May 3 & 4, 2014

Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec

CIHR Team Grant Meeting IV:

Gender, Violence and Health, Contexts of Vulnerabilities, Resiliencies and Care among People in the Sex Industry

07/07/2014
Cecilia Benoit & Nadia Ouellet

Introduction

Cecilia Benoit, CARBC and Department of Sociology, University of Victoria

This report summarizes the discussions at the fourth Team Meeting of the CIHR *Team Grant on Gender Violence and Health, Contexts of Vulnerabilities, Resiliencies and Care among People in the Sex Industry* (henceforth Team Grant) that took place on May 3-4, 2014 at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec.

Participants at the meeting included project researchers and research coordinators belonging to the Team Grant (see Appendix A: Participant List and affiliations).

The main objectives of the meeting were as follows: 1) reporting on the key themes emerging from each project; 2) clarifying issues and identifying cross-cutting themes, as well as presenting preliminary findings; 3) developing a knowledge mobilization plan.

Day 1

Participants to the meeting

Participants on Day 1 included the PIs Cecilia Benoit, Chris Atchison; Lauren Casey, Mikael Jansson, Bill McCarthy, Rachel Phillips, Dan Reist, Fran Shaver; co-applicant, Bill Reimer; and research assistants Isabelle Bhola, Mary Clare Kennedy, and Nadia Ouellet.

Cecilia welcomed everyone and talked briefly about the plan for Days One and Two. The meeting agenda was finalized, and Cecilia reminded the group that she and Dan will be sharing the results of Team Grant Meeting IV with representatives from the Institute of Gender and Health during a teleconference scheduled for May 15th 2014. Team Grant members will not hear whether they have received their CIHR Dissemination Grant until July 1st, but they will proceed with the Fall Symposium regardless. Cecilia invited all the participants to say a few words about themselves and their role in the Team Grant.

Project 2: National Survey of People Working in the Canadian Sex Industry

Principal Investigator: Cecilia Benoit, CARBC and Department of Sociology, University of Victoria

Cecilia gave an update and overview of the findings of Project 2, a study of people who identify as sex workers. Cecilia presented seven common myths surrounding sex work. These were:

1. All sex workers are women;
2. Most sex workers have been abused as children;
3. Most sex workers are addicts;
4. There is no such thing as a real choice in sex work;
5. Sex work harms women;
6. Sex workers are vectors of contagious disease;
7. Sex workers do not have complex networks.

Cecilia then presented a demographic outline of the study sample. The sample was marked by considerable diversity and fluidity in sex and gender. The sex workers in the study were comparatively disadvantaged in childhood. The majority do not use drugs at work and many do not use "hard" drugs in their personal lives. The participants have a relatively positive view of their job content and have overall high levels of job satisfaction. A minority of the sample report having tensions/conflicts with clients. The

vast majority of sex workers access STI screenings. HIV infection rates are notably low, particularly among female sex workers, none of whom report HIV positive status. Sex workers have a high level of engagement with the health care system, and a minority report feeling stigmatized by health care professionals.

Discussion

Fran was surprised at the low level of stigma from health providers reported by the workers. Cecilia replied that healthcare practitioners are doing well in this regard, and seem to be generally well-informed regarding sex work issues.

Dan noted that the reported instance of childhood abuse is quite high among the sample, and asked how this compares with other groups in the population. Cecilia stated that other comparable service industries also report childhood abuse, although sex workers are relatively disadvantaged in this regard. Dan suggested that we need to be careful about calling this a myth; not all sex workers were abused, but many were. Cecilia highlighted the need to be careful about how we disseminate such information because it can be taken up in harmful ways. It will be important to determine levels of abuse in the general public to situate these findings. Fran suggested that the term 'abuse' needs to be nuanced; what do we mean when we refer to 'abuse'? Dan stated a similar issue arises with substance abuse when the difference between 'use' and 'problems emerging from use' is not clear.

Dan stated that myth-busting isn't often an effective agenda from a communications perspective, but that it does identify where politically-charged debates are taking place, and it allows us to plan our strategic knowledge mobilization agenda around these difficulties. We have data on these issues, and we know they are politically-charged, so it is important to nuance our presentation in order to minimize misinterpretations.

Dan asked Cecilia what she found to be the most interesting findings from her data. Cecilia emphasized the relative control/power sex workers perceive themselves to have with respect to clients, and that relationships with clients appear less hostile than we might expect. Cecilia also highlighted the rational, positive, mundane aspects of sex work, similar to those experienced by many other workers.

Project 3: Intimate Partners of Sex Workers
Principal Investigator: Mikael Jansson, CARBC and Department of Sociology, University of Victoria

Mikael shared three important findings from his study of partners of sex workers:

1. Participants in the study have relatively disadvantaged backgrounds;
2. Participants report high levels of perceived stigma toward sex workers, as well as personal experiences of discrimination. Perceptions of stigma are very similar to, and in some cases even higher than those reported by sex workers in Project 2;
3. Partners of sex workers are very isolated. There is no network of sex work partners for support, and partners do not have access to service agencies that cater to their concerns.

Mikael then presented a broad overview of his study. Thirty couples were interviewed, five of which involved a partnership between two sex workers. Data from 25 partners were presented in this meeting. The average age of the participants is 35, and the partners are on average six years older than their sex worker partners. Participants experience relative childhood disadvantage in terms of emotional support

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and discrimination at school, and have a social economic status below the Canadian average. Participants report low levels of current social support and high levels of discrimination and perceived stigma, nearly identical to those of sex workers.

Discussion

Mikael noted that social institutions filter and shape stigma/discrimination, and these vary over social contexts. Cecilia added that perception of stigma is not static.

Dan asked about the significance of the relative disadvantage of partners. Rachel stated that partners are often depicted as exploitative of sex workers, but their disadvantage shows that these relationships are more equitable than we might have thought.   The image of partners parasitically 'living on the avails' is inaccurate, since 70% of partners are working at a job that pays a salary or wage. From a policy perspective, these findings show a need for family-oriented services for sex workers. Investment in sex workers' health has ramifications for families. Fran stated that these findings address an area for which there is little to no data currently available. This population is defined under the law as living on the avails, and they are often perceived as pimps, but the actual dynamics of relationships are shown in the data to be different.

Fran asked how we should deliver this message. Cecilia stated that we have powerful data building on existing evidence. It draws out complex relationships and dynamics, and asks various players similar questions using widely validated scales and measures. Dan suggested that our findings may give us a new language in which to speak about sex work. We can come up with new arguments that do not hammer away at 'the rights issue,' but frame findings in a way that enables conservatives to engage in the discussion, e. g., 'family issues.'

Cecilia noted that partners are concerned with the wellbeing and safety of sex workers, in contrast with societal perceptions. Legislation and stigma strain partners' ability to provide support. Lauren and Bill Reimer suggested that it will be important to look at other partner-worker dynamics, in both stigmatized and non-stigmatized professions, to situate these findings.

Project 4: Positioning Sex Buyers in the Nexus of Violence, Gender and Health.
Principal Investigator: Chris Atchison, Department of Sociology, Simon Fraser University

Chris presented several common stereotypes about clients that are challenged by his data:

1. Gender/sexuality: all are straight men;
2. Privilege: all are Caucasian, working men;
3. Pedophilia: sex buyers fuel demand for children's bodies;
4. Power: clients exploit and abuse workers;
5. Sexual Health: low levels of sexual health knowledge or respect for sexual safety.

Chris noted that increasing numbers of people who pay for sex identify as bisexual, and a large number have been with, or fantasized about being with, men and transgender people, undermining myths around hegemonic masculinity. Clients express degrees of femininity, and tend to describe themselves as men who are unable to attract women/men; older, less physically fit, etc. Many respondents are Caucasian, although this is partially a product of sampling. During recruitment, a lot of women appeared to be

inexperienced buyers, and therefore, thought the survey did not apply to them, opening up questions about how we research women's sexual purchases. A large percentage of the sample has a substantial disposable income, but respondents are not uniformly economically powerful, as evidenced by their varying levels of occupational prestige. There is widespread disdain for pedophilia, and men who indicate a preference for younger sex workers are usually younger themselves. As buyers age, their age preference also increases.

Buyers have a clear understanding that there are boundaries in transactional sex relations, but also express these in market language: they may shop around until they find a sex worker who will provide the desired service. Some buyers will push boundaries, and the conditions under which this occurs need to be teased out. There is a general respect for sex workers among buyers, and 'making the industry safer for sex workers' is listed as one of the main reasons why buyers support changing the law. Buyers have high levels of sexual health knowledge, as well as high levels of respect for norms around sexual safety. However, the expectation tends to be that sex workers provide condoms, rather than clients taking responsibility for sexual safety. This is consistent with a market context of sex as a service. STI testing levels are lower and less frequent among buyers than sex sellers (Project 2), but clients trust health care professionals, and especially sex workers, for information about sexual health. These patterns suggest opportunities for communicating messages about access to and frequency of testing. Buyers often do not purchase sexual services in the city in which they reside. Shame and stigma influence these factors. Criminalizing the purchase of sex increases shame and stigma, and therefore, has direct implications for the health and safety of sex workers.

Discussion

Bill McCarthy asked whether buyers frequently purchase sex outside of Canada. Chris replied that the overseas 'sex tourism' we typically think of is not common. Fran added that traveling to buy sex necessitates disposable income, and asked what less wealthy buyers do. Chris stated that buyers who cannot afford to go elsewhere are confined to their locale. Only 7% of buyers buy on-street as a preference and only 30% have a history of ever buying on-street. This is the least preferred option for buying sexual services.

Bill McCarthy asked about levels of victimization reported in the study. Chris stated that self-reported violence by clients is relatively low. This may be partially attributable to response bias, although the anonymous format of the survey reduces this concern. Aggression tends to take the form of online reviews, verbal arguments, and name-calling, but acts of self-reported physical violence by clients are uncommon. Chris suggested that there are relatively few clients who behave violently, and those who do, likely do so repeatedly. Disputes are generally related to terms and conditions of service. Bad reviews can turn into harassment, cyber-bullying, etc., with online forums being both functional and dysfunctional. For the purposes of knowledge translation, forums will be an important point of access, as buyers do not typically use buyer/sexual health websites.

Cecilia asked about trafficking. Chris stated that, under the current conditions, reporting trafficking is a risk for buyers. We need comparative data on the wider population in terms of awareness and willingness to speak up when trafficking is observed.

Chris observed that some of the most interesting findings are those related to health, which highlight opportunities for intervention. Another is the nuanced relational dynamic between buyers and sex workers. This is tied to time and space – time to negotiate the terms and conditions of the service and places where sellers and buyers actually meet. These are significant determinants of worker-client interactions.

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Project 5: Supervising Sex Work: Challenges to Workplace Safety and Health
Co-Principal Investigators: Rachel Phillips, CARBC, University of Victoria, Bill McCarthy, University of California, Davis, and Lauren Casey, University of Victoria

Rachel outlined the descriptive findings of the study, which included 61 interviews. The majority of respondents are Canadian and Caucasian. Aboriginal persons are overrepresented compared to the Canadian population, whereas visible minorities are not; however, the questionnaire was only available in French and English, and there were barriers connecting with Asian businesses in some cities. The average age of managers is 37, a majority identify as women, and their family income approximates the median family income of the Canadian population. Eighty-five percent have completed high school, and over a quarter have a post-secondary degree. Most managers in the study live with a partner, and the majority have had children. More than half report having financial dependents. There is no gender/sex complexity in the sample (all report being cisgender[i]), although a substantial minority report that they are not heterosexual.

Managers report arranging sexual services for less than ten clients on average per day. Many of the managers, women especially, are currently working as sex workers, or did so in the past. Managers tend to use safety strategies more often than what is reported by workers, indicating that managed environments facilitate safety. Surprisingly, many managers (35%) do not have condoms available at the worksite, perhaps because doing so would indicate to regulators and police that sexual services are provided on site. Managers report seemingly high levels of violence against sex workers, when measured by asking if any worker in their business has been subject to a violent incident over the past 12 months. However, we must keep in mind that managers are reporting on an average number of 10 workers per site, so this cannot be understood in terms of individual risk. Efforts will be made in future reports to look at how the reported violence translates in terms of estimates of violence based on individual workers. Violence against managers was less common, although it does occur, and some managers report instances of being in the middle of conflicts that emerged.

The health of managers is slightly worse than the general population's, but better than sex workers' (Project 2). Stigma and lifetime discrimination are also less than what is reported by sex workers, but workplace stress reported by managers is higher compared to sex workers. Managers report very low substance use at work. Managers state they tried to avoid substance use at work (a finding also echoed in research on sex workers who felt it was often a contributing factor for disputes). Managers also comment that it is difficult to monitor substance use in some contexts, particularly use by clients.

Rachel reported that a variety of business models operate within fixed federal legislation. This begs the question of why some businesses operate in-call locations while others avoid in-call expressly to avoid bawdy house legislation. It is likely that municipal licensing and regulation are also important to how businesses are organized. Managers speak of their relationships with sex workers as symbiotic, more so than in terms of traditional workplace power dynamics, and they are careful to respect sex workers' autonomy in terms of choosing shifts and services. Managers do not want to be seen as "forcing" people to work, and they understand that this is a stereotype that permeates ideas of sex work management. According to most managers, sex workers have the autonomy to refuse services and/or clients. Many managers spoke of guidelines around how this should happen and their mediating role when disputes arise.

Discussion

Bill Reimer noted that federal laws are the same across sites, but municipal laws are different and would have different effects at the level of management. He also asked whether there are differences in terms of the health and safety of sex workers. Cecilia replied that sex workers report fewer violent incidents than managers, but sex workers report an amount similar to that reported by clients. Rachel added that managers are asked whether *any* of their workers have *ever* experienced a violent incident, which is different from asking about the mean number of abusive events in the past 12 months experienced by individual workers. Dan stated that we will have to be careful about how we message this sort of data. Chris asked whether the project included a breakdown of venues across cities based on desirability due to legislation. Data shows a decrease in clients who frequent agencies and an increase in clients accessing the services of independent sex workers, which is partially attributable to prohibitive legislation.

Chris asked about agency ownership, and whether it is as common for women to own the agencies as it is for them to manage them. Rachel stated that she will look into this. She suspects it is just as common for women as it is for men to own businesses. Cecilia asked whether managed sites function as training locales for launching into independent practice. Rachel replied that it is difficult to establish stability at worksites. The project does not have a measure for how long workers stay at agencies before transitioning to other environments or independent practice, but general turnover seems high as managers report that they are often hiring, and long-term employees did not seem common.

Mikael asked whether there is any communication among managers. Rachel replied that there is not, and that there is generally not a lot of networking among them or with service agencies. There is some animosity among managers due to competition.

Project 6: The Effects of Prostitution Laws on Vulnerabilities, Resiliencies and Health
Co-Principal Investigators: Frances Shaver, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Concordia University and Kevin Walby, Department of Criminal Justice, University of Winnipeg

Fran reported on the state of data collection for Project 6. She is coordinating with Kevin to return to Calgary this summer, where data collection was impeded by the flood. Fran will complete data collection in Victoria. Fran shared a site comparison grid that demarcated site-based difficulties in terms of collaboration. Fran described some unwillingness on the part of law enforcement in some regions to identify weaknesses of current laws, and noted that the framing of sex work tends to be predominantly around street-based sex work. Fran stated she is open to suggestions in terms of her continued data collection and analysis.

Discussion

Mikael asked about the history of police interviewed in Montreal. Isabelle replied that interviewees have not been asked to report, for instance, on the number of apprehensions of sex workers. Fran stated that these data will hopefully be collected in the future, but that she is focusing on analyzing licensing documents.

Bill McCarthy asked whether the PIs are collecting data on how police interact with customers, managers, and other third parties. Fran replied yes, and stated that based on the interviews she has conducted so far, most police report that they never deal with clients or managers, and tend to interact exclusively with sex workers.

Mikael asked about the findings pertaining to provincial legislation and municipal bylaws. Fran stated that commonly invoked provincial laws included those regulating vehicular traffic such as stopping a moving vehicle. Crime victims' compensation is difficult to navigate for sex workers because they are deemed ineligible if they have "put themselves at risk." Fran stated that municipal bylaws at each site have very little to do with safety.

Cecilia identified the issue of trafficking as a dominant motif in the discourse around the sex industry and sex work legislation. She noted that there is a large number of people traveling across municipal, provincial, and even national boundaries who do not consider themselves trafficked. There is a lack of nuance in existing legislation around trafficking versus freedom to move, and the dominant discourse links sex workers traveling for work to being trafficked. Cecilia raised the issue of licensing when moving across municipalities. Traveling sex workers are constrained in prioritizing safety because they are trying to avoid being caught operating without the appropriate business license. It is important for legislators and law enforcement officials to make a distinction between trafficking and traveling for work. Fran replied that the interview guide does not include questions related to trafficking, but that this issue can be raised during open-ended interviews, for example, under the question "what do you see as main problems" with regard to current legal framework.

LUNCH 1:00-1:30 PM

Clarifying Issues & Identifying Cross-Cutting Themes

Dan asked the group to reflect on what they had learned during the presentations and discussions and its implications for the goals identified in the original Team Grant proposal. These include informing policy/legislation, service-delivery, and discourse.

Dan cited five key areas that drive the moral compass of political conservatives (according to Jonathan Haidt):
1. Harm/care, shared with liberals;
2. Fairness/reciprocity, shared with liberals;
3. In-group loyalty;
4. Authority/respect;
5. Purity/sanctity.

These values have intersections with the work we are trying to accomplish. This involves leverage around authority/respect and in-group loyalty. Dan asked the group to keep these areas in mind as we craft our dissemination strategy because they will moderate our potential to impact current policy and discourse dominated by conservative perspectives.

Key Implications of Research

Dan asked the group to consider what might be the key implications of the day's presentations.

Bill McCarthy stated that, in terms of violence, our message needs to be about **safety** for all involved. Discourse about improving the safety of workers is not enough; we need to consider safety of everyone involved in the sex industry (e.g., managers, partners, children of workers, and clients). Our message should be clear that safety in the sex industry is compromised in various ways by current legislation.

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Chris suggested that, for our purposes, referring to "sex work" may no longer be effective, since framing transactional sex as work becomes a divisive **linguistic** point and can be counterproductive. Additionally, some people who sell sexual services may not consider themselves "sex workers." Fran stated that agency versus choice are issues in all industries. Chris agreed, but suggested that our language should respect and situate that. Suggestions included "domain of transactional sex," "sex commerce," and simply "sex industry". Dan stated that the words we use in the context of research can become problematic during knowledge translation. Cecilia stated that the notion of "industry" works in terms of denoting people making a living and having a clientele, like the food service industry and the hairstyling industry. Dan stated that those industries are 'subs' of the service industry and have legitimacy as such. Do we want to position sex work this way, i.e. as a domain of a broader service industry? Chris suggested that there is an inherent power dynamic suggested in sex work language, which could be problematic. Additionally, the current language omits sex buyers, and it is also important to include knowledge on this population. Dan stated that we should flag this as an important and ongoing issue.

Cecilia stated that another key implication concerns **sexual health**. Taking action on the information we have collected could improve the health of the population beyond sex workers and buyers. Cecilia noted that it is not simply individuals who are acting harmfully, but importantly, the legislation and the organization of the industry make it difficult for individuals to use healthy practices and access services. Shame and fear have a tremendous impact on health and safety generally, and on sexual health specifically. Dan stated that the resilience of individuals and of communities/networks is compromised by current approaches. Bill McCarthy added that not only is resilience constrained, but we are unable to maximize systems already in place for reaching people in the industry, such as online forums. Policies are not directed toward using existing structure and networks within which communities are embedded.

Fran identified **relationships** and the nuances of those relationships as another crosscutting theme. Our findings nuance the lives and identities of people involved in the sex industry. Dan asked how 'complex relationships and care' fit within the theme of power. Fran stated that the relationships we study allow us to draw out and understand the implicit power dynamics because they are more complicated than we tend to think, including in worker-client, manager-worker, and worker-partner relationships. Dan stated that we are 'up against' common assumptions about binary, gendered, power-relationships when we paint a picture of nuanced relationships. We need to be aware of these assumptions, and think about how to challenge them in our messages. Bill McCarthy agreed that humanizing people in the sex industry by communicating complexity and diversity will be a challenge. Chris stated the LGBTQ[ii] movement has parallels to the sex industry in this regard, and can give us ideas for strategizing.

Cecilia stated that a **normative view** of the selling and buying of sexual services seems to be a commonality across Projects 2, 3, and 4. Most interviewees express that buying/selling sex is not abnormal or deviant. Chris added that these are activities done within a stigmatized context. Buying/selling sex is one of the many normal activities engaged in by participants, but that does not mean it is normative. We can acknowledge these are normal activities for these people, but that they may not be normative across society: de-stigmatization does not equal normalization.

Cecilia forwarded the notion of **sexual citizenship** within the disability rights movement as an example of the articulation of the rights of a group of clients around sexuality and their implications for the sex industry. Bill Reimer added that this raises issues around who counts or matters in the discourse surrounding the industry. Cecilia stated that this can be a means of challenging simplistic understandings of who is involved. Chris asked to what degree human sexuality is a need versus a want, regardless of (dis)ability, since this is a key to understanding and utilizing the notion of sexual citizenship.

Rachel identified **legislation** and its shortcomings as another crosscutting theme. Current legislation does not address the issues it is intended to address, i.e. social issues such as nuisance and the 'harm' that the sex industry causes to individuals and 'communities.' Most people involved in the sex industry want to be law-abiding, contributing members of society, and prohibitive legislation impedes that intention. The majority of people do not commit the violent and exploitative acts feared by the general public. Bill McCarthy added that current Canadian legislation makes it difficult to mobilize relationships to enhance safety and wellbeing. There are problem-causing people within every system, but we are not currently able to share information effectively about those people and increase safety in the industry. Dan stated that when we are able to locate the cause of violence and abuse outside otherwise functional relationships, dealing with those issues can make the larger community safer.

Chris stated that **spatial organization**—where relationships happen, where legislation applies, where problems occur, where people work, etc.—is another theme emerging from the data. How individuals are constrained varies based on the space within which they operate. Dan added that police tend to have a narrow focus constrained by space, i.e. streets, even though the law is broader and intended to provide safety across spaces. If the street is in fact the most risky space, how/why do we convince the police not to respond primarily to that space? Bill McCarthy stated that focusing on one space allows us to ignore what happens in other spaces, and pushes 'problems' into confined, and less-safe, spaces. Lauren added that 'street space' is diminishing with the onset of online networks, highlighting the need to rethink the street/off-street typology. For example, when social service agencies do street outreach, there are fewer street-based workers to reach, but there are not fewer sex workers who may benefit from support. Dan stated that if our data show that there is a shift in the industry created by technology, this becomes an opportunity to show that there are new contexts to regulate. Fran cautioned that 'regulation' is a loaded word, and makes people think of federal legislation. Bill McCarthy suggested 'legal support.' Chris stated that with our data, we have identified spaces where there are needs for health care, education, and support, which encourages programming as opposed to 'regulation.' Our messaging should identify what actually needs to be done to address problems, and demonstrate that simply outlawing sex work does not fix social problems. Cecilia gave the examples of increasing disability benefits, raising the minimum wage, and increasing access to low-income housing.

Bill Reimer stated that based on the spaces we identify as critical, we can determine with whom we should connect and build **alliances**. As academics, we can do research work, but we need partners to engage in political activism. Fran suggested reaching out to the labour movement. Cecilia added that Bill's point takes some focus off of legislation and shows that social policies also play a large role in people's lives.

Key Implications for Informing Policy and Legislation

Bill Reimer raised the issue of the nuances of **violence**—what it means in a variety of contexts and what conditions increase/decrease it in various spaces. Rachel stated that, according to the literature, there is an underestimation of sexual violence outside the sex industry in Canada. Dan stated that the challenge for us is that the sex industry does not intersect significantly with the 'the sexual violence world.' Where there is violence within the industry, it is often not sexual in nature. Although our research may touch on sexual violence, it might not make sense for us to make this a focus. Rather, we should speak to policies to reduce 'violence.' Dan concluded that as a team we have something to contribute to the issue of violence in the sex industry. We can communicate that there are other factors involved, and we are not dealing with 'just' sexual violence. What are the factors we can actually change?

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Bill Reimer suggested we craft a message that would be good news to **municipal** councillors and mayors, in terms of assuaging fears surrounding the effects of the sex industry on cities and communities. Bill suggested forming an alliance with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in crafting and disseminating this message. Dan suggested that councillors and mayors may not necessarily hold draconian views on the sex industry, but they believe voters do. Councillors and mayors will continue to cater to voters' fears. What are the implications of our research that will allow us to get traction in terms of affecting change and encouraging wellbeing?

Bill McCarthy stated that **marginalized populations** are prominent in some parts of the sex industry, and we need to find a way to deal with this. For example, sex workers are disproportionately indigenous, socioeconomically marginalized, etc. Cecilia stated that painting sex sellers as inherently empowered can discourage services and programming, and encourage 'holding sex workers accountable.' On the other hand, Canada's Justice Minister, Peter MacKay, has stated that proposed legislation will focus on 'the most vulnerable' in the industry, and we do not want to fuel this perspective.

Moving beyond federal and municipal legislation, Dan asked what the implications are for **service delivery**. Rachel listed services for youth transitioning out of care, Aboriginal women's services, and LGBTQ services as important sites for improvement because these populations are disproportionally vulnerable within the sex industry. Rachel added substance use services, sexual health services, and employment for women with disabilities. Dan stated that services for these populations are important outside of the sex industry, so any proposed services will also be relevant to the broader society. Rachel and Bill McCarthy noted that these are populations who encounter more problems within the sex industry. Although this information does not constitute an 'arrival story,' others are inclined to interpret it in this way. Dan stated that this is the challenge of messaging around service delivery. Bill McCarthy added that highlighting vulnerabilities encourages people to cling to draconian laws, while introducing other programming.

Mikael noted that the Nordic model is being proposed and supported in Canada and that no one is saying that **buying sex** is acceptable or is willing to defend the sex buyer. We need to come up with a non-threatening way to present this message. We may consider reaching younger audiences via alternative media such as Twitter and YouTube. How do we humanize and create a sense of understanding for buyers of sex?

Developing our Knowledge Mobilization Plan (Part 1)

Dan asked the team to turn to the document "Sex work in Canada—knowledge mobilization plan."

Dan asked what we are trying to accomplish as a team with our research and knowledge mobilization. Responses included improving the health and safety of people involved in the Canadian sex industry; helping people understand the diversity of the sex industry; reducing violence and stigma; educating the public, which implies getting people involved in an interactive way; and influencing legislation and social programming.

Dan summarized that the ultimate goal is to make the world a better place. Ways to go about doing this include:
1. Influencing the legislative agenda;
2. Educating the public;
3. Advocacy;
4. Influencing social service design and delivery;

5. Influencing the structure/function of the sex industry.

Dan stated that the next critical question is: who are the publics we think we can influence? Responses included:

- Police/justice groups;
- Voting publics; younger people who mobilize around social issues;
- Women's groups;
- Health care providers;
- Church groups/faith communities;
- Sex industry networks;
- Municipalities; mayors, Federation of Municipalities;
- Student groups.

At the close of Day 1, Dan asked the group to think about these publics, and consider which have infrastructure in place that we could access to bring about influence at a broad level.

Day 2

Cecilia gave a brief introductory welcome.

Developing our Knowledge Mobilization Plan (Part 2)

Dan reiterated the list of potential publics, and the group determined that our top key audiences are:
1. Health professionals;
2. Police/justice groups;
3. Women's groups (overlap with faith communities).

Health Professionals

Dan asked the group to consider the message we would like to deliver to health professionals.

Cecilia stated that one message would be one of **encouragement**, since her data show that health care providers are doing quite a good job. There is remaining stigma and gaps in services, and we can help health professionals to see sex workers and people involved in the sex industry as assets to their own agenda of extending health, and thus improving the health care system. The goal here is to build on the previous success and existing structure of health care while addressing identified shortcomings.

Rachel suggested that another message would be a call to action for health professionals to make **harm reduction** more comprehensive within sex work networks, while also taking advantage of the existing framework of harm reduction. Bill McCarthy added that the sex industry does not involve only sex workers, so health professionals need to be encouraged to expand their mandate to include others connected to sex work, for example, families, clients, managers, etc. Widening the lens of harm reduction in this way would improve public health in general.

Bill McCarthy stated that populations outside of street-based sex workers are not accessing street clinics, so there is a need for more outlets and **expanded mandates**. Lauren added that, similarly, many sex

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workers do not associate with services or groups such as PEERS or STELLA due to street-work stigma and the assumption that these services are intended solely for street-based workers. Chris stated that independent escorts do not feel that existing services apply to them, and are likely not accessing information via existing sex work networks. Bill McCarthy stated that our data are suggesting that we need to consider different models for health care. Dan gave the example of methadone programs that incorporate a variety of services ranging from street-based to more normalized services. Each service appeals to and omits whole segments of the population.

Chris added that current models for health care delivery need to be critically examined in terms of assumptions about '**sexual risk**.' A singular approach that insists any sex without a condom is risky sex fails to acknowledge the variety of practices and relations that exist in sex work. This relates to the finding that 25% of sex workers feel stigmatized by health care providers because their behaviour is being pathologized without much effort to understand context.

Police

Lauren stated that the police are not very interactive in the **off-street sex industry** and asked how we can reach the non-street industry via police. Dan asked the group to consider why we think the police are an important audience for us. Fran stated that some police chiefs are supporting the Nordic model, while others are not; there are opportunities here for knowledge translation. Bill McCarthy stated that some police communities have shown that they are open to the notion that they have not done well in the past in dealing with the sex industry, which is another opportunity for knowledge translation. Cecilia added that sex workers interact with police frequently, but they are fearful of being arrested, so they do not reach out to police when they are in need of help. Chris raised the ongoing conflation of prostitution and trafficking and the need to communicate the differences to police.

Dan suggested that our message to police is a call to action: to influence current legislative debates and to influence current practices in policing.

Women's Groups & Faith Groups

Rachel stated that women's groups are already concerned with women's health and opportunities. We need to **guide** them in the direction of things that can be done to help women in the sex industry and away from focusing on 'trafficking.' There has been a lot of marketing of this issue and these misconceptions are difficult to overcome. Dan added that there is a similar predisposition to justice issues among faith communities, but less education around trafficking and exploitation. Bill McCarthy stated that we need to communicate that vulnerable women in the sex industry do not represent the entire industry.

Cecilia noted that there is **polarization** among women's groups on the issue of sex work, and asked how we can get beyond this. Dan suggested that we work to help women's groups with abolitionist leanings understand the complexity of the sex industry, while building on their commitments toward women's health and justice. These groups already understand intersectionality, so perhaps we can begin there.

Our message to women's groups and faith groups is a call to action: to influence the legislative agenda, to withdraw support for the Nordic model, to support social services without resorting to a rescue narrative. One goal is to help these groups reformulate their framework of definitions and services, since they are themselves educative institutions.

Our list of target mechanisms include: the Canadian Council of Churches, various denominations, the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches, the Canadian Women's Foundation, Aboriginal organizations, NWAC, Status of Women Canada, the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres, university women's associations, the Canadian Federation of University Women, the Salvation Army, etc.

Industry Organizations

Chris stated that we want these organizations to tell us what kind of **information** they need, and for them to facilitate dissemination of that information as widely as possible to people involved in the sex industry. Rachel added that there is a distinction (and sometimes tension) between service organizations and advocacy organizations, and each has its own agenda for our information.

We discussed developing a **repository of knowledge** and tools that might be of use to the various populations impacted by the industry (workers, clients, managers, families), and making that available to industry organizations. Products need to be succinct, graphic, and streamlined.

Young people & students

Student organizations might be relatively easy to access, but they have many interests competing for their resources.

Municipalities

Bill Reimer stated that municipalities are frontline institutions for affecting the tolerance of cities. It is important they have accurate **information** regarding the sex industry and its implications. Municipalities are faced with challenges and constraints similar to those faced by police. Dan suggested we put together a well-designed **information kit** to bring to meetings. Bill Reimer added that the Federation of Municipalities has a national magazine and a website, and we might try to access this infrastructure. Cecilia suggested that site-specific data might be useful, such as case-studies, stories or local tips.

Closing Discussion

Next Steps

Project 2

Cecilia hopes to have her national report finished by early June. She plans to focus upcoming analyses on collaborations between projects 2 and 3 because there are a lot of data on partnerships and the individuals in those partnerships. She would also like to look into additional relationships, including those between sex workers and clients. Cecilia also hopes to focus on the issue of trafficking, allowing the data to illustrate the difference between trafficking and traveling in the sex industry.

Project 3

Mikael plans to carry out more work on third parties, specifically with regard to 'living on the avails,' and asked the team to forward any pertinent information. Areas of interest include partners of sex workers,

managers, analyses of court cases, and municipal legislation. Bill McCarthy suggested searching court records for 'bawdy house,' as Mikael and Nadia has already collected and coded data from a search on 'living on the avails.' It was also suggested that Mikael try to access municipal cases for analysis.

Project 4

Chris is looking into securing more funds for this project and has two RAs working with him. His team has a production schedule and will have a full working draft of the national report ready within two weeks. The next step will be to cut the report down into a publicly consumable document. His team has plans for additional analyses and cross-projects analyses.

Project 5

We will continue univariate and bivariate analysis for the project report and will also undertake analysis of qualitative data. A project report draft will be available in late June.

Project 6

Fran plans to hire another research assistant, and will begin her report before she has collected all of her data. Fran may coordinate with project 3 on the question of third parties (and "living on the avails"), and will conduct further investigation into the difference between research sites.

Notes

Bill McCarthy suggested that we use graphs, rather than tables, in our final reports.
Papers to present in the Fall will focus on violence, health, relationships, and trafficking.

Budgets

The team grant has two years remaining and we have just received our third year funding. Ideas for spending Project 7 funds include:

- Hiring RAs;
- Hiring a cross-projects research scientist;
- Developing a knowledge translation website;
- Distributing funds for cross-analyses;
- Compiling a book;
- Extending our networks.

The team agreed to consider these options and the needs of their particular projects, and to discuss this further during a scheduled teleconference meeting.

Appendix A: Participant list and affiliations

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Appendix B: Agenda

Team Grant Meeting IV
Montreal, May 3-4, 2014

Concordia University, Hall Building (1455 de Maisonneuve West) on the 11th floor in the Department
of Sociology & Anthropology (**room H-1120**).

Day One: May 3

9:00 – 9:15 am	Breakfast, coffee & welcome – Cecilia
9:15 – 9:30 am	Overview of the day and introduction of a KM framework – Dan
9:30 – 10:00 am	Report and discussion: Project 2 (Sex Workers) – Cecilia
10:00 – 10:30 am	Report and discussion: Project 3 (Romantic Partners) – Mikael
10:30 – 11:00 am	Report and discussion: Project 4 (Sex Buyers) – Chris
11:00 – 11:30 am	Report and discussion: Project 5 (Managers) – Rachel
11:30 – 12:00 am	Report and discussion: Project 6 (Law Enforcement) – Fran
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 – 3:00 pm	Clarifying issues & identifying cross-cutting themes – Dan
3:00 – 3:15 pm	Coffee break
3:15 – 4:30	Developing our knowledge mobilization plan (Part 1) – Dan
4:30 – 4:45pm	Wrap up & plan for Day Two – Cecilia

Day Two: May 4   (morning only)

9:00 – 9:15 am	Breakfast, coffee & welcome and plan for the day – Cecilia
9:15 – 11:30 am	Developing our knowledge mobilization plan (Part 2) – Dan
11:30 – noon	Wrap up and teleconference schedule for coming months – Cecilia

Appendix C: Knowledge Mobilization Strategy

1) Goal: [specific and actionable statement of what we want to achieve]

2) Position Statement: [1-2 sentence statement of our position – how we understand the issues]

3) Objectives: [SMART; emerge out of our research; relevant to current setting]

4) Audience(s)

    a) Target audiences [can make the changes – pay attention to attitudes and media habits]

    b) Participant communities

5) Key Messages [simple – something new – engaging]

6) Call(s) for Action [doable – compelling – provide options]

7) Formats/Tools

    a) Well-curated repository (website)

    b) Clear, short documents related to objectives/audiences

    c) Larger pieces including journal articles

    d) Media releases and kits

    e) Op Ed, blogs, tweets, etc.

    f) Presentations, etc.

    g) Maximize social media appropriately

8) Measure Impact

Appendix D: Project Analysis Guide

Project: _____

What is the most interesting finding from the research in this project?		
What other interesting points emerge from this research? What new knowledge emerges?		
How might this research inform policy or legislation?	How might this research improve service delivery?	How might this research be used to increase understanding? For whom?

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[i] A cisgender person is someone who identifies as the gender/sex they were assigned at birth.

[ii] LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (and/or questioning) individuals/identities.