge and yet compensated them in ways that further reified the social conceptualization of sex workers as incapable subjects in need of intervention. FSWC spent several years with the VAW organization that first funded their group, and during that time, they were able to compensate members directly and immediately with cash, as Jackie explains. However, funding ran out at this VAW organization, and the program was cut. After this, FSWC applied for external funding from an international sex workers’ rights group and received two years of funding from this organization. During this time, they also began to participate in other community organizing or government-funded social services spaces where they had less control over how members were compensated. In NEO, FSWC is often called into community meetings to offer their expertise and lived experience. For participants, there was an extreme irony in the fact that social service groups would call on them for their expertise, yet these same organizations and service providers continued to infantilize sex workers and treat them as if they were incapable of caring for themselves or making their own decisions. Jackie explains how this dynamic plays out:

That's why I always say "you want people to contribute their lived experience? Then you're going to fucking pay them. You want people to contribute their um experiential property? Then you're going to fucking pay them and honor them. You know, you know that you need them at the table? You know, it's important to have them at the table? .... Okay, now you know, you need to have with the table to legitimate whatever it is that you're fucking doing here to actually help, use that [knowledge so] you can create a program that's gunna have some type of meaningful effect in community? Then you need to fucking pay them as you're being paid.
The paradox between using sex workers to legitimate social programs (and by extension, the service providers’ jobs) and simultaneously viewing sex workers as incapable of knowing what is best for themselves is shown in the use of gift cards to pay sex workers for their time. Jackie described how FSWC members are often offered opportunities to contribute to community round tables in exchange for gift cards. Frequently, the organizer of these community meetings “will buy the gift cards so that people can access food and not smokes or wine or whatever at the little kiosk where they will sell booze” (Jackie). For participants, gift cards are a form of infantilization based on moralizing ideas of what people in poverty should spend their money on according to societal ideas of undeserving and deserving poor. While the social service provider may be forced to compensate people with lived experience in this way by their organizations’ policies, it is demonstrative of the pitfalls associated with professionalization. Even as sex workers provide the justification and legitimacy to social programs, their knowledge is undervalued, and their ability to make their own decisions is removed when they are compensated with gift cards.

As Korteweg (2016, 217) argues, it is important to examine when “moments of political engagement in which attempts to further liberation turn into illiberal practices.” The semi-professionalized status of FSWC means that in the early days of its organizing, it was dependent on, and at times constrained by funding organizations. The constraints that emerged from its semi-professionalized status led to the active depoliticization of FSWC’s early activist efforts and the cooption of their attempts to disrupt the local community’s ideas around sex workers into a community dinner that re-instated the very ideologies of victimhood that they were attempted to critique. The semi-professionalized status of FSWC and their struggle for compensation on their terms also demonstrates some of the tensions that exist with professionalized feminist activism. In particular, the feminist push to value lived experience knowledge must occur alongside a
fundamental transformation of the relationship between those with lived experience and other community activists so that those with lived experience are not used as a “puppet” as Jackie described. The professionalization of feminist activist work leads to the potential for depoliticization and the reification of social hierarchies, yet at the same time, can also create opportunities, and it is there that we will turn next.

The Benefits of Professionalization: Resistance without Compensation and the Question of Class

In their 2019 book, Roy (2019, 159) made the polarizing argument that “the NGO-ization of politics threatens to turn resistance into a well-mannered, reasonable, salaried, 9-to-5 job. With a few perks thrown in. Real resistance has real consequences. And no salary.” Roy’s (2019) critiques of professionalization are important, and yet, their conceptualization of resistance as one that is incompatible with a salary and with professionalization pre-supposes an activist subject who has the monetary ability to survive as they engage in resistance, or a subject who exists outside of the relations of capital. However, resistance is not so easily parsed into “real” and “unreal” forms along salary lines. Rather, the existence of a salary and the professionalization of some forms of resistance can be a productive force for creation of activist movements. Just as Korteweg (2016, 217) argues that “there is no prior un-co-opted subject, unpolluted by processes of co-option” and in the same way, there is no subject who exists outside of the relations of capital. So, the question becomes not how to escape the financialization of resistance movements but what is gained and lost in their professionalization. Marxist scholars such as Cleaver (2017, 244) argue that “access to sources of money gives us the power to resist being exploited at work […] by buying time away from it […] by buying time to struggle […] or by buying time to invent alternatives.” While Cleaver’s preoccupation was with the struggle to end capitalism, his articulation of money as a requirement for the ability to “buy time to struggle” and “invent alternatives” is important to the sex workers’ movement. Throughout my fieldwork, participants frequently described how they
got involved in FSWC because of the potential for monetary [or other] compensation and how that compensation enabled their participation and helped them survive as they engage in the work. Lisa, for example, lived in the “bush” surrounding NEO for two years as she sought “stable housing” that was “bug-free” and liveable. During this time, when she lived without permanent housing that she became involved with FSWC. As Lisa described it:

Well, like I said, [when] I started, it was an art group and it was like, years ago. (Yeah). It was $25 and food and I'd come out of the bush fucking this was my thing, you know, like, fuck. I never had a clock in the bush or whatever the time but I made sure I was out in the morning fucking waiting downtown to come to my like fucking group, you know?

For Lisa, the twenty-five dollars and food that was offered as compensation for her participation motivated her involvement and enabled her survival as she engaged in the activist work being done by FSWC. Lisa’s story was not unique; Ellen, who has been involved in FSWC since its beginning articulated a similar stance.

Lindy: And then why’d you join FSWC? or when? or how or?
Ellen: cause I found out they were paying money to just come in sit around for an hour and a half and I thought well fuck that's […] I can do that. yeah, you know?

For Ellen and Lisa, their compensation for their work with FSWC enabled and motivated their involvement. For other participants, the pay involved with FSWC justified their involvement in the activist movement to other people in their lives who rejected or attempted to end their involvement. The importance of compensation to justify participation to others became apparent to me during an interview. I had met Devon at her house, and when I arrived, someone close to her called and seemed less than impressed that I was there. Devon justified her involvement with my project by emphasizing that it was for “her job [with FSWC]” and paid:

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Aye? My friend came here to interview me for my class. I said my friend came here, she's from the University of Carleton. She came to interview me for my class. It's just a half an hour interview. I'm getting paid for it though. It's for my job. [man talking] It's professional.

This conversation that Devon had is illustrative of how monetary compensation and the professionalization of activist movements, while deeply embedded within and reproductive of social hierarchies and capitalist logics, can also be a way to enable participation of people who must justify their participation to others in their lives. The legitimacy of professionalization does not only extend to individuals. Jackie described how after the first difficult year at the VAW organization she worked with there were a series of institutional changes that ended up benefitting FSWC:

We were sent an email. We were not allowed to attend [the community dinner]. We were not invited. […] So I forwarded that to my boss and I'm like "Look at this shit. OK. How do you expect any of us to fucking move forward in this?" So that was the turning point where they finally were like,"Oh, maybe you're right." […] And then it turned […] So FSWC was at [VAW organization]. It was awesome. It really was. I learned so much at [VAW organization] and I think [VAW organization] learned a lot too from the relationship that we had building the community. I got to do a lot of really interesting things with the group. It really built the legitimacy of the group. It was beautiful for about five, six years, like after the first year, the first year was hell. The next five or six was awesome.

As Liinason’s (2020, 108) points out “NGOs,” and I would contend, feminist organizers, “still have agency that they can use to influence the conditions within which they operate.” Through their refusal to be silenced, members of FSWC were able to “influence the conditions within which they operate” and gained a form of legitimacy from their semi-professionalized status even as they faced resistance from their funding partners. While never fully separated from the logics and processes of late liberalism and settler carceral feminisms FSWC was still capable of shifting the terrain upon which they fought for recognition and liberation as sex workers in NEO.
In NEO, FSWC has also been able to “influence the conditions” they operate within in their relationships and agreements with other organizations around compensation. In particular, FSWC has fought for the right to be compensated on their terms and will not participate in any community consultation work that does not pay their members cash. For FSWC, this is about refusing class-based gatekeeping in feminist community organizing that has the potential to recreate the very social hierarchies that feminist activism is meant to refute. As Jackie describes, offering gift cards or “prepaid money cards” as compensation further divides who can participate in community organizing along class lines:

They can pay us with prepaid money card, but that - if you lose the money card then there's a fee to get a new one. So it's not a manageable form of currency for people that just like need to have access to cash. Or you could wait and get a check. But when you're you know, when you don't have access to money, you need your, your money that you worked for immediately (yeah) so that you can actually do whatever you need to do it.

Lindy: And if you've budgeted in your mind that you're going to have so many dollars on Tuesday and then you don't get it until two weeks,
Jackie: Then that means you are you don't have the money that you needed for whatever it is you need it for in that minute, You don't just have another fucking pocket of cash that you can pull it from. Yeah.

Since not all people who wish to engage with community activist work have access to available funds, monetary compensation in cash can enable participation and be a way to disrupt the class hierarchy of feminist activism. This is not to claim that the formalization or professionalization of resistance efforts is without issues; the pitfalls and forms of co-option are clearly illustrated above. However, I argue against Roy’s (2014) proclamation that resistance can not include a “salary.”

The importance of offering compensation and addressing financial barriers to participation was made especially clear to me in the early focus group sessions. In our first focus group meeting, one of the participants wrote down “sharing meals” as something they look for in community.
asked the group to expand on what they meant by this note; why was sharing meals so important?

What came up first was that food brought people to the table, creating a space to have discussions.

As Shirley explained:

Food brings people together. And as long as there's food, you'll always bring people to the table. Now, whether they say anything or not, they are hearing you. (mhmm) They hear you. Whether they're listening is a different story. But they still hear you, so something. They're going to go home with something or they're going to have an aha moment somewhere in life, that we- that moment. [hitting table] but food always brings people to the table.

While food brings people together, it also makes it possible for them to complete the work they need to do because it physically sustains them. As Melissa described, “when you're hungry, you don't think as properly, or like a lot of [times if I was hungry] I would say I would be more bitchy.”

By offering up monetary compensation and by offering food and other sustenance, FSWC refused the potential for a class-based hierarchy in activism that occurs if resistance is only thought of as something that exists with no “perks” or monetary compensation because then only those who have access to additional funds or time can participate.

For members of FSWC, the compensation they can offer members because of its semi-professionalized status enables participation, provides members with the basic needs of life, and legitimizes members’ activist work to others in their lives who remain skeptical of their participation. In the remainder of this chapter, I will explore some of the activist work completed by FSWC, including consciousness-raising, space reclamation, and the invention of alternative ways of understanding justice and accountability outside of the carceral state.
Resistance, Consciousness-raising, and the Politicization of Individual Experiences

Consciousness-raising

Much social organizing theory is indebted to Paulo Freire (1970) who popularized the idea of *conscientización* in education theory. Freire’s concept of *conscientización* can be broadly understood as the “mobilization of consciousness aiming to produce critical historical knowledge about oneself, and about the groups to which one belongs, thereby producing a new understanding and giving sense to one’s temporal and spatial place in society, from one’s specific lifeworld” (Montero 2009, 72–73). Important insights into the idea of consciousness-raising must be attributed to Black feminists such as Patricia Hill Collins (1990, 49), who underscored that Black feminist thought did not so much engage in consciousness-raising as much as provide “a vehicle for expressing in public a consciousness that quite often already exists” with the goal of “stimulat[ing] resistance.” In this study, it became clear that the creation of FSWC led to consciousness-raising in that FSWC was an effective tool for challenging shame, questioning lateral violence, and contextualizing lived experiences within the social systems that structure sex workers lives as well as foster the ability to “express in public” what was already known and felt by many of the members (Hill Collins 1990, 49). In this way, the creation of FSWC as a sex worker exclusive activist community, and the consciousness-raising that occurred and continues to occur in that community is not just a “step toward action but rather that the formation of [FSWC as a] community was action [enabled through the] agency of a marginalized people who held a common cause and a critical consciousness” (Rothrock 2016, 266).

For members of FSWC, consciousness-raising was an essential element of their activist work, and participants described the sense of liberation they gained from contextualizing and de-individualizing their experiences and understanding them as politicized events. In interviews and focus groups, there were frequent discussions about the shame and stigma that sex workers are
forced to carry and the importance of FSWC as a place to address and question those emotions. As Jackie states:

It's a real lived experience where you just are held hostage by that fucking shame and guilt (yeah) and feelings of unworthiness. And... Because [of] the messages that get sent to you on all levels: with your intimate partners, with your relations, your mother, your relationships with your parents.

FSWC offered a space for Jackie and others to reconceptualize and work through the feelings of “unworthiness” and analyze where the messages of shame are coming from. Participants repeatedly described how FSWC allowed them the opportunity to refuse pathologizing narratives that they had received “from society” that made them feel ‘broken’ or wrong for working in the industry. For example, Lisa explains how before she became involved with FSWC

[I] looked down and felt guilt about my own sex work thing. No, but not no more. Because now I'm back to like, Holy fuck, What the fuck was up [with feeling guilty].

Similarly, Samantha explains how before joining FSWC she believed the pathologizing narrative that all sex workers were abused. A narrative that was re-entrenched during her time in the drug recovery system where she was “so shamed for doing [sex work] and ashamed of doing [it].” After joining FSWC Samantha explains how her understanding of her own experiences shifted:

I don't feel that anymore. Its like fan-fucking-tastic. It's gone. You know, and it's [sex work] … just a part of who I am. It's a part of what I did. And it's okay. You know? It's like, holy shit, for me to be able to let go of that. Just to let go of that was huge, huuuge.[...]And it took me a long time to realize that man, it wasn't until I came here and started speaking to these women, you know, that I realized, holy fuck, who I am as a person I have nothing to be ashamed for. But society told me I did. My recovery told me I did.

Samantha, who is one of the newer members of the group, describes how life altering it was for her to be given the chance to “let go” of her shame:
You know, especially when I got enough guilt and shame and all that crap running around in my heart and head and (yeah) you know? For my whole life. To be able to let go of something - it was amazing. And this was a really big one. It just completely changed my life, (amazing) you know? Oh, yeah, absolutely. I'll be forever grateful for those women in-in helping me see that, you know?

Like Samantha, other participants frequently articulated how thankful they were for FSWC and the ability to recenter their own narratives and de-individualize their experiences. For sex workers in NEO, the community FSWC built plays an essential role in connecting the individualized experiences with pathologization and state interference to structural violence to understand how institutional decisions have mediated their lives and material realities. As Wieskamp and Smith (2020, 84) write “understanding gendered violence as a collective experience […] allows those who experience violence to envision their struggles as political, rather than individual in nature, which can foster agency and political action.” I witnessed in focus group sessions moments of collective understanding where members of FSWC recontextualized their experiences within the broader struggle for gender justice. In one particular focus group, Melissa posed a question to the group that was reframed by Ellen:

Melissa: Isn't sex work the oldest profession?
Suzie: Yeah. Next to politics [laughter].
Ellen: Subjugating women is the oldest profession. Let us not be confused here.
Devon: What's subjugating women mean?
Ellen: like just, you know, making fucking women, second class citizens.

In this interaction, Ellen’s interjection began a moment of collective recognition of the ongoing subjugation of women, and the conversation turned towards the history of gender injustice.64 I

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64 I am wary to present this quote because of out context it can imply that participants were discussing sex work as the inherent subjugation of women, this was not the case. What this quote is meant to demonstrate is the power of formal communities in creating the space to have broader discussions about the systems and structures that characterize their current reality, including in this case a discussion around heteropatriarchy and its effects on all women and other marginalized gender identities.
learned from participants that moments like these are not uncommon and are one of the more powerful elements of the work FSWC does. As Shirley explains:

I'm very grateful that [Northeastern Ontario] has a space for women to unpack their shit and they can go home with a clear, clear, clean conscience, with no guilt and no shame. So for that, I'm very grateful for these rooms.

For Shirley, Samantha, Lisa and others, FSWC created the space for sex workers to “unpack their shit” and have conversations that do not centre around self-blame and shame but rather a space to re-assess where feelings of shame are coming from. Bolzan and Gale (2012, 505) use the term “interrupted spaces” to describe space-times that allow “for social actors to experience something different, something outside of their usual daily routine, and make meaning of it.” For sex workers in NEO, where the norm means existing in a space defined by “structural stigma” (Hannem 2012, 25), sex worker exclusive spaces such as FSWC act as interrupted spaces that disrupt the norm of structural and symbolic stigma and contextualize and politicize individual feelings of shame and guilt and the collective refusal of shame and guilt.65

Making Sense of Personal Intimacies

One particularly powerful example of how consciousness-raising within the FSWC helped participants understand their experiences as collective experiences that were connected to larger political struggles was in the ongoing group discussions around relationships, partners, and individual pleasure. Participants described to me how their participation in FSWC allowed them to reclaim pleasure and the right to enjoy sexual interactions both in and outside of work and a place to discuss their ideas and thoughts without facing pathologization or judgement. Talking

65 My findings echo Cecilia Benoit et al’s (2017, 1) results that found that sex work led peer advocacy groups resulted in five positive outcomes including, “reduced internalized stigma,[…] increased critical consciousness […] increased participation and control […] strengthened solidarity [and] resource mobilization to shift behaviour and improved health care” (Benoit et al.2017, 1).
about personal sex lives and sex work is a politically fraught conversation because of the history of pathologization. Sex workers no more need to justify or discuss their personal sex lives than any other profession, and studies that have explored the sex lives of sex workers often present the results in sensationalizing ways that unfairly suggest that all sex workers’ sex lives are affected by their profession (Warr and Pyett 1999). At the same time, “whorephobia” can create unique challenges for sex workers in their intimate relationships, and it is essential that sex workers have places to discuss relationships and understand whorephobia within relationships as a form of gender-based violence (Tempest 2019). As Jackie describes:

Sex work in general is always used against women. All the fucking time. You know, they'll be like... Men are opportunists man. Fuck. They can find a way to fucking really dig into ya. [...] With like [imitating male voice] "go suck another dick slut, After all I've done for you, I saved you."

For Jackie, coming to understand whorephobia as a part of a broader gender-based struggle was one way that she contextualized and politicized her experiences with whorephobia. As Tempest (2019, 337) writes in her autoethnography:

Until you unlearn societies teachings, whorephobia feels justified. You believe that you deserve to be ostracized; that what you are doing is wrong and sinful. You believe that you deserve only whatever scraps others offer because you are a whore.

Participants described how FSWC is an important space to “unlearn” whorephobia and discuss what a healthy relationship looks and feels like. For example, in one focus group session, participants articulated feeling as if they were not allowed to seek pleasure in intimate relationships and as if sex was always a “performance” for their partner:

Jackie: Yeah. it's there because I was always very performative. It was never about my own fucking pleasure. It was never about like me just being fucking.
Dee Dee: You.
Jackie: Me!
Dee Dee: yeah
Jackie: In all my messy fucking glory.
Devon: Yep
Emily: you're so right, you know what, you're so.
Jackie: How much am I going to arch my back? How much am I going to fucking moan for you
Samantha: The sounds I gotta make, how - yeah
Jackie: Like how am I gunna suck your dick in a way that I'm going to fucking turn you on.
Samantha: The better I can suck a dick the more you're going to love me. The better I can suck your dick, mean you ain't going nowhere else to get it. Fuck. How do we get these fucking bullshit in my head?.
Emily: Oh my god, you so right, oh my god I was just thinking this, what the fuck?

Within these group conversations, a couple of things occur: first, participants can recognize that their sexual experiences are not unique but shared by others who have similar life experiences. More importantly, in asking questions like Samantha’s “how do we get these fucking bullshit in [our] head[s]?" participants can question the origins of internalized whorephobia and politicize their experiences. \(^{66}\) For example, Samantha describes how it was not until she met Melissa and began to talk to her at FSWC that she learned about her right to pleasure:

> It wasn't until I met Melissa and she's like, "fuck, no" She says "If I don't get off, he ain't getting off" Well when I heard that first I said "fuck I think you're right" you know? She’s like "fuck that!" I admired that so much to see that into somebody that was, you know […] I have needs too, and it was like "wow!"

Sex worker community spaces enable sex workers to discuss the right to pleasure, relationships, and their desires in spaces with others who share similar experiences of marginalization and stigma. During one focus group, Jackie asked the group, “who gets to go home after work and fucking talk to their boyfriend or their husband or their partner?" With few exceptions, most noted

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\(^{66}\) The feeling of sex as performance is a common occurrence in many heterosexual relationships and cannot be traced solely back to the experience of working in the sex industry. For example, Elliot and Umberson (2008) argue that “performing desire” is an essential element of marriage and highly tied to western assumptions about men as constantly desiring sex and women as gatekeepers of sexual pleasure.
that they were unable to share with their families either because they did not know about their involvement in the sex industry or because their partners and family “[don’t] want to hear it, no” (Ellen). FSWC gives participants the chance to discuss personal intimacies and actively resist whorephobia by connecting their relationship experiences to the criminalization and stigmatization of the sex industry. As Tempest (2019) writes, “it is a real act of resistance to stand up to everyday whorephobia,” and sex work community spaces enable these acts of resistance by allowing sex working community members to address everyday whorephobia and to show up in all their “messy fucking glory.”

**Addressing Lateral Violence**

Another example of consciousness-raising that FSWC engages in is addressing and politicizing forms of lateral judgement and lateral violence that occur with the sex industry. FSWC places a particular emphasis on contextualizing how forms of lateral violence or judgement emerge and are encouraged through the social policies and structures that police the sex industry. For example, participants identified how the political rhetoric that youth sex workers are inherently exploited, coupled with anti-youth sex work laws, increases lateral violence within the sex work community. Women who work in less-criminalized areas of sex work see youth as a potential threat to their legitimacy as workers and recognize that working alongside youth sex workers could mean increased surveillance from police. Jackie, who began working at 15, described her experience as a youth sex worker in the strip club:

> Because I was young in the sex industry and when I was working in the uh strip club, you know, I'd have the house girls that were there and they knew that I was younger and they knew that I was under age. (mhmhh) So they would like, write shit on my locker or not on my locker, maybe on my locker. But I really remember them writing on the mirror "You underage bitches. We know who you are!" Fucking blah blah blah. "Get out of here." Right? Like whatever.
Because they saw me as basically umm uh like- impacting their ability to work safely. They're legitimate, like the legitimacy of their work. (Right.) And you know? So it affec-it impacted them, they felt impacted by me being there.

Jackie explained how the lateral violence that occurred in that interaction emerged from adult sex workers’ fear that the safety and legitimacy of their work would be called into question by the presence of youth. Rather than blaming adult sex workers who were actively trying to remove her from the industry, Jackie attributed that experience to the larger criminalization of youth sex workers, thereby politicizing and contextualizing her experiences with lateral violence. Lateral violence towards youth sex workers is also encouraged by policing practices that target youth as informants for the police. In NEO there is a general understanding that police rely on youth to get information about the sex working community:

Shirley: I also see the police hooking up with the young teenagers, the young youth that are hanging out downtown when, you know, they should be in school or what not. Or you know that they're in a group home because [Northeastern Ontario] only has two group homes.
Samantha: uh huh
Shirley: And we all know that. Or hear that…
Jackie: cops love to use the youth for intel

As we can see in this conversation, lateral violence is encouraged by police practices that purposefully distance youth from adult sex working community members by making them objects of distrust. Participants frequently articulated how youth who are engaged in sex work can be best protected and taught how to work safely by other members of the sex work community who have more experience. Therefore, the criminalization and stigmatization of youth sex work which leads to increased lateral violence in the community, only makes sex work for youth isolating and difficult. For FSWC, addressing lateral violence against youth sex workers starts by recognizing
that lateral violence is encouraged by the governance of the industry and this helps motivate resistance and refuse intra-community conflict.

**Humour and Resisting Respectability Politics**

While FSWC enables participants to contextualize their experiences with violence and whorephobia through consciousness-raising, FSWC also enables acts of collective resistance using group humour. In particular, collective humour is a way for participants to resist the policing of their emotional and social lives by non-sex working community members. As I discussed in Chapter Two, being around or working with social services providers often means sex workers are forced to engage in the psychocentric management of their emotional states and operate according to the rules established by the service provider. The expected standards of respectability enforced during these interactions include what forms of humour are acceptable and what forms of humour are not. During one focus group, the women describe an experience at a community round table with social service providers, violence against women organizations, and sex workers where two sex working community members were talking about their lived experience:

Jackie: the two women were talking, one of the women was telling a little bit about her story, and then another woman cracked a joke about the other women and part of her story. But it was funny, to that com- to that group it was funny because they have rapport. But one of the service providers was like, [imitating voice] that's not funny. [whole table laughs] That's not funny! and I'm like, “it was”

Ellen: According to who it's not funny?
Jackie: According to her, she found it offensive. But the women, had rapport.
Devon: We thought it was funny

Sex work exclusive spaces such as FSWC allow sex workers to engage in forms of humour that are policed in other social settings and thus resist the respectability politics that so often structures their access to social services. The use of humour also acts as a boundary-making activity that exposes who is “in” the community and who is not, who is safe to talk to and who does not ‘get
it.’ As Sanders (2004, 273) argues, humour is a “vehicle for defining group membership” within sex work community spaces. As Jackie describes “sometimes the stuff that we find funny that we've normalized is not something that somebody outside of the community would be able to understand.” In one focus group, participants noted how talking about aspects of the job to non-sex workers often did not go over well:

Jackie: sometimes the stuff that we find funny, that we've normalized is not something that somebody outside of the community would be able to understand.
Devon: understand
Jackie: and get it.
Devon: like talking shop with the girls, you know what I mean? Like…
Ellen: I got cock sucker cramp today [loud laughter],
Jackie: I said that to my dentist’s receptionist one time. [loud laughter] and she was like so offended. I honestly said I've got cock-suckers cramp. Cause that is what I was in there for.
Dee Dee: [Demonstrates rubbing her jaw] Just rub it, and then slide em shut [laughter]
Jackie: She didn't think it was funny at all [laughter]

Being able to complain about aspects of the work, like cock-suckers cramp, helps legitimize sex workers’ experiences and build trust with others who “get it.” Participants noted that the humour they use with each other comes with practice and a willingness to repair if someone has gone too far. Shirley, for example, describes that group humour comes from a lot of “practice:”

Shirley: […] a lot of patience and love and practice.

67 Sex workers are not able to complain about their work in the same way that other labourers in formal sectors of the economy are able to complain about the parts of their job that are irritating or annoying. Popular pro-sex work writing often presents sex work as an exclusively empowering (and by extension always fun) form of labour to legitimate the work itself and defuse anti-sex work feminists. While many sex workers enjoy the labour or aspects of it, premising the legality or the acceptability of sex work on individual workers’ enjoyment means that sex workers rights and legitimacy can be taken away if they do not appear to be enjoying the labour enough. As Bryn Greenwood (2017) writes, “sex work is simply work, and it can be as empowering or as demeaning as any other job.” Participants describe how complaining about aspects of the job in non-sex worker spaces means facing prohibition advocates who will coopt these stories and complaints to argue that sex work is exploitative or harmful to workers.
Lindy: Practice in what?
Shirley: [...] To to um, to be humour[ous] with each other. (oh) Because everybody has set a different kind of level of humor and depending on what kind of day you’re having [laughter at table] So. Having said that, after being with so many so many of us on a consistent [basis] we can tell
Lisa: Different days, different humour, like Jackie [referring to inside joke]
Ellen: I think we got lucky too because there was really no internal beeves going on
Shirley: No
Ellen: You know what I mean?
Shirley: And if there was it was dealt with. [...] It was always dealt with.
Ellen: Because we keep things healthy, and I know we rag on each other but you know

Humour is both a boundary-setting instrument for sex workers, establishing who ‘gets it’ and who does not and a trust-building exercise established only with practice and with the willingness to “deal with’ potential interpersonal conflict and ‘keep things healthy.”⁶⁸ At the same time, collective humour can be understood as a resistance strategy that enables sex workers in NEO to resist the respectability politics that often characterizes experiences with social service providers. The use of humour as an act of resistance in sex work communities is well documented. For example, Pamela Downe’s (1999, 65) seminal study on humour and sex worker resistance in Costa Rica found that laughter is a way for sex workers to “cope with oppressively violent conditions and as a form of resistance to them.” Humour can be used both internally in sex work communities but also used to “publicly question the personal violence, police harassment, cultural marginalization, and medical apathy that marks their daily lives” (Downe 1999, 65)

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⁶⁸ This is not to say that formalized sex working communities are inherently radical or exist outside of the relations of power that mediate our society. At times, participants described how instances of racism can emerge within the group, leading to tensions if they are not dealt with in a timely manner.
FSWC, as an example of a semi-professionalized activist community, engages in active resistance against the stigmatization and criminalization of the sex industry by producing a group consciousness, built in part through humour, that enables sex workers to contextualize their experiences within the current social structures. Consciousness-raising through FSWC helps politicize individual sex workers’ experiences, address and question the root causes of lateral violence, make sense of personal intimacies, and resist respectability politics. Nevertheless, as Stall and Stoeker (1998, 750) write, “one criticism of consciousness-raising in the women's movement is that it did not translate into action very effectively.” In the next section, I will problematize that critique by examining some acts of overt collective resistance that FSWC engaged in through the reclamation of community space in NEO.

Reclaiming Community Presence and Space

In the last two chapters, I described how the criminalization and stigmatization of the sex industry often symbolically and physically places sex workers outside of the idea of community in NEO. Puwar (2004, 144) pushes researchers to examine how certain spaces “have historically been ‘reserved’ for specific [white, male, middle class] kinds of bodies.” The reservation of these spaces is not accidental but established as we saw in Chapters Two and Three, through state and community violence that is made invisible through the marking of certain spaces as ‘degenerate’ and the marking of other spaces as in need of protection from the leakages of ‘degenerate’ spaces (Razack 2000). While not accidental, these spatial reservations are often naturalized, and the violence that sustains them is invisibilized. As Baldwin, Cameron, and Kobayashi (2011, 6) argue, “if white normativity is integral to the formulation of historical and contemporary forms of racism, its power lies in its unequal capacity to naturalize its geography.” In this section, I will talk about two examples of how FSWC in NEO engages in community space reclamation as acts of political activism that disrupt pre-existing ideas of who belongs in community spaces in NEO. The first
example is the annual sex workers conference created and run by FSWC, and the second is the red umbrella walks.

For the past four years, FSWC has organized an annual conference for sex work activists in NEO. Each December, sex work organizations from around Ontario and Quebec have gathered in NEO in the act of community building and solidarity. Meeting with other cross-Canadian sex work organizations is especially important for the sex workers in NEO who are otherwise isolated from other sex working organizations due to the geographic distance. The annual conferences act as a way for sex workers to physically reclaim space in the community by renting out spaces that sex workers have been denied access to (or heavily monitored in) during the course of their work with clients. Participants described the conferences as an opportunity for sex workers to “establish the space” and assert their boundaries around how non-sex working community members can conduct themselves. In particular, the conferences are an opportunity for FSWC to reclaim power in interactions with state actors such as the police.

In 2018, police in NEO came to a conference, and FSWC members were clear about the rules police had to follow to be in the space. These rules included placing police at the back of the conference at clearly marked tables so every “knew who they were and where they were sitting” (Jackie) and sitting sex workers together at the front of the conference, so they were both symbolically and physically at the ‘head’ of the table. At all stages, the conference catered to the needs of sex working participants rather than to the demands or objectives of the police establishing the space as a sex workers’ space that police were invited into and could be removed from. At one point during the conference, there was palpable fear in the room from sex working participants and Jackie describes how they re-established a sense of safety and control:
Jackie: So we actually told the police that they had to go wait outside [laughter] while we got sorted as a group and people felt grounded. So we did a big circle. We gave out tobacco ties. We all fucking circled in together, took a breath, and then *when we were ready*, invited them back into our space.

Melissa: Mhmm

Lindy: Damn

Jackie: So it was the first time that we actually -we were like able to say this, "you are being- you are a guest in our space." They paid to come, but we got to establish the space because we needed to. So many of the people in that room had experienced so much violence from police services that it couldn't have happened unless we were able to do it in that way.

As Jackie said, this event was the first time in NEO that sex workers could make rules for their engagement with police based on what they needed, when they were ready, and where police were guests in the space. Several participants noted how powerful this collective act of resistance was for them, describing the experience as “awesome.”

This act of collective resistance was more powerful in transforming how police treated sex workers in NEO than the legal changes in 2014. During my interview with Lisa, when I asked if the adoption of PCEPA affected how officers treated sex workers, she argued any changes in their behaviour had more to do with the acts of collective resistance found in the conferences and their community building:

[Police] really changed around here and I think it has to do a lot to do with either like our FSWC like having different conferences and Jackie's really advocating for us. Because, yeah, I find they've changed in the past few years just like since I joined in like with FSWC and stuff

As Lisa demonstrates, this conference where sex workers established the space and their rules, had a profound impact on how police treat sex workers in the community—showing the power and possibilities behind collective resistance through activist groups.
Another act of community space reclamation that FSWC engages in are outdoor red umbrella walks that FSWC members will conduct along the strip in the middle of the night to make their presence known and stand against police “lurking:”

Lisa: we've gone out there with red umbrella so we've gotten together.
Shirley: Yes, at one o'clock in the morning. Was it one or two in the morning? But we had to show a little of
Lisa: solidarity
Shirley: intimidation in with you know [excited talking] with, yeah!
And let me tell you, they [police] disappeared without having to make a phone call or an email I don't think there was, was there? No.
Lisa: That's when I did my $200 blow job! [laughter].
Shirley: But, let me tell you, I seen, I seen guys in the - in the laneway peeking around the corners like, "what the fuck are those broads doing over there, man?"
Lisa: Yeah. [laughter] it stopped work for the girls for a bit.
Shirley: It did, it did, it did cause talk, and so it let the community know that we were there and who we are. And I'm telling you, FSWC has a big reputation and they really, really respect us in the [downtown neighbourhood]. I'm not kidding you. There's a lot of respect for FSWC.
The act of going out and reclaiming the strip as a sex workers’ space not only worked to resist police attempts to remove sex workers from community spaces but it also actively removed the police from that area letting sex workers engage in the work on their terms and ultimately leading to increased earnings for the women (after the clients got over the initial shock and began entering the area again). Further, this act was both a show of “solidarity” towards working women and an act of “intimidation” against the police, using the intimidation tactics that police had used against sex workers against the police, showing them the power of collective action. In these acts of space reclamation, FSWC refused and exposed the violent processes and tactics that maintain spatial boundaries (Razack 2000, Amram et al.2019), particularly policing strategies of displacement used against sex workers. However, more than just active resistance to police displacement tactics, collective resistance actions like this “let the community know that we were there.” Ultimately,
acts such as these have given FSWC a “big reputation” and community respect, re-instating sex workers as community members who deserve equal access to community spaces. Red umbrella walks in NEO today are significant not only because they reclaim community space and assert the presence of sex workers in areas where police have attempted displacement, but also, they signify a refusal to be silenced by feminist community organizations that had previously attempted to shut down the first Red Umbrella March as described earlier in the chapter. Today, the organizations who condemned the first Red Umbrella March Jackie tried to organize now support FSWC showing the power of FSWC members’ collective refusal to be silenced. Through the annual conference and red umbrella walks, members of FSWC reclaim community space demonstrating the collective power of FSWC to shift the terrain upon which sex work liberation is fought in NEO.

The Question of Rules: Re-Imagining Accountability Through/Within Late Liberalism

Building an activist community within and through the logics of late liberalism and settler colonialism means that ideas of accountability and justice within activist spaces are often framed around the same punitive logics of late liberalism and settler colonialism. As discussed earlier in this chapter, feminist calls for justice and safety for women who have experienced violence or abuse are often coopted by states and used as justifications for increased policing efforts (Bernstein 2020, Kaye 2017; Goodmark 2016). As Kim (2020, 313) argues “feminist reform strategies that demanded response from law enforcement were often initiated from an adversarial position but devolved into mandates contributing to the policies of mass incarceration.” Yet, building feminist community spaces and engaging in activism requires forms of accountability to address lateral violence or judgement. Anti-carceral feminism is a branch of feminist scholarship that engages with and attempts to disrupt carceral and punitive actions within and outside of feminist spaces. Anti-carceral feminism has its roots in Black and Indigenous feminisms that call for community accountability and the end of the carceral state and policing systems that have been created
specifically to police Black and Indigenous persons (Davis 2003; Hill Collins 1990; Kaba 2021; Kim 2020; Kim 2018; Ritchie 2017). Kim (2020; 2018) argues that there are two popular forms of alternative justice: restorative justice practice and transformative justice practices. The former emphasizes “the impact of harm” not only on individual victims but on the larger community; while the latter “explicitly recognizes that interpersonal forms of violence take place within the context of structural conditions including poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, and other systemic forms of violence” (Kim 2018, 227).

In NEO, FSWC’s efforts to create alternative forms of justice can be understood as examples of transformative justice that emphasize the “structural conditions” that create the possibility for interpersonal forms of harm. Jackie described to me how they were offered a free community space to meet in the early days of the group forming. After each meeting, Jackie would notice that toilet paper, dish soap, and other essentials were missing from that community space. Rather than turning towards punishment and asking members to call out the others who were taking these items, the group invested in a basket of essentials that were free to anyone who wanted or needed them. In this way, the group recognized that the missing items were taken due to a place of need and attempted to address the root cause rather than punish the action.

Missing items were not the only issue the group faced in its early days, interpersonal tensions that at times erupted into violence that had to be dealt with by the group as they learned to work together, and the first attempts at solving these interpersonal issues involved instituting rules. As Jackie describes:

I know at the beginning when we were first forming, people would come in and they would want to know who was here because potential for like, you know, bad relationships outside so … people had to come to the table with a lot of care and uh and tenderness and tolerance.
Suzie: We had to set a rule like, shit outside stays outside

However, efforts to solve interpersonal tensions with rules increased rather than decreased tensions and made it more difficult for members to enter with “care, tenderness, and tolerance” (Jackie). For example, one of these rules was that people were not allowed to use drugs or be high while in the community space. Lisa detailed how it quickly became clear that this rule encouraged punishment over care:

Like first, god, like we weren't allowed drugs and every-everybody was running in, telling on, and it just became like probably too much for Jackie and everybody because we're all tattletaling [laughs...] But [it got to] the point where we had to go back, like I said, and make the rules like… where people were going to use anyways and make it so that it's safer. So, we don't trigger others that are [not using] but [...] our rules [...] they change all the time.

The punitive nature of the first set of rules did little to make the space safer for everyone and encouraged tension. This did not mean that the FSWC entirely dismissed the idea of rules; instead, the group came together to recreate the rules, or what they now call guidelines, for how to keep each other accountable in a way that is safest for all members of the group. These guidelines model Spade’s (2020, 76) interpretation of “consensus decision making” that focuses on establishing what everyone’s concerns are and then “trying to find a path forward” that meets these concerns. They also model Hill Collins (1990, 192) call for an “ethics of caring and personal accountability” rather than punitive approaches to “move communities forward.” These guidelines are constantly being remade to address the community's needs and are based on the goal of keeping each other as safe as possible rather than being based on societal assumptions of what ‘good’ behaviour should be. As Jackie describes, each time the group sits down to re-assess the rules, they put up on the whiteboard their answers to the following question: “what do we, [and] what do you, need to feel like its safe?” From their answers, they create a new set of guidelines, keeping in mind that
these will change over time and may need to be re-assessed. Because the objective of the guidelines is to keep each other safe and to be “loving,” any guidelines that do not accomplish this goal are constantly re-worked. As Jackie, Devon, and Shirley outlined, the objective of love, or what bell hooks’ described as a “love ethic” (131) is behind the rules:

    Jackie: The rules sound great at the beginning but then when you actually try to put them into practice in real life, they don't work.
    Devon: No,
    Shirley: it just wasn't loving
    Jackie: So then we changed them as we go.

At the same time, the group recognized that the process of creating the rules is not rigid and strict. As Dee Dee describes the process is not linear or firm and they do not put too much emphasis on finalizing set rules:

    Dee Dee: And then there's new rules and we're going to get someone to type it up. Like there is something wrong and then you fix it again
    Shirley: 2017 revise.
    Dee Dee: And then we don't get to it. And then next spring, we get to it. But we're not sure we all, we'll change this with that.
    Samantha: Yeah.
    Suzie: Only half the group shows up on that day

For the FSWC the presence of the rules or guidelines is less important than the process of asking what needs to be done to keep each other safe. As Melissa and Shirley note, if rules are broken they go back to the process of figuring out what need is not being met:

    Melissa: So if we break the rules go back to the process.
    Shirley: Guidelines.
    Melissa: guidelines …and each time. So it's a long process. But we've been working, you know
    Shirley: we did it, we're doing it.

One example of a guidelines that the group operates under is a confidentiality pledge about what is discussed in community meetings. This pledge is meant to make it a safer place for people to share details about their life and their histories and unpack the stigma and shame that has been
attached to them. At the same time, when this pledge is broken Melissa describes how the group will address the issue head on, and “call each other” on this broken confidentiality:

Melissa: We-we call each other on, like, trust issues if we hear a gossip.
[mhmms around table] A lot of times we'll call each other on it like “stop it.”
Shirley: Yeah
Melissa: So that's you know, because we have
Shirley: and that's healthy

Calling each other on broken trust, and then repairing it helps to ensure safety for all community members. For FSWC creating guidelines is more about doing the work and the process of creating the guidelines and rules together, figuring out what each person needs, and establishing safety in that way. As Shirley argues:

Shirley: And if we fail, we get up brush it off and start over.
Lindy: Try again.
Shirley: Just learn from it, that's all.

The question of rules and guidelines is individual to each community and finding the right guidelines or rules for how to hold each other accountable is an ongoing process. For FSWC it worked best to invest in the process of finding out how to best keep each other safe, and work from an objective of care over punishment to establish community guidelines.

The objective of care that underlies the group’s guidelines is echoed in their commitment as a group to “meet people where they are” (Lisa). Throughout the field work process, I came to understand that “meeting people where they are” means offering support without an imposed end goal for an individual about where they should end up in life or how they should act. It also means refusing the idea that only certain people have valuable knowledge to share or only certain community members could share their knowledge in working group meetings. This is an active rejection of the respectability politics required in interactions with health care workers and police and a refusal of classist assumptions about how people should act that frequently lead to
dehumanization. Samantha and Devon note that meeting people where they are means dismissing the late liberal rationalities that premise social inclusion on formal work and respectability politics (Ferris 2015; Glover and Glover 2019; Rivers-Moore 2012). In the following interaction they demonstrate this recognition of worth:

Samantha: people are fucking people.
Devon: Yeah.
Samantha: You know what I know what I mean? Whether they're making.
Devon: Money or not.
Samantha: 100 bucks a month or whether they're making one hundred thousand a year or like. You know, it all comes down to people are people. We're human beings. That's where that whole concept of meeting people where they're at, as as a fellow being.

For many of the participants in this group, coming to FSWC was a new experience of being able to show up without feeling the need to engage with respectability politics. Samantha describes how joining this community allowed her to show up as she was without conforming to societal forms of acceptability in her dress, or without having to hide her past or present:

And all, and the fact that like I haven't been around for long at all and they welcomed me with open arms, this is the first time in my life that I ever knew of any organizations, that you know, that promotes that and its [sex work] okay and part of my history and like I mean I am over 300 lbs you know what I mean? I rarely rarely wash my hair, I'm just fucking exhausted but they still let me in, you know? they don't judge me on how I look, they don't judge me on how I am, they just they accepted me.

The acceptance that Samantha is describing is in direct opposition to public health narratives that continue to operate with a specific end goal of ending drug consumption and other behaviours that are deemed deviant.69 As Jackie explains, their community operates under the understanding that:

Everybody has got everyone. There's no "you're clean. You're using, you’re whatever, whatever" Everybody's managing, everybody is

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69 For example, public health officials who participated in this study said a healthy community was one that had no drug use or sexual promiscuity.
managing their drug use. Whatever that looks like, whether they are using at all. Or you know, however.

Meeting people where they are means letting go of society's imposed ideas of behaviour allowing people to show up as they are without judgment, and about refusing the normative ideas about whose knowledge is important and valued. It also means flexibility with guidelines and investing in the process of addressing needs rather than relying on punishment or shame. Meeting people where they are is an act of everyday resistance.

Conclusion
In the last two chapters, I explored how sex workers in NEO experience and mediate the logics and structures of late liberalism and settler colonialism and examined how community discourses and practices are mobilized to reproduce the social hierarchies embedded within late liberalism and settler colonialism. This chapter adds an additional layer to the complex relationship between sex work and the concept of community through an examination of how formal sex work activist communities reproduce, mediate, and resist those same structuring logics in NEO. FSWC, as an example of a semi-professionalized activist community, faces both the threat and reality of depoliticization and expert-led gatekeeping but also benefits from its association with

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70 For members of this community, meeting people where they are means allowing them the autonomy to manage their own drug use in whatever way that looks while “having each other” and holding space for everyone’s needs. This is not always an easy line to walk, and we engaged in a lengthy discussion about how they are constantly re-evaluating the needs of the group in relation to things such as drug use. However, allowing a non-judgemental space for people to engage in behaviours that are normally pathologized was one of the ways through which some members of the group formed and built trust. In fact, participants noted that in the early days of the group there was an increase in their recreational drug use as they reconnected with each other. As Shirley noted “when this group first started off, um I-I remember it being spring. I don't remember what year it was, but I remember a lot of us girls, not girls, women, we hadn't seen each other some of us in a long time. And we all have some kind of intimate relationship with each other of some sort. So what does everybody do after group? Lets all go get high.[laughter]“ By recognizing each individual’s autonomy and promoting an atmosphere built on meeting needs the NEO FSWC was able to foster a sense of connection based on shared experiences rather than based on punitive ideals of health of well-being.
professionalization and compensation for members. As an activist community FSWC offers sex workers the possibility of collective resistance to “structural stigma” (Hannem 2012, 25) through forms of group sense-making that reconceptualize and politicize whorephobia and individual experiences of violence, acts of space-reclamation, and the invention of alternative forms of justice and accountability. I end this chapter with Dee Dee who, during an emotional focus group, wrote the following script that she would use if she were starting a group similar to FSWC.

“If you want to start group, what would you say? [reading off her paper] There's a group starting. And I thought it was a great. It's a great group. You will enjoy it. There's food and money [laughter] When its finished lots of laughs, tears […] ups and downs, but a very strong group of women.”
Chapter Five

Informal Sex Working Communities: Labour and Survival within and through Communities

While in the last chapter, I examined the implications of professionalization and formalization for community organizing, feminist, disability, and settler colonial studies have emphasized the importance of informal communities that are built by and for deliberately marginalized populations. Informal communities are often valorized as sites of resistance and simultaneously critiqued for the ways through which their labour is coopted by state and capital interests. In this chapter, I hope to move beyond this dichotomous understanding of informal communities to explore how informal sex working communities offer the possibility for survival through the collectivization of resources and labour even as they are produced within (and can reproduce) the practices and logics of late liberalism and settler colonialism in NEO. As feminist theorists such as Federici (2010) have argued, too often, the labour that creates informal communities is rendered invisible, leading to the further marginalization of women and gender diverse peoples who take on the majority of this feminized reproductive labour (see also: Andrucki 2020 and Lynch 2013). In this chapter, I explore informal sex work communities (IFSW) as sites of collective action paying particular attention to the reproductive labour required to build and sustain these communities.

I will begin by conducting a brief overview of recent literature on “informal life” within the communities of the “dispossessed,” paying particular attention to how the collective acts of everyday survival of oppressed subjects are understood as acts of resistance within feminist, disability, and post-colonial literature (Bayat 2007, 579). I then turn to explore three interconnected phenomena as they relate to ISWCs in NEO: First, I examine how ISWCs engage
in “community resource sharing” networks that can refuse and undermine the conditions of scarcity produced by the exclusion of sex workers from the “benefits of liberty” (Smith and Mac 2018; Rose 2000, 324). I pay particular attention to the implications of resource and information sharing for Indigenous sex working youth who face increased state surveillance compared to their non-Indigenous sex working counterparts. Next, I return to the previous discussion of sex work and motherhood to study how sex working mothers manage and mediate “strategies of reaffiliation” by sharing the reproductive labour of mothering within “care commons” (Hande 2014). Finally, I explore how sex workers in NEO manage the risk of state-sanctioned violence in policing by developing “parallel forms of legality” that act to protect sex workers from potential violence from clients and police (Belge and Blaydes 2014, 448). The practices that emerge from ISWCs become knowable within the context of late liberalism, neoliberalism, and settler colonization that structures sex workers’ lives in NEO. I argue that ISWCs act as sites of “ongoing collective action” that enable sex worker survival in the face of settler, late liberal, and neoliberal governance strategies (Andruki 2020, 1365).

In tracing the practices of ISWCs as acts of collective labour and action, I do not negate that informal (and sometimes involuntary) communities can at times replicate and reproduce the very same violence and structures of oppression that the individual subjects who make up these communities are mediating. Nor do I write this chapter as a call to return to the problematic arguments around the “culture of poverty” that responsibilize individual subjects for their experiences of poverty as a result of a shared ‘community’ mentality rather than as responses to political and structural barriers (see for example Lewis 1966). Finally, I do not claim that

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71 In his 1966 article Lewis problematically claims “by the time slum children are six or seven they have usually absorbed the basic attitudes and values of their subculture. Thereafter they are psychologically unready to take full advantage of changing conditions or improving opportunities.” This framing of
informal sex working community coalitions are “inherently or iconically ‘radical’” (Andrucki 2020, 1367). Instead, through an examination of ISWCs I hope to answer Dunst and Edwards (2011, 7) call “to find a vocabulary” to describe and highlight “counter-hegemonic ‘cracks’ within contemporary life” while making visible the reproductive labour that builds these movements.

Informal Communities in the Literature

Bayat (2007, 587) defines informal life as the tendency to “function as much as possible outside the boundaries of the state and modern bureaucratic institutions.” For Bayat (2007 587) informal communities and life are not created because the subjects involved “are essentially non-or anti-modern but because the conditions of their existence compel them to seek an informal way of life […] because modernity is a costly enterprise [and] requires a capacity to conform to the types of behaviour.” According to Bayat (2007, 580) informal communities are defined as the relationships and networks of people that exist outside and alongside state institutions and are “characterized by autonomy, flexibility and pragmatism, where survival and self-development occupy a central place.” ISWCs, as informal communities of dispossessed subjects, emerge as a response to late liberal strategies of re-affiliation (such as empowerment-based social programs and drug cessation programs) and strategies of exclusion (including the potential for state violence to manage those who are deemed incapable of re-affiliation).

subjects who have been marginalized by poverty responsibilizes these subjects for their life-conditions rather then examining and critiquing the conditions that led to their impoverishment such as accumulation by dispossession, settler colonization, neoliberal state practices.

Even as I draw on the language of formal and informal to mark a distinction between types of communities, I recognize the “‘artificial’ formal–informal dichotomy” and the impossibility of marking clear categories in that all subjects engage, live, work, and play in both formal and informal communities (Rodgers, Shahid, and Williams 2019).
As feminist theory has established, informal communities are produced through the reproductive labour\textsuperscript{73} of their members who engage in forms of affective labour and care work to sustain each other (Federici 2010).\textsuperscript{74} At the same time, these reproductive labours and the “spontaneous, positive externalities such as social networks, attachments, and passions” that they produce are exploited by capital (Oksala 2016, 293). Feminized reproductive labour and the informal networks or communities that emerge from this labour “form a buffer in times of crisis, as households take on additional work to substitute services they can no longer afford to buy and/or the state no longer provides” (Daskalaki and Fotaki 2017, 131). As Spade (2020, 50) argues “for decades, politicians have combined attacks on public infrastructure and public services with an endorsement of privatization and volunteerism.” Lynch (2013, 179, see also Fineman 2004, 2008) similarly argues that “much of the economy, polity and cultural spheres of social life ‘free-ride’ on unpaid and poorly paid care, love and solidarity work.” The co-optation of feminized reproductive labour makes it essential to remain critical of how the existence of informal communities can end up further marginalizing some populations (particularly women) as their labour is required to create these networks and can also be appropriated by capital and state interests to justify the decrease in spending on social safety nets. Nevertheless, informal communities and the “social networks attachments and passions” created within them “could also, potentially, form the bases for alternative modes of production and forms of life” (Oksala 2016, 73). Marxist theory often classifies reproductive labour into three broad categories: First, as the labour required to reproduce life (i.e. gestation, birthing); second, as the labour required to sustain a labour force (feeding, educating, washing); and finally, as labour that fulfills caring needs “that may be wholly privatised within families and kinship networks or socialised to some degree” (Bakker 2007, 541). Marxist feminists have also pointed to the inseparability of productive and reproductive labour in the capitalist mode of production and the gendered ways through which unpaid reproductive labour most often completed within informal communities upholds and benefit state and capital interests.

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As Daskalaki and Fotaki (2017, 131) argue, informal communities and the reproductive labour within them both “sustains and, at the same time, resists capitalism.”

The potential for informal communities to act as sites of resistance to state or capital interests has been well documented by feminist, disability, and post-colonial theory. Feminist theorists have documented how the informal communities created by women “collectivize reproductive labor both as a means to economize the cost of reproduction and to protect each other from poverty, state violence, and the violence of individual men” (Federici 2010). Federici (2010) draws on the example of the ollas communes in Chile and Peru that were established in the 1980s and created collective community kitchens in response to rising inflation which made purchasing food as individual households too expensive. Other feminist theorists have shown how “women’s subsistence work” within “the commons” and other sites of collective care enable “the concrete survival of local people” and yet is “made invisible through the idealizing of” women’s unpaid reproductive labour (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999, 159).

Queer theorists such as Andrucki (2020) have borrowed from feminist critiques of the collectivization of reproductive labour to argue for the possibility of “queering reproductive labour.” Andrucki (2020) recognizes that the collectivization of reproductive labour plays a role in the justification of neoliberal state policies and cuts to welfare systems. At the same time, they argue against a reductionist reading of collective labour in informal communities contending that it is not simply a problem of making this “labour visible but of rearticulating the radical potential of often-feminised caring labour that crosses boundaries of public and private” and formal and informal (Andrucki 2020, 1376). Within queer theory, care labour in informal communities is most frequently theorized as “chosen families” with an emphasis on how LGBTQ+ “alternative
communities can provide ‘safe spaces’ for queers, subalterns and other others who live with the threat of violence in their everyday lives” (Ahmed and Fortier 2013).

Much like feminist and queer studies, disability theorists have made visible the interdependency of individuals and most recently have drawn attention to the existence of informal care communities that have emerged in response to neoliberal state practices and social service cuts (Hande and Kelly 2015, 964). Theorists such as Bond, Thomas, and Diprose (2020) argue that “the loss of disability support services forces both individuals and advocacy groups to develop alternate survival strategies” that can be “used as practical modes of resistance” but reminds readers that they “can all be co-opted and restructured to suit a neoliberal ideology and must be continually interrogated.” Due to the long history of state violence against disabled subjects using the language of care, informal care communities can also act as sites of resistance for disabled subjects and enable them to refuse institutionalization within state bureaucracies (Hande 2014). In much the same way, informal sex work communities and care collectives can help make sex workers safer by disrupting the potential for state interference and violence, even as the existence of these informal communities and the reproductive labour of its members can be co-opted by the state and capital interests to justify increasing cuts of social programs and institutions.

Finally, post-colonial theorists such as Bayat (2007, 2012) and settler colonial theorists like Wieskamp and Smith (2020) have examined how informal communities can foster safety for racialized and colonized peoples. They contend that informal communities enable both consciousness-raising and the politicization of an individual’s experiences and create safety by separating colonized peoples from the colonial institutions. There has been a growing emphasis on post-colonial and settler colonial literature on examining the creation of alternative paths for justice within informal communities that can help minimized contact with state justice systems that were
created to ensure the processes of colonization (Wieskamp and Smith 2020; Belge and Blaydes 2014; Kim 2018). Informal sex work communities offer similar forms of alternative justice that can produce safety for sex workers outside of formal justice institutions that are frequently sources of violence for sex workers themselves.

Borrowing from the work of feminist, disability, and postcolonial literature in this chapter, I understand informal communities as systems and networks built from the reproductive labour of marginalized subjects that come together without “formal requirements” and without state intervention to “meet felt or expressed needs and/or to resolve issues in a self-reliant and sustainable manner” (Pawar and Jojo 2015, 189). I use the term informal sex work communities (ISWCs) to refer to specific subjects, practices, and systems that are associated with the sex industry in NEO that are not subject to formal rules or regulations nor are they formally organized or named. ISWCs are fluid and porous in that the subjects who create these communities (including but not limited to sex workers, and sometimes by extension their children and families, clients, and third-party service providers) are not always identified (or voluntarily identify) as members.

Community studies tend to define communities exclusively as sites of voluntary belonging, situating communities as the purposeful coming together of people based a shared sense of meaning or togetherness. For example, Sara Ahmed (2005, 101) argues that ‘feelings are crucial to the forming of surfaces and borders” and reminds us that “that what makes those borders also unmakes them [in] other words, what separates us from others also connects us to others.” Ahmed uses the example of “disgust” to illustrate how a shared feeling of disgust for a person or persons creates a community with others who similarly experience this sensation of mutual disgust for that same person or persons. Therefore, the emotion of disgust acts as a boundary that both aligns the subject with others that feel a similar emotional disgust and at the same time separates the subject from the object that they are disgusted by. What Ahmed’s important insight is missing is a recognition that the person or persons who are viewed as disgusting are similarly forced into what could be described as a community due to the shared experience of being labelled as that which is disgusting. In this sense, communities are created involuntarily as people are identified as a member of a community based not on their choice to join but because rejection from one community means an (at times involuntary) association into another. If we can begin to broaden the conceptualization of community as something that is both created voluntarily but also a space created through forced membership it becomes more possible to understand how communities (whether...
of the community. I understand that ISWCs are produced within and reproduce the very logics that necessitate them, and yet, following the insights and interventions in feminist, queer, disability, and postcolonial theory, I argue they also hold the possibility for collective resistance and survival for sex workers who face violence through state-mandated strategies of re-affiliation and exclusion.

**ISWCs and Resource Sharing Networks**

In their autobiographical study of sex worker resistance, Mac and Smith (2018) argue that because of the criminalization of the industry, "community resource sharing is often the only safety net sex workers have if they are robbed at work or an assault means they need time off to heal.” Throughout our focus group and interview sessions, it became abundantly clear that community resource sharing was a deliberate survival strategy used by sex workers in NEO due to the lack of support or justified fear of accessing support from state actors, including police and health workers. Suzie, an Indigenous sex worker with over ten years of experience in the industry, described how she engaged in resource sharing with a friend and colleague when other forms of support were not accessible. Suzie’s friend and colleague was raped while she was working by someone posing as a client. Suzie encouraged her friend to report this incident to the police and get a rape kit done. She described to me how she came to regret encouraging her friend to report the incident when her friend experienced more trauma at the hands of police and health care workers because of her status as a sex worker. Eventually, Suzie took over her friend’s care when they did not receive the support they needed from state actors:

> I used to work with a buddy, eh? Me and her would work together, like in pairs, we would keep our eye on each other, and one night she went missing, and uh, the guy had picked her and took her to the edge of

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*voluntarily created or not) both are produced within and reproduce social hierarchies, and yet can also work as forms of resistance.*
[redacted], and raped her there and left her at the side of the road, so she had to walk back right, (yeah). So like she was gone for several hours, like she got picked up, I guess maybe it was ten, and she didn't get back till 5, now she was living with her boyfriend at the time, right? […] There was no way she would just leave, right? So like, [her boyfriend and I] knew something bad had happened so we called the cops, right? He [the police officer] was more interested in the smell of pot coming from the apartment, this was just before they legalized it, but you could smoke it medically at the time, than he was the fact that she was missing. Yeah.

Lindy: So, a minor drug charge is more important to him than this girl's life?

Suzie: Yeah, yeah, yeah, cause she was a working girl, right? So […] finally she came home right, and we called him [the police officer] back, and stay home and tell her what happened, right? And I feel bad now for doing this, because I forced her to get a rape kit, right? Cause I was already kinda [involved with FSWC] at the time, and so I'm like, you know like "you should do it" you know like […] “what if he goes after other people?” you know what I mean? (yeah) you know like, at least his profile, and things... Big mistake. When we get to the hospital, and uh, I had never been there for a rape kit with anyone before so I didn't know the procedure right? I found out afterwards what the procedure is [wry laugh] I met someone from the victims -sexual assault victims services there, but uh so I knew they had to call a rape nurse, but that was all I knew. They told me they couldn't get a rape nurse right away, we'd have to wait, I think several hours, it'd be a couple hours, right? But there's a small room off the waiting room that our hospital, where they normally take pa- people in to tell them someone died, (right) but they'll also put people in crisis there. They wouldn't let us use the room, and it was empty. Right, they made her sit, in the main waiting room, right?

Lindy: You think because she was a working girl?

Suzie: Yeah. And then, and the cop told everyone, all the nurses there, right, and then the nurse that he was talking to, she would grab all her friends.

Lindy: Wait, the cop told all the nurses that she was working?

Suzie: The cop told one of the nurses there, that I guess, I guess the triage nurse that took the call, cause we came in by the back way, right? And then she grabbed all her friends, and then like, we could hear them, like we're not dumb right, like we're not that far away, like this is what
you hear [imitates whispers] "that's the working girl who says she got raped." .... Right?

Lindy: Who says she got raped? they didn't…

Suzie: Yeah, Yeah, no, "says" right. And then uh she had been wearing pants that she'd taken off after, like, she just wanted to get them off they were all ripped (mhm) and uh, she, the reason why [the police officer] said he didn't believe her is because […] it was raining really hard in the city at that, that night, like pouring like white wash pouring. But [Northeastern Ontario] is so big that it can be pouring washing downtown and not do that in [Place B] (mhm) right? And he said because he was in [Downtown] and […] it was raining here, right? It must have been, it had to be raining in [Place B], right? and cause she wasn't wet, she wasn't wet enough, that's what he said. (wow) Yeah […] she told him where she put her pants right, in the garbage [in Place B] like she put in the garbage can over here by the store, so we went to go get them (yeah) right, and he says they weren't wet enough. First off, you have gloves on so how the hell can you tell how wet they are, right? And then - and then, I was in the back seat of the car at the time, he tossed the pants at me, "here you feel" [laughs] […] they were inadmissible at that point, he broke the evidence chain, I didn't have gloves on (yeah) I wasn't, I wasn't a victim, I wasn't, he broke the evidence chain. […] yeah he broke, he purposefully broke the evidence chain cause he threw the jeans at me. He knew! (Wow), He obv- he's a cop, he obviously - he knows I can't touch those jeans (yeah) right? (holy shit) so why throw them at me? […] That's why I said, I feel bad for doing it, because I made her go through all that trauma, for no point.

Due to the trauma of the rape and the trauma that was incurred while seeking supports from the state (at the hospital and through the police) Suzie’s friend was no longer able to work and Suzie took on the increasingly difficult role of breadwinner for the entire household:

I was supporting three people with my working. It - it and it was the middle of winter by this point too, and its like, I literally had a mental breakdown, right? Cause I couldn't do it anymore (yeah) you know its like -30 outside your standing out there for hours till cars come by, its so damn cold [laughs] (yeah yeah) right? And you gotta get twice as much more, three times as more cause there's three people, (yeah) cause I didn't want her going back to work, because of all that happened, like you know?
Suzie’s willingness to share her resources at great personal expense enabled her friend and their partner to survive as she healed. The discrimination and violence her friend faced in the health care setting made it more difficult for her to access supports after her assault leaving her vulnerable and unable to support herself. It was only through the ISWC and Suzie that she was supported as she took the time to recover. Suzie’s unpaid “care, love and solidarity work” (Lynch 2013, 179) acted as a safety buffer for her colleague who was unable to perform in those moments after her assault the “responsibilized” subjectivity that was demanded of her by the police and health care workers. The same narrative of responsibilized and autonomous sex worker that I traced in chapters Two and Three, that is used to frame sex workers as complicit in violence against Indigenous women, was used against Suzie’s friend to hold her accountable for her own assault because of her position as a sex worker. Suzie’s labour and care for her friend refused that responsibilized-sex worker narrative and made space for recovery without condemning the entire sex industry as public discussions of violence within the sex industry often do. Instead, resource sharing networks like the one exemplified by Suzie and her friend work based on the assumption that vulnerability rather than autonomy is the “common” condition of humanity (Fineman 2008, 1).

Beyond enabling recovery and survival when other resources are inaccessible to sex working community members, community resource sharing can also act as a form of health care equalization. Melissa for example, described to me how her partner is not eligible for ODSP and therefore would have to pay out of pocket for his daily methadone dose, which was outside of his budget. To help him access the methadone he required Melissa gives up half her doses to her partner, enabling him to access health care benefits he would not otherwise have:

…he doesn't have any benefits. So it's kind of hard, you know…I give him like half of my [methadone] drinks and, you know, (right yeah) so
its, I'm living and I'm sweating there right now [...] But that's what it does cause I get a drink every second, (oh) So it's hard on my body, but I could still do it like it's still (yeah). But I do sweat every second day and [...] I still sweat and, and I'm bigger so, but yeah. So I wish he had uh like uh covered because it would be easier on me [laughs] (yeah honestly). But people miss a day like really you can go three days without it - without being really sick, sick. Like they say you miss three days, you're out. Right. So what I've been doing is I've uh been taking. So I give him half. whatever. But the other half, I take half a drink every day when I'm supposed to [take a full one]. I can't tell [my doctor] I can't let them know when I take half a drink. It still works, but I- I need a little bit higher dose because I've been doing that. But I don't want to say "hey doc. Yeah I've been giving to my old man [half my drinks] but he's he has no income." [...] We both kinda like - for I'd say about 10 hours every second day there I feel it. Like around 8:00, 9:00 tonight there I'll start feeling like not the greatest, (yeah) but I still get through the night and everything [...] 

As Melissa’s story exemplifies, ISCWs can act as informal health care equalization movements that enable uninsured community members who cannot afford to participate in the methadone clinic access to treatment. Stories like these can be understood as examples of resource collectivization that undermines the conditions of scarcity produced by the Canadian two-tier health care system caused by a lack of universal pharmacare. At the same time, these informal healthcare practices can also help sex working subjects mediate the long history of paternalism and pathologization towards sex workers in health care (Hande 2014). As noted in the first chapter, pathologization marks certain actions or practices as “sick” and in this way “medical authorities” in the same way as “the church or the law, execute a form of social control” (Oeming 2018, 214). In recent years there has been a push in the health care towards a ‘holistic’ understanding of health that while productive in some ways, has been applied to sex workers to alongside discourses of ‘lived experiences’ to pathologize their lived experience of drug use as moralizing rationalizations for why someone would work in the sex industry. The pathologization of the lived experiences of
drug use is also coupled with a discourse of responsibilization so that those who refuse responsibility for their pathologies become marked as a perpetually excluded Other who must be managed through more punitive control strategies (Rose 2000). ISWCs can help sex workers manage the logics of pathologization and responsibilization and enable their survival within and through the health care system. At the same time, these forms of resource sharing can be co-opted by the state or used as a justification to end social programs if participating subjects are described in public discourse as ‘non-compliant’ or seen to be ‘irresponsible’ in their use of programs such as methadone clinics because of resource sharing.

ISCWs also enact other forms of informal health care through communication networks about the quality of street drugs currently being sold. Sharing about drug potency and the presence of fentanyl in other drugs ensures all community members can make informed decisions about their use. Participants describe how they trust their informal networks more than government or public health warnings about drug use. The level of distrust towards public health announcements was blatantly clear as some participants expressed fears that the rise of fentanyl overdoses, and government inaction, was a deliberate act by the government to “take out the weak” (Dee Dee). Distrust of public health systems, incurred through repeat experiences of violence within these systems, and public health warnings mean the community relies on their knowledge of street drugs to keep each other safe. For example, Dee Dee describes how a friend knocked a drug out of her partner’s hand because the friend heard there was fentanyl mixed in. The information-sharing networks described by participants are based on the assumption that people who use drugs can make their own decisions about their use with the proper information. Dee Dee later sold what was left of that drug to a friend while making sure to warn them about the potential for fentanyl:
I sold it to somebody for 15 bucks [laughs] [...] So I asked the person and the next day “how was it?” He goes “it was awesome [laughing] obviously I'm still here, eh? But it was Fetty.”

ISWCs and the informal knowledge networks within NEO allow community members to share information about the presence of fentanyl so that all community members can make informed decisions about if and how much they use. Participants describe these informal measures are more effective than public health regulations because of a justified distrust of the public health system and because their networks are not premised on ending drug use but rather on respecting each other’s right to make informed decisions.

Informal drug awareness campaigns have become more important in the last few years as the quality of street drugs has significantly changed, but also because participants saw a rise in street drug use due to public health policy changes. Ellen argued that the recent attempts to reduce opioid use through prescription reductions have led to an influx in street drug use to fill the gap. Ellen, who has used prescription opioids for years to manage pain, had her prescription cut by her doctor after the enactment of the 2016 “Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy” and later turned to street drug injections to continue her pain management:

Well, I never used to have to inject for years I was getting the ten eats a day and I was good on that. And then when those guidelines came out and they started taking everybody's meds away. That was it. Because uh they're just not as effective when you eat them. You-you get more bang for your buck when you poke them, right? (right) So and for years, I was just eating them because I was getting enough that it didn't matter if they weren't as strong because I could just take an extra dose. I had five doses a day, right? (right) Now I've only got three. So -and if I eat them, there's just no fucking way it will last me, it just doesn't last me there's

Lindy: is that like because of those 20 I don't remember what year it was. But the regulations to try and reduce opioid –
Ellen: Yeah the 2016 guidelines. And those were not meant for people who were stable at high doses (right) and they ended up derailing me. I was at a very high dose but I was stable for years. (yup) Everything was great. You know, so

Lindy: whose discretion was it? Was it the doc-?

Ellen: Well, the doctors were under a lot of pressure from the college eh? So there was a catch in there and it said that uh this 90 milligrams limit thing I don't know if you've heard about it but they put a 90 milligrams limit in there. But that was for opiate naive patients who were just starting a script and the exact wording said that doctors should be careful to when they're making the decision to titrate a patient up to or over 90 milligrams when they're starting, (right) I was at 480 milligrams equivalent,

Lindy: and they tried to bring it down to ninety?

Ellen: Yeah. And it's like, well, but that has nothing to do with me, you know? (yeah yeah) And but the college was just pressuring all the doctors. So I mean, my doctor, he had no choice which really sucked because for 10 years, he gave me enough that I was good, you know? And then it all just started going south, so but, but the- the woman who's in charge of the college she, uh she put out a press release, I think a month or two ago that basically says uh they misapplied the guidelines, and they didn't mean to fuck anybody up who was already stable.

Ellen commented that her situation was not unique and many of her friends have had doctors take a similar approach to cutting prescriptions too quickly:

But a lot of people were getting cut at astronomical rates like 10% every two weeks and shit, like enough that I know two people who committed suicide because they got tapered so hard one guy hung themselves, he couldn't fucking take it. He was so dope sick. You know? (That's) it's brutal. (That's so fucked up). And I can't say to the doctor “Listen, you've taken me down so far I'm buying stuff off the street,” because if I say that, I'm automatically, he's, I'm canned. (yeah yeah) He'll just can me as a patient right? So I can't be honest.

As Ellen described, being honest with medical practitioners around informal medicating and drug networks could lead to her losing access to medical care or her family doctor. To manage the potential for exclusion from the medical system, Ellen turns to informal networks to access drugs to help her with her pain. The 2016 strategy that Ellen discusses was intended to focus on
“compassion and collaboration” in reducing opioid use in Canada through a renewed emphasis on public health measures versus policing and enforcement measures (Government of Canada 2017). Yet, despite the language of compassion and collaboration, participants like Ellen found the regulations to be more punitive and coercive than the earlier use of policing over public health. Informal communication networks around drug potency and safety help reduce the risks that come with her choice to access unregulated drug markets more effectively than the formal public health efforts. As Bayat (2007, 587) commented, informal communities of marginalized populations are marked by a desire to “exert some degree of autonomy in their working and cultural lives, basing their relationships on reciprocity, trust and negotiations rather than on the modern notions of individual self-interest, fixed rules and contracts.” In this way, informal health care networks within ISWCs offer advice or resources that enable participants to “exert some degree of autonomy” by relying on “trust” and “reciprocity” to engage in health care decisions and practices.

Outside of the informal communications around drug safety, participants described relying heavily on ISWC knowledge networks to keep each other safe while working. In an early focus group, Suzie remarked, “community gives me important information, like bad dates.” These knowledge networks can be found online and offline in the form of bad date lists and word-of-mouth networks that share information on their rights as sex workers. These knowledge-sharing networks aim to create safer working conditions by ensuring everyone knows their rights in the same way workers in formal sectors of the economy do. Participants noted that sharing information about rights is a form of resistance that acknowledges that all forms of sex work are legitimate and sex workers deserve basic human rights:

Jackie: but what we really want to do is put our efforts towards making it safer for people that are working outside. […]You know, instead of trying to get people off the street,
Devon: Yep,
Shirley: mhmm
Jackie: You know, it's to make the working outdoors as safe as we can for people.
Melissa: yes
Jackie: So that they can have [their] human rights intact like the rest of the people that go to work, whether you're going to work at McDonalds,
Melissa: Its still the same, either McDonalds or sucking cock or sleeping with someone.
Jackie: Or sucking cock at McDonald's its all the same [laughter].
Melissa: it is. Or on the streets.

ISWCs disseminate information about rights through informal information networks and word of mouth. Having a thorough knowledge of the law is an important form of resistance when faced with over-policing and criminalization, and participants frequently told stories about how they were able to learn about their rights from other sex working community members and use this information when facing control strategies of exclusion through the criminal justice system. We can understand the active efforts to share knowledge through ISWCs as a form of reproductive labour that enables other sex workers to safely navigate the ongoing structures of late liberalism and settler colonialism seen in the Canadian legal system. In NEO, Shirley is well known for having a strong understanding of the law and is frequently approached by others for legal advice. Similarly, Lisa was able to use legal advice she gained through ISWCs to stop an illegal eviction.

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76 As discussed elsewhere in this thesis, the Canadian legal system arose from the on-going logics of settler colonialism that transplanted British legal systems into what is sometimes called Canada. This legal system today is further predicated by the rationalities and practices of late liberalism whereby subjects are governed through their freedom and those who do not act according to socially prescribed ideals of subjecthood are then forcefully enmeshed in through strategies of re-affiliation or through the processes of exclusion that mark these subjects as risks which can then be punished or harmed without repercussion (Rose 2000; Dean 1999; Wolfe 2006; Simpson 2016).
after she charged her landlord with sexual assault. She explains how she relied on informal networks to evade eviction:

The police told me there was nothing that they could do that he was under the Innkeepers Act and I had to leave or they were going to physically remove me […] So I left and then I went to every organisation, nobody could help me. I just got the loop round and the fuckin housing list. Every organisation gave me the house list, I was ready to throw people out. […] fucking housing lists, which is all places with bugs. (Yeah,) you know? and I know I've done leg work and stuff so. So uh anyways uh four days later, I was talking to somebody [at the] downtown Tim Hortons. They're like, “Oh, he's not under the Innkeeper's Act, he's under the landlord-tenant board.” I'm like, “What? I got papers at home, I got papers.” I went and got a lawyer [and I] went to the police station. I said “I want to talk to, to police.” They set me up with this guy named Officer B. And I said, “Listen, you're the fucking officer that enforces the law that further fucking victimized me by making me leave my fucking home.”

Thanks to information and legal advice she received through informal information-sharing networks, Lisa remained in her housing and won the right to live rent-free for a year because of the illegal actions of her landlord. In this way, the reproductive labour of other sex working community members who engaged in informal knowledge sharing networks enabled Lisa to more safely navigate her experiences with the legal system safely. While Lisa and those who were sharing the information with her did not name this as an outward act of resistance, it became one in that provided her with the tools necessary to mediate her survival in the face of state complacency. As Feredici (2010) argues, the “practices” and “the ability […] to look at reproductive labor as an important sphere of human activity [does not need to] be negated but to be revolutionized.”

Participants noted that it was especially important to ensure information sharing networks extended to Indigenous youth sex workers who face heavier criminalization and therefore tend to be more wary of and at risk of violence when interacting with formal institutions. As Mac and
Smith (2018) argue, the sex industry, like all industries, is produced within and reproduces the structural and interpersonal realities of racism and sexism alongside the potential for state-mandated violence through policing. Teaching youth ways to remain safe while with clients: such as keeping the door handle open so the door cannot lock, working with a buddy or partner, and how to spot a police officer or social worker is another form of reproductive labour that ISWC members engage in to help mitigate the potential for violence. Dee Dee, an Indigenous sex worker with over 20 years of experience in the industry, describes information sharing as especially important for Indigenous youth who face increased levels of violence both from police and from clients:

[Where I am from] there's a lot of Natives and then the white men and they fucking take, take the girls over a bridge because I used to work out of [redacted]. And the first time I got beaten was the last time. I didn't want to go [across the] fucking bridge again. So I stood my fucking ground. (damn) I want the money in my hand ... and I want the door unlocked... cause if you pull anything and fucking I can open the door or I'll just pull the, pull the latch so it's not (fully closed). Yeah. (that's smart) So if anything does come along, like you know? I don't wanna, like you know, I give pointers (yeah) like that to the girls eh? Like you make sure you get your money up front, like you know, don't let these assholes take advantage of you, and that's how they do it, and they won't pay you at last, they'll pay you last. But then they'll try and scam you outta some of your money (right) Cause you didn't do a good enough job or, like you know, I've heard it all. And its just, it's scary. But I wanna, I wanna help all the girls out there, eh? [laughs] as much as I can.

While reproductive labour was traditionally theorized as something that occurred within private households, working in the sex industry can mean the loss of connection to biological families and engaging in familial care work is an important part of the ISWC. Dee Dee describes how she plays the role of “auntie” or “mom” for younger sex workers, teaching them how to keep themselves safe on the job and from the police. For her, making connections and building trust with youth was
possible because there was a shared sense of experience with racism and sexism both in and outside of the sex industry:

I know what you're going through or I understand what you're going through because I've been there. And a lot of the young kids, they come up to me and they look up to me and they'll either call me mom or auntie. And it makes me feel proud. For Dee Dee protecting the youth was an important role that she saw for herself in the community and one that she could do because of a shared experience and understanding. The connection that Dee Dee describes can be traced in part to shared experiences of marginalization and criminalization. Shirley described a similar understanding of how mutual experiences can create a bond even if the other members of the community cannot verbally express their understanding:

I find sometimes the more fucked up people are, the more fucking understanding of the way you feel, just sometimes they're lost for words to put it in perspective, or t- to express. As described in Chapter Three, PCEPA and NEO policing tactics work to situate sex workers physically and symbolically outside of communities. Participants frequently commented on how other members of the community, from non-sex working community members who yell at them on the street, to social service providers who call them “lazy,” make them feel as if they are “not part of society” (Shirley). In contrast, ISWC spaces foster a sense of belonging for sex workers who have experienced deliberate marginalization. Participants described the sense of belonging created in SWCs as familial, discussing how they “make our own families” and referring to other SWs in familial terms such as “my street mother.” SWCs act as a “chosen family” and are especially important when traditional families are not supportive of their work or life choices. As Ellen describes:

And the families you pick yourself are better any way because a lot of people don't get along with their family. So I think if you can put together a support system that is not your family, that you picked, it's way better.
The concept of a “chosen family” is typically used to refer to “the construction of elaborate friendship networks to compensate for a lack of supportive family ties” in LGBTQ communities and in drug recovery programs (Dewaele et al. 2011, 313). For participants, ISWCs mimicked a chosen family in that their support for each other was based on mutual care. This further echoes Bayat’s (2007) argument that informal communities are characterized by “reciprocity, trust and negotiations rather than on the modern notions of individual self-interest, fixed rules and contracts.” When I asked participants to explain the difference between friends and chosen family, they underscored the importance of mutual care and care that was done without expectation of financial or personal gain:

Ellen: Family are the people who are there for you when it is not beneficial to them.[…]
Suzie: Family is the one that will help you bury the body [laughs].[…]
Samantha: you care when caring is not gunna get you anything. The only thing caring is gunna get you is reciprocal caring. And sometimes, and sometimes its not even really reciprocated but you care for somebody you know and not for anything.
Lindy: Just because you care?
Samantha: Just cause you care. […]
Suzie: Yeah. Even when you're down, like when you don't have money, when you're not rocking, you know, you hit rock bottom. They're still there. And they're still taking your calls.

For sex working community members who have experienced purposeful displacement tactics from police and other community members, having a chosen family that is “still there” without expectation of reciprocity fosters an essential sense of belonging. Lynch (2013, 195) argues that recognizing the role of care and other affective relations within informal solidarity networks means recognizing that human motivations are not solely driven by the ethics of competition and self-interest. It would raise the principle of othercenteredness to a new standing, which might help contain the
principle of rational economic interest and challenge the politics of fear, both of which are central to contemporary capitalism. In engaging in the reproductive labour of sharing material resources, informal knowledge networks, and fostering belonging ISWCs in NEO help to decenter the “ethics of competition and self-interest” and enable survival for sex workers as they navigate the formal social structures that mediate their lives.

Care Commons and the Collectivization of Motherhood

Throughout the study it became clear that ISWCs were especially important for sex working mothers. As discussed previously, motherhood completely transformed the women’s relationships with the state, acting to reduce their ability to manage their bodies\footnote{For example, several participants noted that under their conditions with CAS they were required to take certain medications. As Suzie explains “when I had Baby Jane, CAS got involved too, just like her [talking about Diane]. I wasn't allowed to do anything. I actually - they forced me. And this is against the law by the way. They mandated that I take antipsychotic medication after Jane was born because I had bipolar, which, by the way, is against the law. It's up to your choice if you want to take it. But they mandated that I take antipsychotics. My mom had to live with me 24/7. I wasn't allowed to be left alone with Jane by myself at any one time for the first three months of her life. OK? These conditions didn't get dropped till Jane, and she was preemie by the way, caught up to, and my doctor, her doctor pediatrician hates CAS so I loved her.” For many participants, motherhood meant, or was experienced as, a reduction in their bodily autonomy when state actors were involved.} and often forcing women to take increased risks at their job, hide their profession, and enact a particular form of ‘proper’ subjectivity.\footnote{Discussed in more detail in Chapter 2} Participants in this study highlighted how motherhood and the presence of children in their lives increased the risks associated with being “caught” working in the sex industry. For example, Emily described how being a sex working mother meant living in perpetual fear of CAS or fear of police realizing you had children.

the cops stop you and they know that you have kids they are gunna call CAS when you get picked up, and then you get charged and then CAS gets called. And then they'll fucking, like, they just automatically, back then, just take your kids. So that was always a worry.[yeah] like was always worry, cause they [CAS] didn't support it, and never have.
Even though child and youth services do not have any explicit policies surrounding sex working mothers, there is a general understanding within the sex work community that CAS does not “support it” and being a sex worker will increase your chances of losing your children (Emily). CAS also enacts certain strategies of re-affiliation targeting sex working mothers by creating particular conditions under which these mothers can keep custody of their children. For example, in one focus group, participants describe how the threat of child loss is used to force mothers to reduce their drug use in ways that rely on moralizing assumptions around drug use and motherhood:

Shirley: Well they set you up for failure. They set you up for failure when they take that child, and they think "well if, I take your child, and if you don't change like that, well, then you never cared."
Samantha: Ab-so-fucking-lutely
Shirley: But it's setting them up for failure because you know what? You just dug that hole even deeper now. Whatever crisis that individual was going through, trying to raise their chi-.
Devon: Now there's more.
Emily: Oh yeah
Shirley: children, instead of helping and supporting, you just, you just dug her [hits table] even deeper.
The fears of CAS that participating mothers, who used drugs and those who did not, articulated is well supported by research. A quantitative study of sex worker mothers done in 2014 found that nearly 40% had their children apprehended by child protective services, and Indigenous sex working mothers, outdoor sex working mothers, and sex working mothers who used drugs were all at increased risk of losing their children (Duff et al. 2014). Attempts to access supports to reduce the risk of child apprehension through formal systems also pose risks. For example, two participants described how they were forced to name their children’s father if they accessed Ontario Works. One participant, who was running from an abusive ex-partner, was scared to name him because this would mean he would learn where she was living after she moved cities to escape
his threats and violence. To access social services, she was forced to choose between the safety of her and her child from the threat of her ex-partner and the risk of extreme poverty. To limit their exposure to CAS, sex working mothers frequently rely on ISWCs “care commons” to share the reproductive labour of maternal care. The idea of care commons is most often attributed to disability justice to denote the “informal, unpaid care supports from family and friends [that are] organized to meet immediate care needs” (Bond, Thomas, Diprose 2020). Within ISWCs care commons take on several different forms of reproductive labour, from the actual child-minding to the creation of support networks that actively challenge assumptions around motherhood and sex work.

Finding childcare for your children while working as a sex worker is often fraught and difficult because of fears that CAS could be called and therefore interfere. Dee Dee describes how difficult it was to find childcare providers when certain outfits for work ended up exposing your profession:

You don't want them [the babysitter] to know. So and like, you know, some clothes give it away. Like when you go to the bar [laughing a bit] dressed like a [laughter]

Participants noted they relied on maternal care commons and rotating childcare amongst other sex workers to mediate the risk of exposing their profession. Several participants acted as caregivers to each others’ children while they were at work when they did not trust other non-sex working community members:

Dee Dee: just like you used to babysit for me.
Emily: Yeah. Like I used to babysit for you.
Dee Dee: When I worked, when I worked, when I'd go and work the street
Emily: Yeah I used to babysit for her
Dee Dee: I wouldn't come home [with clients], I wouldn't do nothing at home, I have three kids, yeah they're on crown wardship.
Emily: After the fact
Dee Dee: Yeah
Emily: Like after you ra-
Dee Dee: Yeah, I raised my kids.
The collectivization of maternal care is a form of collective resistance against state intervention and is not unique to sex working communities. The creation of maternal care collectives is well documented in marginalized or criminalized communities. Radcliffe (2009) for example found that care communities played an essential role in mothering practices for mothers who use drugs. While Dewey, Orchard, and Brown (2018, 28) argue that the “shared precarity” of sex working mothers acts to erase sex working mothers’ ability to “represent themselves and their interests as equal members of society.” I argue that the collectivization of maternal labour and ISWCs care commons offer a way to transform the shared precarity of motherhood into forms of solidarity based on collective experiences of criminalization and stigmatization.

Care commons extend beyond the sharing of physical mothering labour to include the sharing of emotional labour by offering a place to challenge stigma and shame through collective sensemaking and conscientización (Freire, 2012). In our first focus group, I asked participants to write down what major issues they wanted to discuss as a part of this study. One repeated idea that they wanted to challenge was the societal notion that sex work and motherhood are incompatible. Participants frequently described feeling “out of place” in spaces where they were defined as mothers because of social stigma related to sex work and fear of being ‘outed’ by former or present clients while with their children. Lisa described it as a pervasive sense of guilt:

[speaking to Jackie] it- it triggered a couple of things like even when you said like how you feel out of place and stuff. Like when you go to schools. Or for me it was my son's hockey. You always have like that guilt. Guilt of things, you know? […] I wasn't doing sex work when I had my son. But
like, I remember going to a hockey game and seeing somebody who I was working for [a client] at the hockey game. And I remember feeling like, "oh my poor son," and feeling guilty about ever doing that and the shame. But I never did do it when -when I had my son. But…

Even though Lisa was not working in the sex industry while she was raising her son, her feelings of guilt that emerge from the stigmatization of the profession stayed with her and made her feel consistently “out of place” in mothering spaces. Shirley described her experience as a sex working mother as a “performance [where] I was a housewife. I was a mother.” Rather than seeing herself as a mother and sex worker Shirley was forced to see herself as performing motherhood and performing housewife duties while simultaneously hiding her work in the sex industry from her children, husband, and friends. Hiding your profession from family members was a repeated safety strategy enacted by SW participants, both to manage stigma and decrease the chance of child welfare interference. Hiding their profession frequently meant facing whorephobia from family members who were unaware of their work. For example, Emily describes how her mother would mock sex workers when she was not aware Emily was working and how emotionally hurtful that was:

Like I remember once. So my own mother, when she came to [Northeastern Ontario] and she'd like bring the kids for the day and stuff like that. And she'd be like, "let's go look at the hookers" like who the fuck does that? […] Looking for those hookers [stops laughing] like you know, so that was-
Devon: that's crazy.
Emily: So that was a really hard thing

While Emily earlier in the focus group had been discussing with pride her ability to provide for her family through the sex industry, because of the stigma of sex work, she could not be openly prideful and was forced to hide her profession. Faced with this stigma, ISWCs create the space for sex workers to be both mothers and sex workers and challenge the conditions that make mothering
while working as a sex worker difficult. This was evidenced in a focus group session where Dee Dee broke down crying while discussing her experiences with child apprehension. Dee Dee was quickly comforted by other participants who offered her the space and permission to grieve while also opening the conversation to the social conditions that made motherhood and sex work difficult:

Samantha: Dee Dee, during that time when your children were taken from you, and that's the really fucked up thing, is because society says, "oh, OK, well, they're just taken from you." That's bullshit. It is. That is a traumatic experience.
Lisa: Oh fuck yes
Devon: Yes, yes
Samantha: To be grieved, just like a death
Devon: I remember when I lost mine. [I] died, [I] died, I didn't care, I just - I know I had no chance, I know I had no chance. No chance.
Samantha: So what I went through with the loss of my son, you are going through with the loss of your children. I really do. So you went through that [overlap] and that loss for how many fucking years with society telling you "no big deal, this person can be allowed to grieve because it was a death, and this person can't be allowed to grieve because it was just taken away." That's bullshit. That's, that's traumatic just the same and should be grieved just as strongly and as heavily as a death
Devon: But I chose to use drugs, I chose to used drugs, it was my own fault at the end of the day.
Emily: And I feel bad to cause I chose to sell you them, I made you
[overlap]
Devon: Nay nay, an addiction right? Its an addiction.
Emily: I really do.
Dee Dee: I lost my kids, she lost her son, just the same as me losing my kids
Shirley: Well they set you up for failure.
In a similar instance, Shirley was discussing her intergenerational experiences with child protective services. Shirley was taken into care herself and later had her children taken. She describes how after her first partner was killed and the government deported her next partner, she was left alone with the children and how she survived in this situation working in the sex industry - only to have that later used against her by CAS. Shirley takes responsibility for the fact that she was left alone to raise her children before Jackie calls attention to the conditions that mediated her choices:

Shirley: Yeah And I'm alone. So I had to do what I had to do to survive and provide because I was alone. I - their dad was deported when my son was six months old. You know, my oldest’s father, I mean, he was murdered, you know, just before her third birthday. So I did whatever I had to do with what I had with the means and education. I did the best that I could. And you know what? Yeah, I made my bed. Yeah. And I fucking laid in it. And I fucking survived and I did it.
Jackie: The state made your bed.
Shirley: Yeah.
Jackie: The state made your bed and you did the best you could to fucking make it as comfy as possible, man

By calling Shirley to examine how “the state made her bed” Jackie is practicing a form of consciousness-raising that enables participants to re-define their experiences and allows them to rebalance personal responsibility with a critique of a state. As Spade (2020,10) argues, mutual aid networks, like informal motherhood collectives, “work to meet survival needs” but also “build shared understanding about why people do not have what they need.” Shirley’s life was significantly affected by state interference and lack of support, from her earliest days where police refused to hold her childhood sexual abuser accountable to the later years where her husband was deported, leaving her a single mother. In ISWC spaces, she is given a chance to reconceptualize

79 Intergenerational experiences with child protective services were common for participants in this study. Dee Dee, for example, had the very same social worker who apprehended her from her parents later apprehend her children.
responsibilization narratives to understand how her life was shaped by systems and structures outside of her control (Spade 2020, 11). The care labour that goes into maternal sex work care commons can not be understated as it both enabled women to keep working in the industry as they mothered while also politicizing their experiences.

ISWCs also offer a safe space to ask for advice and seek support in mothering practices when approaching formal institutions for support could mean risking child apprehension. As discussed in Chapter 2, motherhood fundamentally transforms how sex workers interact with the state, leaving them vulnerable to increased state and community surveillance and potential interference from child protective services. One of the ways that sex workers manage this surveillance is by participating in “acceptable” consumption habits or by ensuring that they were going “over and beyond” (Jackie) as mothers to “prove” (Jackie) their mothering abilities to CAS (Rivers-Moore 2015). This leaves little room for sex working mothers to make mistakes or ask for any support they may need without fear of state interference. ISWCs create the space for sex working mothers to come together, support each other and offer advice, giving them the right to be imperfect as mothers. In one early focus group before we began, I saw Samantha reach out to the others and ask their advice about disciplining her granddaughter who lives with her. Samantha cried as she described having difficulties figuring out the best way to discipline her. The group came together to offer support and suggestions without judgement allowing Samantha to work through her ideas about motherhood and the best way to care for her granddaughter. In a similar

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80 Many similarly faced stigma related to substance use. Motherhood is often seen as antithetical to drug use, yet this binary is typically only used against socially unaccepted substance use and is tied to class and race. For example, white middle class “wine moms” in online spaces proudly conflate motherhood and substance use and are celebrated for it.

81 A right that white middle and upper class non-sex working, able bodied, mothers are automatically granted.
incident, Suzie asked for advice during one focus group on how to address her daughters’ behaviour. Again, Suzie was offered advice and suggestions without the threat that someone would reveal this difficulty to CAS who is already monitoring Suzie’s family. For sex working mothers who must perform perfectionism in public because of increased public and police surveillance, ISWCs are a place where they are able to be imperfect and seek support for their mothering practices.

While no participant articulated their involvement in these care commons as political acts of resistance, ISWCs can be understood as collective acts of resistance because of the history of state intervention and disruption within sex working motherhood. As Federici (2010) argues “grassroots women's communalism today leads to the production of a new reality, it shapes a collective identity, it constitutes a counter-power in the home and the community and opens a process of self-valorization and self-determination from which there is much that we can learn.” In this way ISWCS and the collectivization of care work is “political work” (Smith and Mac 2018) in that it helps sex working mothers mediate the realities of surveillance and question the overarching narratives that define sex work as antithetical to motherhood.

Parallel Legalities and Mutual Safety Networks
The care labour of ISWCs extends beyond mothering to include other aspects of life, including the enactment of different forms of legalities and mutual safety networks. In a focus group, the participants describe how difficult it can be to address violence with the sex industry when the state institutions meant to keep communities safe pose a threat. For participants, informal communities and mutual safety networks were an essential part of making their lives safer and there was a general sense of pride at being a member of this community. Shirley describes this feeling:
Shirley: Its like we are our own secret society, with our own politics, political rules, and we all understand it without having to say so many words.
Jackie: Cause you can't call the cops
Shirley: That's right
Jackie: You call the cops you end up being the one that fucking threatened with arrest.

Fear of police and arrest means SWCs create their own forms of “recourse” when faced with violence from clients or other community members.

Jackie: So it's one of these things that comes up a lot, too, is how, because women in sex work aren't able to call police when there's been a crime committed against their person. We'll fucking find our own way to our own recourse. (Yeah,) right? So if it's fucking stealing an asshole's wallet because he was a fucking.
Lisa: goof
Jackie: uh violent client,
Ellen: or getting your boyfriend to go over and pummel the guy [laughter]

These forms of remedy are not always within the bounds of the law, such as stealing someone’s’ wallet or getting your boyfriend to beat someone and, because of this, participants worried about disclosing their safety-making strategies within this study. When I first approached the group, I suggested that we talk about resistance strategies and how they keep each other safe. However, it quickly became clear that they did not feel safe discussing acts of resistance or community safety tactics because of an overarching fear of how these stories would be portrayed or used both by the state and other community groups. Violence that occurs within the sex industry is difficult to discuss because there is a general fear that stories about violence will be co-opted by prohibition feminists and lead to increased criminalization of the industry. Participants were quick to note that while violence occurs in the industry, other care work industries also face violence. As Lisa, who worked as both a PSW and outdoor sex worker, described the parallels to me in an interview:

Lisa: And that's my like big saying is like, you know, […] I compare it to being a PSW. As far as like safety goes and whatever. It's similar
Lindy: abuse on the job as PSW, abuse on the job doing sex work?
Lisa: Yeah. Like, and it is a service.
The on-going co-option of stories of abuse and violence within the sex industry by carceral feminists has been well documented in the previous chapters and by other scholars (Bernstein 2019; Kaye 2017). Jackie describes the worries she has about discussing resistance and safety-strategies with me and the potential ramifications for sex workers either because of carceral feminists or state interference:

That's why I'm waiting to really bust out and talk about the strategies of resistance. (Yeah). Because I'm worried that if we really get into them that they'll be co-opted or they'll be taken from us. And then the state- don't know. Maybe it's a conspiracy thing but I really feel like this state will be like, oh, so you do this [strategy] now we will [look out for strategy].

For sex working community members, acts of survival are acts of resistance in the face of state policies that have tried to erase them and their voices. So, to discuss resistance means to expose their means of survival to scrutiny and potentially expose their deliberate acts of survival to the very institutions whose surveillance they are trying to escape. Instead of discussing acts of resistance, participants highlighted their concerns about exposing their resistance strategies. As Jackie explains:

But maybe what you need to speak to then is the concern within sex work community.
Lindy: about talking about resistance?
Jackie: … talking about resistance. And …about our strategies for resistance because we're so concerned that it's going to be used against us.

For those reasons, I do not discuss most of the safety-making tactics that were talked about in focus groups and in individual interviews. Instead, the following section describes one safety method that participants approved during the review session: A ban on disclosures and the use of silence.
One of the unspoken rules that the community relies on to keep each other safe is a ban on disclosing information to the police if they ask questions about another sex working community member. Throughout my time in NEO, participants would assure me that they do not talk to police about other community members. Ellen describes how she will tell police “look, don't ask me about nobody else. I'm happy to sit here and blab with you. But if you're gunna ask me shit about other people, just you got to go ask them, you know?” This ban on disclosures extends to all forms of police inquiries, whether they are asking for information because of a crime that was committed, or if they use the language of sympathy and missing person reports to try and get information on somebody’s whereabouts.

Participants noted that police will frequently try to “manipulate” them into sharing information about each other by using missing person reports to play on their sympathy, only to arrest the individual in question later. Jackie and Devon describe how this form of police manipulation played out when a missing person’s report was filed on Devon:

Jackie: Yeah And there was a missing persons report. They called me and said, we have a missing person’s report out on this individual. Have you seen her? I'm like "that individual is a grown woman." [Devon mhm] If I see her, I will let her know that you're trying to get in touch with her. That's all I'm doing.” I won't, like fuck. It's not my place. And they don't get to do that. They try to manipulate eh?
Lindy: right
Jackie: So.
Lindy: And pull the heartstrings almost?
Jackie: They try to. And I don't. I won't. I can't do that to community members.

The underlying premise of this unspoken rule is respect for the autonomy and agency of other sex working community members and a recognition of that person’s right to talk to police or not. Refusing to disclose that information about other community members is a way of keeping each
other safe from arrest and further criminalization and about respecting that person’s autonomy and agency in relation to police. Participants argue that because of the manipulation tactics police use, they rarely trusted official missing person reports; instead, they rely on their knowledge of each other and ISWCs to know if someone is in danger. In the incident described above this mistrust was vindicated as police used the missing person’s report to find Devon only to arrest her for outstanding charges:

Jackie: So apparently somebody had called, so it was all over, I guess, in the paper [and] on social media that this individual was missing. They called the homeless shelter, and they came and arrested her. That was one of the questions, I said "Is there a warrant for her arrest?" [imitating lower voice] "Yes. There's a warrant, but we won't be addressing the warrant. We just want to know that she's OK."
Lindy: So they were using a missing persons language to try and fill out a warrant?
Jackie: Oh, I think a family member had called in the missing persons, but there was no missing persons stat- like this is an adult woman.
Lindy: Yeah.
Jackie: Whose just not calling her family member […] For her own reasons. […] And so they saw that as an opportunity. […]
Devon: I know, I know. And they arrested me at the fucking out of the cold.
Lisa: Yeah.
Jackie: At our shelter,
Devon: They arrested me. Woke me up and arrested me.
The unspoken ban on police disclosures keeps community members safer from detention and arrest (and potential violence at the hands of the police) and forces police to recognize the full humanity and agency of other sex working community members - pushing police to “ask them” and reminding police they are “grown-ass women.” Community silence in this way keeps other
community members safer from incarceration and re-affirms to police the agency of other sex working community members.  

Sex workers face the potential for state violence when they attempt to access justice through formal networks and face the potential for narrative cooption by prohibition feminists when discussing violence in the industry. To avoid both sex workers enact safety mechanisms through informal mutual safety networks. These networks can be understood as examples of collective resistance that expose the contradictions in Canadian policing and carceral feminism and as forms of collective action that enable their survival in the face of state-sanctioned violence and CAS enacted strategies of reaffiliation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I traced three main ways that informal sex work communities create the conditions for safety for sex workers in Northeastern Ontario who experience over-policing, state interference in the form of CAS, and the potential for state-sanctioned violence. In exploring these communities, I am not arguing that they exist apart from or are unco-opted by the logics and practices of late liberalism and settler colonialism. Instead, I argue that through resource and information sharing networks, the collectivization of maternal labour, and mutual safety practices ISWCs expose the contradictions within these overarching social structures and offer the possibility for sex worker survival and resistance. Resource sharing networks, and the unpaid labour that sustain these networks, enable sex working subjects to refuse the responsibilization and pathologization narratives that structure their interactions with health care providers. These resource-sharing networks also help equalize access to health care as participants mediate the

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82 Even as those narratives of autonomy can at times be coopted by the police into empowerment policing tactics that also reaffirm state-sanctioned violence as discussed in Chapter Three
“strategies of re-affiliation” that health care practices (Rose 2000), such as the 2016 Opioid Strategy, initiate through the language of compassion coupled with responsibilization discourses. At the same time, these informal networks, and the labour within them, can be used to justify decreased state funding of social services, catching sex workers in a complex web where accessing services poses a potential danger but not accessing services also can. For sex working mothers, evading state intervention is one of their primary occupations, and the collectivization of maternal labour enables them to engage in mothering practices outside of formal institutions. These collective care commons also permit sex working mothers to be ‘imperfect’ mothers as they share the emotional labour of mothering through and in the midst of “structural stigma” (Hannem 2012, 25). Finally, informal sex working communities rely on a sense of “trust” and “negotiation” to create mutual safety networks that purposefully limit the necessity to engage with state actors such as police that pose a risk to sex workers (Bayat 2007, 587; Spade 2020). Within informal community spaces in NEO there was a constant shift away from “modern notions of individual self-interest, fixed rules and contracts” (Bayat 2007, 587) and recognition instead of the mutual vulnerability of subjects who are forced to mediate governing structures premised on the end of the sex industry (Fineman 2008; Spade 2020). In highlighting the care work and other forms of reproductive labour of ISWCs I hope to answer Lynch's (2013, 174) call for the social sciences to "take greater account of the affective/normative interface in social life” as I examine ISWCs as collective acts of resistance.
Chapter Six

Some Concluding Thoughts on Tensions and the Question of Resistance

“Governable subjects are fundamentally “subjects of doubt” (Clarke 2004). They are capable not only of actively resisting top-down attempts to regulate their behaviour, but may also be involved in forging their own governmental strategies, either in partnership with, or against, various authorities” (McKee 2011, 4)

“The framework of contradiction suggests an analysis that complicates, on the one hand, a simple narrative of feminist co-optation” (Kim 2020, 311)

“I was searching at that point for um like sex work community, like some type of like building, a movement of sex work community. I craved that like I needed that.” (Jackie)

Theoretical Contributions and Argument Overview

Through this dissertation, I explored a series of tensions and contradictions that sex working subjects are produced within, reproduce, and mediate for their own survival in NEO. In writing this dissertation, two overarching tensions revealed themselves in the data: First, was the symbolic and material articulations of community and the ways through which the symbols and practices of community can be both complicit with and a site of resistance to capital and settler state interests. The second, was the ongoing debates around resistance and the cooptation of resistance efforts within the logics and structures of settler colonialism and late liberal capitalism.

In examining these two tensions, I sought to make visible the productive power of both late liberalism and settler colonialism and articulate how these two over-arching governing structures create the conditions through which sex workers become knowable as risks to the community, as deviants, as governable subjects, and how these same structuring logics and practices “sculpt a domain” within which sex worker resistance emerges (Dean 1995, 564).
By reading settler colonialism alongside theories of late liberalism, I followed the work of Morgensen (2013, 52) to articulate settler colonialism as a ‘primary condition of biopower” within the governance of sex work and sex work resistance in Canada. I examined how the logics and practices of late liberal governmentality are predicated on strategies of inclusion and strategies of exclusion (Rose 1999; 2000), and how these strategies are informed by and produced within the logics and rationalities of settler colonization (Arvin et al.2013; Korteweg 2016; O’Connell 2016; Simpson 2016). At the same time, I argued against theories of governmentality and theories of settler colonialism that adopt “totalizing views of power” and tried to make visible how sex working participants in NEO perform alternatives within these sculpted domains through the performance of responsibilization, acts of space reclamation, and informal community networks (McKee 2011, 1; see also Nunn 2019; Rifkin 2013; Roy 2017). In doing so, I aimed to show the “disorderliness of governing” by exploring how sex workers in NEO experience their subjection and the processes of governance (Love, Wilton, and DeVerteiul 2012) and attend to the counter-hegemonic ways through which sex working participants are able to “think and act otherwise” (McKee 2011, 1).

I took Patrick Wolfe’s (2006, 390) articulation of settler colonialism as a “structure not an event” as a starting point that makes visible the on-going and productive process of material, spiritual, and social colonization. Nevertheless, I recognized that viewing both settler colonialism and late liberalism as structures runs the risk of framing settlement and late liberal logics as “virtual totality” and can risk invisibilizing the “everyday machinations” that continue the settler colonial process and govern bodies, spaces, and lives in Canada (Rifkin 2013, 33). As Rifkin (2013, 11) states it is imperative for researchers to recognize how “settler sovereignty,” and I would contend late liberal logics, are “continually activated, circulated, and materialized within and through the
‘lived hegemony’ of everyday experience.” In this dissertation I attempted to make visible some of these “everyday machinations” by exploring the “messy realities of governing” within the contexts of settler colonialism and late liberalism (McKee 2011, 1).

In Chapters Two and Three, I theorized how within late liberalism, sex workers in NEO are governed through their freedom and how this translates into responsibilization narratives within health care settings and empowerment policing projects. At the same time, following Love, Wilton and DeVerteuil (2012, 78) I recognized that “freedom, choice, and autonomy are governed through their embeddedness in spaces of flexibility that mobilize cultural and gender norms” and these norms cannot be understood outside of the racialized and gendered logics of settler colonization. Therefore, in Chapter Two, I argued that the “bonds of civility and self responsibility” that mark the control strategies of inclusion/exclusion in health care settings are further informed by the logics of contagion that define sex workers as risks to community health, the pathologization of sex workers, and the gendered and racialized processes of settler colonialism. I drew particular attention to how the emphasis on responsibilization coupled with a focus on trauma narratives is used within health care settings as an “explanation” for why Indigenous women work in the sex industry, which re-instates the violent pathologizing narrative that Indigenous peoples are in need of settler intervention and saviourism. I also explored how sex workers in NEO mediate these narratives of responsibilization and pathologization, drawing attention to how “the state made [their] bed” and the ways through which they worked to make it “as comfy as possible” (Jackie).

In Chapter Three, I argued that police and legal representations of sex workers as agential subjects are manipulated to justify state-sanctioned violence in policing by positioning sex workers who refuse empowerment, defined as the choice to leave the industry, as external threats to
communities. I explored how these narratives are mandated in law as the sex industry is defined within PCEPA as a “harm” to communities, meaning sex workers themselves become represented as individual sources of harm that communities must be protected against placing sex workers in a “state of exception” and the literal spatial displacement that sex workers experience due to this logic (Agamben 1998; Pratt 2005; Morgensen 2011). I further argued that the discourse of sex worker freedom, autonomy, and agency, is mobilized by the Canadian government to erase settler state complicity in the ongoing violence against Indigenous women and girls (Kaye 2017; Simpson 2016; Hunt 2016). As Shirley described

the consensual sex worker carries that that cross, you know, and they get the blame. They get the finger pointing it. Right. Particularly the one that is standing outside on the corner. (yeah) You know, they... Carry the most blame and the most derogatories in the comments and the stigma and the shaming (yeah) and are pushed more in the dark.

I demonstrated how the discourse of sex worker autonomy and the concept of the ‘consensual’ sex worker’ is mobilized to blame colonial violence against Indigenous women at the feet of sex workers who are represented as labourers in an inherently harmful industry.

In reading critical theories of biopower, late liberalism, and settler colonialism alongside each other, I understood power not as the “antithesis of freedom” but rather recognized that freedom is a necessary condition for the circulation of power within the practices and logics of settler colonization and late liberalism (McKee 2011, 2; see also Rose 1999; Dean 1995; Nunn 2019). Recognizing freedom as a necessary condition for the exercise of power fundamentally transforms our understanding of what resistance is for sex working subjects. As McKee (2011, 3) argues we must understand resistance as something that is produced within the very relations of power it attempts to manage as “the assumption that resistance can somehow transcend and
overthrow power relations not only ignores the diffuse nature of power in society, but also its productive nature.”

In Chapter Two, I theorized sex worker resistance as the performance of an autonomous and responsibilized subject and demonstrated how this performance allows sex workers to access the “benefits of liberty” that are granted to subjects through “control strategies of inclusion” (Rose 2000, 326). Participants described how performing responsibilization meant learning to “smile back” in the face of blatant racism (Dee Dee) or engaging in acceptable consumption patterns by keeping their kids “always dressed nice, to the tee. Like, my kids always have the best of the best. I made sure of that because [of] what happens if the society fucking comes to your house” (Emily). I argued that even as the performance of a responsibilized and autonomous subject is predicated on and reproduces the violent logics of late liberalism and settler colonialism, it is also a resistance tactic that sex workers engage in to avoid attempts to re-affiliate subjects through state intervention in the form of CAS, or more punitive control systems such as prisons and institutionalization. Seeking inclusion through the performance of a responsibilized and autonomous subjectivity is a survival strategy that sex workers both critique and enact to mitigate the violent effects of exclusion.

In the final two chapters I theorized the idea of resistance within both formal and informal communities and community organizations. My understanding of resistance and community was informed by the work of critical community studies scholars (Joseph 2002; Defillipis et al.2006) and feminist scholars (Nunn 2019; McKee 2011; Kim 2020; Roy 2017) who demonstrate how the symbols, practices, and logics of the community are mobilized within and by settler colonial and late liberal governance strategies to reify the social categories and labours necessary for the proliferation of capital accumulation and settler colonization. Building from their work, in the first
two chapters, I examined how the practices and processes of inclusion and exclusion that define communities through responsibilization discourse in health care settings and empowerment discourses in policing strategies are productive in that they “generate and legitimate necessary social hierarchies [that are] implicitly required, but disavowed, by capitalism” and by settler societies (Joseph 2000, xxxi). I explored how sex workers are represented within the law and health care discourses as risks to community that must be managed and how these discourses of risk are tied to colonial notions of pathologization and settler saviourism.

At the same time, while recognizing that the symbols and practices of community have a “complex complicity” with capitalism and settler colonization (Joseph 2002, xxxi), I also argued against attempts to find “unco-opted’ act of resistance, calling instead for ongoing attention to how acts of resistance through community-building efforts can at times act as a form of “liberation” and also “turn into illiberal practices” (Korteweg 2016, 217). To examine the tensions around community and resistance, in Chapter Four, I examined the potentials and pitfalls of formal sex worker community organizing and explored how formal community organizations can reproduce, mediate, and resist those same structuring logics in NEO. I used FSWC as an example of a semi-professionalized activist community and found that due to its professionalized status, it faced depoliticization, particularly from carceral forms of feminism that advocated for the continuation of settler policing structures (Kim 2020) and gatekeeping through an overemphasis on experts’ knowledge (Brady 2014). At the same time, I argued that the formalization of this community organization had benefits for sex workers in that it enabled participation and actively refused the ‘classing’ of activism. I further argued that due to its semi-professionalization, which enabled it to compensate members for their work, FSWC was able to enact forms of collective resistance through group-sense making practices, acts of space reclamation, and the invention of non-punitive
forms of group accountability. The necessity of sex work community was an oft-repeated refrain in focus groups and interviews, and participants pushed me to acknowledge how they “craved that [community] like I needed [emphasized needed] that” (Jackie).

In exploring the potential for acts of resistance and complicity within sex work community spaces, I aimed to take seriously feminist and other critiques of community organizing. I drew attention to the affective and reproductive labour required to create informal communities for marginalized peoples (Federici 2010; Lynch 2013; Mezzandri 2020) and how these forms of labour can be co-opted for the interest of capital and the state. In Chapter Five, I examined informal sex working communities and the labour that goes into creating these community spaces as sites of resistance. I argued that informal sex work communities create the conditions for safety for sex workers in Northeastern Ontario through resource and information sharing networks, the collectivization of maternal labour, and mutual safety practices. I examined the necessity of these informal communities for sex working youth who are often targeted by police for “intel” (Jackie) and for sex working mothers who are denied the right to mother imperfectly. In exploring and articulating these forms of resistance, I followed McKee (2011) in arguing that resistance is not simply “liberation from an oppressor” but rather resistance can be understood as “a challenge to, and the adaptation and re-invention of, current governing practices." In this way, communities are both sites of regulation and cooption, used to reify the social hierarchies required by capital and settler logics, and yet also can be sites of resistance that allow sex workers to adapt, re-invent, and challenge the ongoing governing structures of settler colonialism and late liberalism within NEO.

Running covertly through this dissertation was a push to make visible the spatiality of the discourses and practices of community. In particular, I attempted to denaturalize and make visible the violent strategies and tactics that are used to maintain spatial purity, a purity defined by settler
colonial logics of race, class, and gender and explore how these ideas of spatial purity are tied to sex work in NEO (Baldwin et al. 2011, Puwar 2004). In Chapter Three I examined how police displacement tactics are used to remove sex workers from spaces and how this violence is rendered invisible through discourses that mark sex workers as responsible for any violence visited upon them due to their presence in spaces that are marked as ‘degenerate’ (Razack 2000) and also by their supposed refusal to act as responsibilized subjects define by racial and gendered logics of responsibility and respectability. In Chapter Four, I argued that through forms of collective space reclamation, particularly through sex worker conferences and red umbrella walks, sex workers in NEO exposed the violence that is used to maintain the boundary of certain spaces and in this way refused community discourses and practices that enable the violence of spatial purity.

In this dissertation, I hoped to illuminate how the discourses and practices of community invoke and disturb the structures and rationalities of settler colonialism and late liberal capitalism while highlighting the productive power of settler colonialism and late liberalism in the governance of sex work and sex worker resistance. Sex work and community are both well-theorized sites of study, examined from a range of theoretical traditions. My work sought to contribute to the scholarship by engaging in an interdisciplinary study of these two phenomena, melding together settler colonial theory (Rifkin 2013; Simpson 2016), community studies (Joseph 2002; Defillipis et al. 2006), feminist literature (Federici 2010; McKee 2011; Roy 2017; Nunn 2019), and sex work studies (Hunt 2016; Kaye 2017; Mac and Smith 2018; Pratt 2015). In bringing together these disparate fields of study, I hoped to illuminate the complex web that sex working subjects are produced within, resist, and mediate for their survival within settler colonial and late liberal NEO. This complicated web of governance and resistance is frequently obscured in popular discourses around sex work and community, cleaning up the “messy reality” of governance and resistance in
ways that make it unknowable (McKee 2011, 1). This study was an attempt to make visible this web, and the tensions that sex workers navigate as they live, work, mother, and care for each other.

**Limitations, Unanswered Questions, and Future Research**
One of the limitations of this study was the relatively small sample size of participants and the difficulty in accessing participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. While my original proposal included interviews with police, health care workers, and sex workers in Northeastern Ontario, I was only able to successfully conduct interviews with the latter two groups. I invited members of NEO police services to participate in the study and conducted several rounds of negotiations with them to create a comprehensive research agreement. In the end, after months of negotiations and emails, the police service in question stopped contacting me, and I accepted their silence as a decline for my request for interviews. I was further limited by the number of health care workers who agreed to participate in this study. Only two public health nurses, both of whom worked at a health unit in Northeastern Ontario, agreed to participate. Their insights were important but represented a small sample of public health perspectives on the research questions. Finally, because I worked alongside a formal sex working organization (FSWC) to recruit participants, all sex working participants in this study were associated with the formal organization, meaning I did not interview any sex workers in NEO who were not associated with FSWC. Their perspectives around formal and informal sex working communities and organizations were filtered through their participation with FSWC.

The results of this study are further limited by the lack of gender non-conforming or male-identified sex working participants. Future studies could examine how gender non-conforming and male sex workers navigate and negotiate the processes of governance and resistance. The decision to exclude cis-male sex workers from this study was made during the initial brainstorming session
with members of FSWC. This decision was made because FSWC serves only female sex workers in NEO. There are also fewer visible male sex workers in NEO as most outdoor sex workers in the region are women. Future studies could also examine how community is built within and between male sex workers who tend to occupy less visible parts of the industry and therefore may not know as many of their colleagues.

This study examined the experiences of female sex workers from all sectors of the sex industry, from online camming to outdoor sex work. The decision to include all forms of sex work in this study was also deliberately made in conversation with sex working participants who felt that including non-contact sex work in the study would help destigmatize and normalize sex work. At the same time, this meant that the disparate experiences of criminalization and stigmatization that sex workers in different sectors of the industry experience were flattened and made less visible. For example, outdoor sex workers tend to experience heightened levels of stigma and violence from state actors and non-sex working community members compared to their non-outdoor working colleagues. Outdoor sex workers, however, also tend to have more relationships with other sex workers compared to workers who labour in the online industries and are less likely to know and be in community spaces with other online or offline sex workers. Future studies could examine these tensions and draw attention to the different experiences of loneliness, solidarity, and community and the differing impact of criminalization and stigmatization between different sectors of the industry.

Further, the location of this study had implications for the results that emerged from the data. In particular, the northern location and relatively small size of the town meant that many of the participants had long-term relationships prior to any formal sex work organizing, which impacted the eventual creation of FSWC. Melissa, for example, explained how the small size of
the Northeastern Ontario town influenced her decision to join FSWC. “I came and you know it was this group, but it was like people I already knew. (Right). Not a lot, but I knew who they were. (Yeah). So I think because [Northeastern Ontario] is like it's a smaller place, you know, so, and we already knew each other. […] so it's very like uh I think that's why we all care for each other (yeah) and we knew each other too a little bit here and there. So I think that's how we make it work.” Many participants noted that FSWC was able to succeed in many of its initiatives because of the long-term relationships that already existed amongst the women in NEO, something they argued was less common in larger urban centres. As Emily explained, “every single FSWC [member] has a part in my life that I connected with them and I think it's cool because every single one of them played a part in my life, as um a teenager in my 20s and 30s. Now I'm thirty eight, gunna be 40, and they're all in the same group that strong women has played a part in my life.”

Future studies could examine the implications of community organizing for sex workers in larger cities where the sex work population tends to be more transient. The northern location of this study further changed the relationship between sex workers and clients. Many participants described their client base as more transient but also argued that because of the resource extraction industry in NEO the sex industry is more lucrative. As Lisa explained decriminalization would act to increase the amount of profit to be made off transient resource extraction workers. “We're in a mining community [laughing] and like fuck we'll be rich [laughing garbled talking] I'm like we'll be rich fuck we're in a mining community, come on, like decriminalising will open a fucking, you know […] There's a lot of contractors that come in and out whatever you know like? […] or they're backpack miners or whatever you know, a lot of people who are backpack miners they don't even get in relationships cause they can't.” Future studies could contend with how the more transient nature of the clients and settled nature of workers in NEO affects the relationships between
community and sex work in these spaces compared to more urban centers where the opposite is true, and clients tend to be more settled as workers are more transient.

Conclusion
Within this dissertation, I aimed to examine settler colonialism and late liberalism as primary conditions of biopower within NEO that sex working subjects are produced within, reproduce, and resist. Throughout, I argued against totalizing views of settler colonialism and late liberalism and explored the “everyday machinations” of these two governing structures (Rifkin 2013; ix) to illuminate the tensions around how they are made and remade in the everyday interactions of subjects within the discourses and practices of community. In making visible the everyday machinations through which power relations are produced and reproduced it becomes possible to examine how communities can be both “complicit with” and resist the violent productive logics of settler colonialism and late liberalism that structure sex workers lives in NEO (Joseph 2002, ix). To this end I hoped to create a “vocabulary” and language to understand the “counter-hegemonic cracks” that emerge within the settler colonial and late liberal governance of sex workers (Dunst and Edwards 2011, 7) even if these cracks at times may only act to expose the weakness within these structures and therefore be co-opted once again. Rather than defining the success of resistance movements by whether these forms of resistance and community building are co-opted, instead, I followed the practices of sex working participants to define the success of resistance movement by their ability to make the sex industry and sex working communities safer for current and future generations of sex workers and their broader families, friends, and networks. As Shirley says

I know [my] story is gunna- it's going to be part of a movement. Now, my children lived the experience [of criminalization]. Now, hopefully my grandchildren and the rest of my tree that comes along does not have to live that. […] they're gunna know “hey, you know, my nana or my
great grandmother or whatever, she was part of this. She -she changed. She was part of the movement that made this change.” So, you know what I mean? That's what I think about. I think about that, the rest of my generations of my family, of what their journey could be if -if they had to -to do what I've done. You know what I mean? […] I know this is a movement, whether it's slow right now, baby steps, it's a movement, man. And it's happening, maybe in other countries it's happened a lot quicker, but it is a movement and that's reality.


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Appendix A: Consent Forms

Consent Form: Police Services

Name and Contact Information of Researchers:
Lindy Van Vliet, Carleton University, School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies Email: lindy.vanvliet@carleton.ca
Supervisor and Contact Information: Sarah Todd (sarah.todd@carleton.ca)

Project Title
“The Governing Logics of Community Health Programs and the Sex Trade in Northeastern Ontario.”

Project Funder
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Carleton University Project Clearance
Clearance #: 110696 Date of Clearance: June 11 2019

Invitation
You are invited to take part in a research project because of your expertise working as a police officer who has been involved with aspects of the sex trade in your professional capacity in Northeastern Ontario. Your involvement may have occurred as a result of a direct invitation from the researcher, or because you were recommended by a colleague. The information in this form is intended to help you understand what we are asking of you so that you can decide whether you agree to participate in this study. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and a decision not to participate will not be used against you in any way. As you read this form, and decide whether to participate, please ask all the questions you might have, take whatever time you need, and consult with others as you wish.

What is the purpose of the study?
This study will explore how the idea of a “healthy community” is understood in relation to the sex trade, and the role of sex trade workers, police, and community health workers in building healthy communities.

What will I be asked to do?
If you agree to take part in the study, we will ask you to:

- Take part in a 60 minute one on one interview with the Researcher on the GoToMeetings virtual platform
- The interview will discuss your role as a police officer, and a community member, in Northeastern Ontario in relation to the topics of the sex trade and community health.
- The interview will take place in a mutually agreed upon area where confidentiality and safety can be best achieved.
- With your consent, the interview will be audio-recorded. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded you do not have to consent to the recording.
Risks and Inconveniences

As this project will ask about issues related to the sex trade, there are some potential professional risks to you if your statements are critical of your workplace’s approach to the sex trade. Further, due to sensitive nature of the topic you may find some of the questions cause you distress (although we do not foresee that the questions will cause any more distress than you encounter in your day to day work environment). However, if you do feel distress as a result of answering any of these questions, we invite you to contact ConnexOntario mental health support line (1-866-531-2600) for support finding counselling services. Indigenous members of the study who wish to access culturally focused mental health support can call the Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre (705-675-1596). You are reminded that you are welcome to end your participation in this study at anytime. You are also welcome to skip any questions you are not comfortable answering.

Possible Benefits

You may not receive any direct benefit from your participation in this study. However, your participation may allow researchers to better understand the relationship between the sex trade and the creation of healthy communities.

Compensation

You will not be paid or compensated for your participation in this study; however, as a token of my appreciation I will provide refreshments.

No waiver of your rights

By signing this form, you are not waiving any rights or releasing the researchers from any liability.

Withdrawing from the study

If you withdraw your consent during the course of the study, all information collected from you before your withdrawal will still be used, unless you request that it be removed from the study data. You can withdraw at any point for any reason before and during the interview, and up until September 30th 2020. It is not possible to withdraw after September 30th 2020 because data analysis will begin at this point.

Confidentiality

We will delete any audio-recordings after the interview has been transcribed. Interview audio will be transcribed by the transcription service Transcript Heroes. Your name and any identifying information, except for a brief description of your job, will be removed from the transcribed data. Your place of work will be identified in the data and any material that may be published as “a police department in Northeastern Ontario.”

We will treat your personal information as confidential, although absolute privacy cannot be guaranteed. If you have chosen to conduct the interview in your place of work, please note that this will limit your confidentiality because your co-workers may overhear or see you speaking with the Researcher. Your confidentiality in the workplace may be further limited if you were sent information
on this study by another co-worker who knows that it is taking place, full anonymity cannot be guaranteed. No information that discloses your identity will be released or published without your specific consent. Research records may be accessed by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board in order to ensure continuing ethics compliance.

The results of this study may be published or presented at an academic conference or meeting, but steps will be taken to ensure that it will be difficult to identify any participants unless you give your express consent, these steps include: never identifying the exact place of work (instead all presentations and publications will refer to your place of work as a “police department in Northeastern Ontario” and never identifying your job title or unit).

You will be assigned a pseudonym so that your identity will not be directly associated with the data you have provided. All data will be kept in an encrypted and password-protected USB Key in a locked desk at Carleton University. Your contact information and this consent form will be stored on a separate password-protected and encrypted USB Key in a locked desk at Carleton University.

We will encrypt and password protect any research data that we store.

**Duty to Report**: The researcher has a professional duty to break confidentiality and report “clear, serious and imminent risk of bodily harm or death to identifiable persons.” The breach of confidentiality will only extend to the necessary information needed to reduce the risk to said individual.

**Data Retention**

Pseudonym keys (used to pair your pseudonym with your name) will be deleted September 30th 2020, removing any links between your answers and your name. Within two years after the study is complete any remaining identifiable data (i.e. consent forms and contact information) will be deleted from the stored data. After data analysis is complete interview transcripts, and researcher notes will be fully de-identified and will be retained for future use up until December 31st 2029 at which point it will be will be deleted from the stored data. After data analysis is complete interview transcripts, and deleted. De-identified interview transcripts and researcher notes will be stored on an encrypted and password-protected USB Key in a locked desk at Carleton University.

**New information during the study**

In the event that any changes could affect your decision to continue participating in this study, you will be promptly informed.

**Ethics review**

This project (protocol #110696) was reviewed and cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board A. If you have any ethical concerns with the study, please contact Dr. Bernadette Campbell, Chair, Carleton University Research Ethics Board (by phone at 613-520-2600 ext. 2517 or by email at ethics@carleton.ca).

**Statement of consent – print and sign name**

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Yes No
I agree to be audio-recorded

Yes  No

I consent to be contacted again to receive a research summary

Yes  No

Signature of participant  Date

Research team member who interacted with the subject

I have explained the study to the participant and answered any and all of their questions. The participant appeared to understand and agree. I provided a copy of the consent form to the participant for their reference.

Signature of researcher  Date
Consent Form: Public Health Unit

Name and Contact Information of Researchers:
Lindy Van Vliet, Carleton University, School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies Email: lindy.vanvliet@carleton.ca

Supervisor and Contact Information: Sarah Todd (sarah.todd@carleton.ca)

Project Title
“The Governing Logics of Community Health Programs and the Sex Trade in Northeastern Ontario.”

Project Funder
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

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- The interview will discuss your role as a community health care practitioner, and a community member, in Northeastern Ontario in relation to the topics of the sex trade and community health.
- The interview will take place in a mutually agreed upon area where confidentiality and safety can be best achieved.
• With your consent, the interview will be audio-recorded. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded you do not have to consent to the recording.

Risks and Inconveniences

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Possible Benefits

You may not receive any direct benefit from your participation in this study. However, your participation may allow researchers to better understand the relationship between the sex trade and the creation of healthy communities.

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You will not be paid or compensated for your participation in this study; however, as a token of my appreciation I will provide refreshments.

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By signing this form, you are not waiving any rights or releasing the researchers from any liability.

Withdrawing from the study

If you withdraw your consent during the course of the study, all information collected from you before your withdrawal will still be used, unless you request that it be removed from the study data.

You can withdraw at any point for any reason before and during the interview, and up until September 30th 2020. It is not possible to withdraw after September 30th 2020 because data analysis will begin at this point.
Confidentiality

We will delete any audio-recordings after we have transcribed the interview. Your name and any identifying information, except for a brief description of your job, will be removed from the data. Your place of work will be identified in the data and any material that may be published as “a public health unit in Northwestern Ontario.”

We will treat your personal information as confidential, although absolute privacy cannot be guaranteed. If you have chosen to conduct the interview in your place of work, please note that this will limit your confidentiality because your co-workers may overhear or see you speaking with the Researcher. Your confidentiality in the workplace may be further limited if you were sent information on this study by another co-worker who knows that it is taking place, full anonymity cannot be guaranteed. No information that discloses your identity will be released or published without your specific consent. Research records may be accessed by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board in order to ensure continuing ethics compliance.

The results of this study may be published or presented at an academic conference or meeting, but steps will be taken to ensure that it will be difficult to identify any participants unless you give your express consent, these steps include: never identifying the exact place of work (instead all presentations and publications will refer to your place of work as a “health unit in Northwestern Ontario” and never identifying your job title or unit.

You will be assigned a pseudonym so that your identity will not be directly associated with the data you have provided. All data will be kept in an encrypted and password-protected USB Key in a locked desk at Carleton University. Your contact information and this consent form will be stored on a separate password protected and encrypted USB Key in a locked desk at Carleton University.

We will encrypt and password protect any research data that we store or transfer.

Duty to Report: The researcher has a professional duty to break confidentiality and report “clear, serious and imminent risk of bodily harm or death to identifiable persons.” The breach of confidentiality will only extend to the necessary information needed to reduce the risk to said individual.

Data Retention

Pseudonym keys (used to pair your pseudonym with your name) will be deleted on September 30th 2020, removing any links between your answers and your name. Within two years after the study is complete any remaining identifiable data (i.e. consent forms and contact information) will be deleted from the stored data. After data analysis is complete interview transcripts, and researcher notes will be fully de-identified and will be retained for future use up until December 31st 2029 at which point it will be deleted. De-identified interview transcripts and researcher notes will be stored on an encrypted and password-protected USB Key in a locked desk at Carleton University.

New information during the study
In the event that any changes could affect your decision to continue participating in this study, you will be promptly informed.

**Ethics review**

This project (protocol #110696) was reviewed and cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board A. If you have any ethical concerns with the study, please contact Dr. Bernadette Campbell, Chair, Carleton University Research Ethics Board (by phone at 613-520-2600 ext. 2517 or by email at ethics@carleton.ca).

**Statement of consent – print and sign name**

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
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<td>I agree to be audio-recorded</td>
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<td>I consent to be contacted again to receive a research summary</td>
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</table>

Signature of participant Date

Research team member who interacted with the subject

I have explained the study to the participant and answered any and all of their questions. The participant appeared to understand and agree. I provided a copy of the consent form to the participant for their reference.

Signature of researcher Date
Consent Form: FSWC Interview Consent Form

Name and Contact Information of Researchers:

Lindy Van Vliet, Carleton University, School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies
Email: lindy.vanvliet@carleton.ca

Phone: [XXX] (dial #31# for cellphones or *67 for landlines prior to the ten digit phone number to hide your number if you wish).

Supervisor and Contact Information: Sarah Todd (sarah.todd@carleton.ca)

Project Title

“The Governing Logics of Community Health Programs and the Sex Trade in Northeastern Ontario.”

Project Funder

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Carleton University Project Clearance

Clearance #: 110696 Date of Clearance: June 11 2020

Invitation

You are invited to take part in a research project because of your expertise working in the sex trade in Northeastern Ontario and because of your involvement with ________. Your participation today may be because you were contacted directly by the researcher, or because you heard of this study through your involvement with ________. The information in this form is intended to help you understand what we are asking of you so that you can decide whether you agree to participate in this study. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and a decision not to participate will not be used against you in any way. As you read this form, and decide whether to participate, please ask all the questions you might have, take whatever time you need, and consult with others as you wish.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study will explore how the idea of a “healthy community” is understood in relation to the sex trade, and the role of sex trade workers, police, and community health workers in building healthy communities.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to take part in the study, we will ask you to:

• Take part in a 60 minute one on one interview with the Researcher
• The interview will discuss your experience in the sex trade, and your experience as a community member, in Northeastern Ontario in relation to the topic of community health.

• The interview will take place in a mutually agreed upon location where confidentiality and safety can be best ensured.

• If you do not wish to participate in a face to face interview you are welcome to call the Researcher at (XXX). If you dial #31# (for cellphones) or *67 (for landlines) prior to dialing the number your phone number will be hidden, thus ensuring your anonymity.

• With your consent, the interview will be audio-recorded. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded, you do not have to consent to the recording.

Risks

As this project will ask about issues related to the sex trade, there are some potential personal, social, and emotional risks to you due to the stigmas associated with the sex trade.

Due to the nature of this study, you may find some of the questions to be sensitive and to cause you distress. In particular, we will be discussing your interactions with police and other members of the community which some people may find difficult to discuss. If you do feel distress as a result of answering any of these questions, we invite you to contact ConnexOntario mental health support line (1-866-531-2600) for support finding counselling services. Indigenous members of the study who wish to access culturally focused mental health support can call the Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre (705-675-1596). You are reminded that you are welcome to end your participation in this study at anytime or skip any questions you do not want to answer.
Possible Benefits

You may not receive any direct benefit from your participation in this study. However, your participation may allow researchers to better understand the relationship between the sex trade and the creation of healthy communities.

Compensation

You will be compensated at a rate of $20 per hour. Your travel costs (including cost of gas and/or bus tickets) to and from the interview location will also be covered up to $10.50 per participant, participants will be asked to estimate the cost of their travel at the interview and will be reimbursed in cash at the end of this interview.

No waiver of your rights

By signing this form, you are not waiving any rights or releasing the researchers from any liability.

Withdrawing from the study

If you withdraw your consent during the course of the study, all information collected from you before your withdrawal will still be used, unless you request that it be removed from the study data.

You can withdraw at any point for any reason before and during the interview, and up until September 30th 2020. It is not possible to withdraw after September 30th 2020 because data analysis will begin at this point.

Confidentiality

We will delete any audio-recordings after we have transcribed the interviews. All data that could be used to identify you will be removed from the transcriptions.

We will treat your personal information as confidential, although absolute privacy cannot be guaranteed. Please note, your confidentiality may be limited if you were sent information on this study by another member of _________ who knows that this study is taking place, full anonymity cannot be guaranteed. No information that discloses your identity will be released or published without your specific consent. Research records may be accessed by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board in order to ensure continuing ethics compliance.
The results of this study may be published or presented at an academic conference or meeting, but steps will be taken to ensure it is difficult to identify any participants unless you give your express consent. These steps include: 1. Never identifying the exact city that interview took place in, instead all publicly disclosed data will refer to a “Northeastern Ontario city.” 2. Never disclosing or describing in great detail any locations or landmarks that are discussed in the context of this focus group. 3. Participants will not be named as members of ______, nor will ______ be mentioned publicly, unless express written consent is given.

You will be assigned a pseudonym so that your identity will not be directly associated with the data you have provided. All data, including coded information, will be kept in an encrypted and password-protected USB Key in a locked desk at Carleton University.

We will password protect any research data that we store or transfer.

Further, at no time will your identity or anything you share that could be used to identify be shared with the police or any public health official (with the exception of any information that falls under my Duty to Report).

**Duty to Report:** The researcher has a professional duty to break confidentiality and report “clear, serious and imminent risk of bodily harm or death to identifiable persons.” The breach of confidentiality will only extend to the necessary information needed to reduce the risk to said individual.

**Data Retention**

Pseudonym keys (used to pair your pseudonym with your name) will be deleted on September 30th 2020, removing any links between your answers and your name. Within two years after the study is complete any remaining identifiable data (i.e. consent forms and contact information) will be deleted from the stored data. After data analysis is complete interview transcripts, and researcher notes will be fully de-identified and will be retained for future use up until December 31st 2029 at which point it will be deleted. De-identified interview transcripts and researcher notes will be stored on an encrypted and password-protected USB Key in a locked desk at Carleton University.

**New information during the study**

In the event that any changes could affect your decision to continue participating in this study, you will be promptly informed.

**Ethics review**
This project was reviewed and cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board. If you have any ethical concerns with the study, please contact Dr. Bernadette Campbell, Chair, Carleton University Research Ethics Board (by phone at 613-520-2600 ext. 2517 or by email at ethics@carleton.ca).

**Statement of consent – print and sign name**

- Voluntarily agree to participate in this study. ___Yes ___No
- Agree to be audio-recorded ___Yes ___No
- Consent to be contacted again to receive a research summary ___Yes ___No

Signature of participant Date

Research team member who interacted with the subject

I have explained the study to the participant and answered any and all of their questions. The participant appeared to understand and agree. I provided a copy of the consent form to the participant for their reference.

Signature of researcher Date
Consent Form: FSWC Focus Group Consent Form

Name and Contact Information of Researchers:

Lindy Van Vliet, Carleton University, School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies Email: lindy.vanvliet@carleton.ca

Supervisor and Contact Information: Sarah Todd (sarah.todd@carleton.ca)

Project Title

“The Governing Logics of Community Health Programs and the Sex Trade in Northeastern Ontario.”

Project Funder

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Carleton University Project Clearance

Clearance #: Project # 110696 Date of Clearance: June 11th 2019

Invitation

You are invited to take part in a research project because of your expertise working in the sex trade in Northeastern Ontario and because of your involvement with ______. Your participation today may be because you were contacted directly by the researcher, or because you heard of this study through your involvement with ______. The information in this form is intended to help you understand what we are asking of you so that you can decide whether you agree to participate in this study. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and a decision not to participate will not be used against you in any way. As you read this form, and decide whether to participate, please ask all the questions you might have, take whatever time you need, and consult with others as you wish.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study will explore how the idea of a “healthy community” is understood in relation to the sex trade, and the role of sex trade workers, police, and community health workers in building healthy communities.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to take part in the study, we will ask you to:

• Take part in a two hour focus group
• The focus group will discuss your experience in the sex trade, and your experience as a community member, in Northeastern Ontario in relation to
Risks

- The focus group will take place in a mutually agreed upon location where safety can be adequately ensured.
- The focus group will be audio-recorded. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded we invite you to participate in this study through a one-on-one interview with the Researcher where no recording will take place.
- As this project will ask about issues related to the sex trade, there are some potential personal, social, and emotional risks to you due to the stigmas associated with the sex trade.

Due to the nature of this study, you may find some of the questions to be sensitive and to cause you distress. In particular, we will be discussing your interactions with police and other members of the community which some people may find difficult to discuss. If you do feel distress as a result of answering any of these questions, we invite you to contact ConnexOntario mental health support line (1-866-531-2600) for support finding counselling services. Indigenous members of the study who wish to access culturally focused mental health support can call the Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre (705-675-1596). You are reminded that you are welcome to end your participation in this study at anytime.

Possible Benefits

You may not receive any direct benefit from your participation in this study. However, your participation may allow researchers to better understand the relationship between the sex trade and the creation of healthy communities.

Compensation

You will be compensated at a rate of $20 per hour. Your travel costs (including cost of gas and/or bus tickets) to and from the focus group location will also be covered up to $10.50 per participant, participants will be asked to estimate the cost of their travel and will be reimbursed in cash at the end of this focus group.

No waiver of your rights

By signing this form, you are not waiving any rights or releasing the researchers from any liability.

Withdrawing from the study

If you withdraw your consent during the course of the study, all information collected from you before your withdrawal will still be used, unless you request that it be removed from the study data.

You can withdraw at any point for any reason before and during the interview, and
up until September 30th 2020. It is not possible to withdraw after September 30th 2020 because data analysis will begin at this point.

Confidentiality

We will delete any audio recordings after we have transcribed the focus group session. All data that could be used to identify you will be removed during the transcription process.

We will treat your personal information as confidential, although absolute privacy cannot be guaranteed. Everyone will be asked to respect the privacy of the other group members in this focus group and asked not to disclose anything said within the context of the discussion.

However, it is important to understand that other people in the group may not keep all information private and confidential, therefore, we cannot ensure your full anonymity nor protect your identity or the privacy of your answers if you agree to participate in this focus group.

Please note, your confidentiality may be further limited if you were sent information on this study by another member of ____________ who knows that this study is taking place, full anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

The results of this study may be published or presented at an academic conference or meeting, but steps will be taken to ensure it is difficult to identify any participants unless you give your express consent. These steps include: 1. Never identifying the exact cities that interviews took place in, instead all publicly disclosed data will refer to “Northeastern Ontario.” 2. Never disclosing or describing in great detail any locations or landmarks that are discussed in the context of this focus group. 3. Participants will not be named as members of _______ nor will ____ be mentioned publicly, unless express written consent is given.

You will be assigned a pseudonym so that your identity will not be directly associated with the data you have provided. All data, including coded information, will be kept in an encrypted and password-protected USB Key in a locked desk at Carleton University.

We will password protect any research data that we store or transfer.

Further, at no time will your identity or anything you share that could be used to identify be shared with the police or any public health official (with the exception of any information that falls under my Duty to Report.

Duty to Report: The researcher has a professional duty to break confidentiality and report “clear, serious and imminent risk of bodily harm or death to identifiable persons.” The breach of confidentiality will only extend to the necessary information needed to reduce the risk to said individual.

Data Retention
Pseudonym keys (used to pair your pseudonym with your name) will be deleted on September 30th 2020, removing any links between your answers and your name. Within two years after the study is complete any remaining identifiable data (i.e. consent forms and contact information) will be deleted from the stored data. After data analysis is complete interview transcripts, and researcher notes will be fully de-identified and will be retained for future use up until December 31st 2029 at which point it will be deleted. De-identified interview transcripts and researcher notes will be stored on an encrypted and password-protected USB Key in a locked desk at Carleton University.

New information during the study

In the event that any changes could affect your decision to continue participating in this study, you will be promptly informed.

Ethics review

This project was reviewed and cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board A. If you have any ethical concerns with the study, please contact the chair of the Carleton University Research Ethics Board (by phone at 613-520-2600 ext. 2517 or by email at ethics@carleton.ca).

Statement of consent – print and sign name

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. ___Yes ___No
I agree to be audio-recorded ___Yes ___No
I consent to be contacted again to receive a research summary ___Yes ___No

Signature of participant Date

Research team member who interacted with the subject

I have explained the study to the participant and answered any and all of their questions. The participant appeared to understand and agree. I provided a copy of the consent form to the participant for their reference.

Signature of researcher Date
Appendix B: Interview Questions

FSWC interview questions (later changed)

Script Interview

Welcome and thank you for your participation today. My name is Lindy Van Vliet and I am a PhD student at Carleton University and I am completing this study under the Supervision of Dr. Sarah Todd. This interview will take about 60 minutes and will consist of 10 questions about your experience in the sex trade and how you conceptualize the idea of a healthy community. I will begin by asking you to review the consent form in front of you, or if you would prefer, we can review the consent form together out loud. In the consent form I ask for your permission to audio-record this session. Please know that if you would like to stop using the audio-recorder at any time during the interview I am happy to turn it off. All your answers will be kept confidential and I will be deleting the audio-data after I have transcribed the interview. During the transcription process I will make sure to remove any identifying information so your identity will not be attributed to your responses.

The purpose of this study is to understand how the idea of a “healthy community” is created in relation to the sex trade; in particular, we are interested in how police officers, community health workers, and sex workers understand the idea of “community health” and their role in creating a healthy community. As you will see, many of the questions that I have today are about your expertise as someone who has worked in the sex trade in this region and your experience as a member of the ________ community. We will talk a lot about the idea of a “healthy community” and your interactions with police and health care workers. At this time I would ask you to review the consent form and once we have both signed and dated it we can begin.

Once again, your participation in this interview is voluntary. If you need to take a break, skip a question, return to a question, or end the interview please let me know. You can withdraw your consent to participate at anytime during this interview without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin the interview?

Interview Questions:

Introduction Question:

- Can you tell me why you chose to take part in this study?
- How would you define sex work?

Health Care Professionals:

- How have your experiences with health care professionals been in the community?
- In the past several years there has been a push in health care to look at health care from a “holistic” angle (in other words by examining how all aspects of a persons life from their job, to their gender, to their racial identity could affect their health). In your experiences with NEO health care have you noticed a “holistic” approach?
Gender, race, and culture and sex work:
- How do you think your gender and race affects your work in the sex industry? (does and if so how does it affect your relationship with police? Or health care workers? Or clients?)

The police and community health:
- What is your relationship like with NEO Police?
  - Have you been approached by police? Do you believe the Police are working towards creating a healthier community with you?

Northeastern Ontario
- Have you ever done sex work outside of NEO?
  - How does the experience of working in this area differ from your experience working elsewhere?
  - How do your interactions with police or health officials differ here than in other areas?

Resistance and Agency
- Sex workers across Canada, have worked extensively on fighting stigmas associated with sex work and fighting for decriminalization.
  - Why do you believe this work is important?
  - How do you resist stigma and criminalization on a daily basis?
  - How do you think your activism work has impacted NEO?
  - How do you think this work contributes to creating a healthier community?
  - Do you see a connection between your fight to end stigmas and criminalization and other activist or social movements in NEO or across Canada?

Community Health Questions:
- What does a healthy community look like to you?
- How do you feel sex workers contribute to building a healthy community?
- Do you think police are necessary for a healthy community?

Before we finish this interview is there anything else you would like to share or elaborate on?
Do you have any questions for me?
FSWC Interview and Focus Group Questions
These questions were created during the brainstorming session and used during the focus groups and interviews.

1. How does this group build a healthy community? What does community and solidarity mean to you? What does belonging mean to you?

2. What does resistance look like to you? In relation to police and health workers? How do you make yourself safer in these interactions? What can sex working community members teach others about bodily autonomy?

3. How does motherhood play a role in your life? How do you deal with internalized stigma and motherhood?
Welcome and thank you for your participation today. My name is Lindy Van Vliet and I am a PhD student at Carleton University and I am completing this study under the Supervision of Dr. Sarah Todd. This interview will take about 60 minutes and will consist of approximately 10 questions about your role as a health care practitioner and how you conceptualize the idea of a healthy community. I will begin by asking you to review the consent form in front of you, or if you would prefer, we can review the consent form together out loud. In the consent form I ask for your permission to audio-record this session. Please know that if you would like to stop using the audio-recorder at any time during the interview I am happy to turn it off. All your answers will be kept confidential and I will be deleting the audio-data after I have transcribed the interview. During the transcription process I will make sure to remove any identifying information so your identity will not be attributed to your responses.

The purpose of this study is to understand how the idea of a “healthy community” is created in relation to the sex trade; in particular, we are interested in how police officers, community health workers, and sex workers understand the idea of “community health” and their role in creating a healthy community. As you will see, many of the questions that I have today are about your expertise as a health professional in this region and your experience as a member of the _________ community. We will talk a lot about the idea of a “healthy community” and your interactions with sex workers and police. At this time, I would ask you to review the consent form and once we have both signed and dated it we can begin.

Once again, your participation in this interview is voluntary. If you need to take a break, skip a question, return to a question, or end the interview please let me know. You can withdraw your consent to participate at anytime during this interview without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin the interview?

1. Introduction Questions:
   a. How long have you worked in this health care industry and what made you chose that career path?
   b. How in your role ad a health care practitioner do you interact with people with experience in the sex trade?

2. Social Determinants of Health Model:
   a. How do you understand the social determinants of health model?
   b. Does, and if yes how does, Public Health work with the SDHM?
   c. How does the SDHM understand the idea of individual responsibility towards their health?
   d. What aspect of public health would you say the SDHM prioritizes?
i. How does this prioritizing materialize in terms of funding for specific projects? IE what programs, health concerns, or projects get the most attention, funding, and time from staff.

e. How do you apply that model to your work with sex workers in NEO?

f. In terms of current funding; how would you describe the availability of funding for programs meant to address the health concerns related to the sex trade?

g. In your experience, how has the health care approach to the sex trade changed over the past decade?

h. How would you describe your understanding of your responsibility, or NEO Public Health responsibilities, in relation to the sex trade?

3. Police and Law enforcement:

   a. Have, and if yes how closely have, you worked with police to address health concerns related to the sex trade?

   b. If you have worked with police, has your partnership with police organizations increased, decreased, or remained relatively similar in the last decade?

4. Culturally Sensitive Material:

   a. One of the main stated goals of Public Health and area is to provide culturally competent material and information to all members of the public.

   b. What does providing culturally sensitive support look like in practical terms when you are working with members of the sex trade?

5. Healthy Communities:

   a. How would you describe your understanding of your role (responsibility), or Public Health’s responsibility, in creating a health community?

   b. How do you understand the idea of community well-being? What does a healthy community look like to you?

6. Northeastern Ontario:

   a. How would you describe the particular health challenges surrounding the sex trade in Northeastern Ontario compared to other regions of the country?

7. Personal Questions:

   a. What parts of your workplace’s programming, relating to the sex trade, do you feel particularly proud of?

   b. What parts of your workplace’s programming, relating to the sex trade, do you feel could be improved?

   c. How do you situation the sex trade in relation to the idea of community health? Does the sex trade negate or contribute to the creation of a healthy community?

8. Before we finish this interview is there anything else you would like to share or elaborate on? Do you have any questions for me?