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# Reel or Reality? The Portrayal of Prostitution in Major Motion Pictures

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Reel or Reality?  
The Portrayal of Prostitution in Major Motion Pictures

by

Raleigh Blasdell

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
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College of Behavioral and Community Sciences  
University of South Florida

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## DEDICATION

This work (and degree) is dedicated to the voiceless. I do not know why I was led to do this work, but I feel that I have a responsibility to you. I pray for the strength to carry your burden, the wisdom to speak on your behalf until the day comes that it is safe for you to stand on this platform, and the courage to use my voice even when it is unpopular to do so.

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined media portrayals of street-level prostitution. The objectives of this research were twofold. The first was to examine the nature of the film industry's portrayal of females engaging in street-level prostitution in the United States in the following areas: 1) entry into sex work; 2) the economic need behind the women's involvement; 3) experiences of childhood victimization; 4) presence and role of pimps; 5) drug/alcohol abuse; 6) victimization; and 7) mental/physical health. The second objective was to determine if this media coverage is analogous to extant research on these aspects of prostitution culture.

The Unified Film Population Identification Methodology was used to identify 15 major motion pictures depicting street-level prostitution that were released in the United States between 1990 and 2014; these films were analyzed using media content analysis. The review of the prostitution literature (encompassing the disciplines of criminology, sociology, victimology, and health) consisted of an examination of 77 studies. The content of this literature was used to determine if the portrayal of prostitutes and prostitution in film are accurate. In addition, an Assessment Index was created to allow for the comparison of films to characteristics of prostitution in the extant literature.

Media content analysis revealed that the films in this study did not accurately portray female street prostitutes; while not necessarily misrepresented, movies tended to provide an incomplete picture of the reality of prostitution. These findings are important because media portrayals of prostitution have the capacity to influence public opinion of prostitutes and

prostitution. Overall, films in this sample presented prostitutes in such a way that failed to mobilize moral outrage and did not encourage viewers to care about the issue of prostitution. This can subsequently affect the types of policies they expect legislators to implement and police to employ as a means of responding to prostitution. Therefore, it is important that researchers and educators involve themselves in the social construction of public opinion, thereby having the capacity to offer alternate themes of crime, criminals, and justice. This will allow for a better-educated public to make a distinction between the veracity of prostitution and what is created by the media.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

The present research examines media portrayals of street-level prostitution. It is important to assess media portrayals of prostitution because they have the capacity to influence public opinion of prostitutes and prostitution. If these portrayals are inaccurate or biased, the public may develop stereotypical conceptions of prostitution, which can subsequently affect the types of policies they expect legislators to implement and police to employ as a means of responding to prostitution.

As noted below, prostitution has long been the subject of various analyses in both the social and health sciences. The present study seeks to determine if media portrayals of prostitution in major motion pictures are consistent with what the extant criminological, sociological, and health literature has reported. The content of this literature is thus used to determine if the portrayal of prostitutes and prostitution in film are accurate.

The data for this study includes a content analysis of 15 major motion pictures depicting street-level prostitution that were released in the United States between 1990 and 2014. The review of the prostitution literature (encompassing the disciplines of criminology, sociology, and health) consists of an examination of 77 studies.

## **History of Prostitution**

Reference to prostitution exists in the earliest mythological records, but arguably the most ancient historical record can be found in the Books of Moses, which suggest that prostitutes were common among the Jews in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century before Christ<sup>1</sup>. The Code of Hammurabi was inscribed at approximately the same period in time, and of note, it included provisions to protect the inheritance rights of prostitutes. Several centuries later, documentation of prostitution can be found in Egypt, where Courtesans existed five hundred years before Christ, and in Greece, where references to prostitution can be found in the Solonian Constitution, which was created in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The first record of prostitution in the United States can be found during the Revolutionary War (De Pauw, 1994) and subsequently in Native American tribes (Sanger, 1895). In the nineteenth century, prostitution became more commonplace as brothels became widespread in mining towns in the West. Brothels were also becoming more prominent at the same time on the East coast. This brothel prostitution remained common in the United States until the early 1900s. It was around this same time that street prostitution became more common in the United States.

## **Street-Level Prostitution**

Street-level prostitutes are the type of prostitute with which most Americans are most familiar (Flowers, 1998). These women overtly solicit clients on the street and offer real or simulated sexual favors in exchange for compensation. While the most visible type of prostitutes, street prostitutes account for only 10 to 20 percent of prostitutes (Arnond, Steward, &

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Leviticus 19:29; Deuteronomy 23:17; Ezekiel 22:19

McNeece, 2000; Flowers, 1998). This population is unique though, as they are at the bottom of the prostitution hierarchy; those working in more commercial forms of prostitution, such as call girls or escorts, are at the top (Benson & Matthews, 1995). Street-level prostitution is qualitatively different from other types of prostitution. For example, the majority of teenage prostitutes, including minor children, fall into this category of prostitutes (Flowers, 1998). These women and girls face violence and dangerous situations as everyday realities (Farley & Barkan, 1998; Muftić & Finn, 2013; Williamson & Folaron, 2001), and have poorer health outcomes, including addiction and mental illness, than women working in other forms of prostitution (Muftić & Finn, 2013).

Determining the precise number of street prostitutes in the United States is impossible, given the secrecy of prostitution. Official statistics can provide the number of females arrested for prostitution, but it is known that most prostitutes elude law enforcement and subsequent arrest figures. Flowers (1998) has reported that there are at least one million adult females working as prostitutes in the United States but believes the actual number can easily be doubled or tripled. This number should be interpreted with caution, though, as it excludes juveniles working in prostitution. It is also unclear what percentage of these women are street prostitutes versus brothel workers, massage parlor prostitutes, or call girls.

Discourse on prostitution in the United States is vastly polarizing; most typically see it as morally suspect and problematic (Weitzer, 2009). There is often a pro-/anti-prostitution divide in both academia and among the general population, with the latter seeing prostitution as degrading or exploitive of its workers and the former viewing it as legitimate work with the potential to empower women in regard to sex and sexuality (Farvid & Glass, 2014). As is further outlined below, the role of the media in molding these views cannot be understated.

## **Social Constructionism**

The impact of the mass media can best be understood through the theoretical perspective of social constructionism, which posits that individuals create reality based on both their individual knowledge and experience, as well as from knowledge gained from social interactions with others and through the influence of the media. Specifically, individuals construct their social realities based on knowledge gained from personal experience, significant others, other social groups and institutions, and the mass media (Surette, 1998). The first source, personal experience, is based on what one directly encounters, but the latter three form one's symbolic reality. Most of the public's facts and impressions of crime and justice are received via a medium of the media (Surette, 1998). People then use the information acquired from the media to construct an image of a concept or issue; they subsequently base their actions on this image of reality.

This social construction is markedly important in the realm of crime and victimization in general due to the fact that most members of society do not have direct experience with crime or the criminal justice system. Therefore, most of the public relies on sources of information outside of their direct personal experience to create their perceived reality of these situations and the individuals involved in them. Consequently, the media are one component of a larger "symbolic information system" that creates and delivers social knowledge (Surette, 1998, p. 2). Symbolic reality thus is based on what one believes to exist, but has not personally seen. As will be discussed below, most members of society create a perceived reality of prostitution based on this symbolic reality. Consequently, because a vast amount of social knowledge is acquired symbolically, it is important to question its content and accuracy.

## **The Role of Motion Pictures in Social Construction**

Modern industrialized societies rely heavily on the mass media to serve as a key mechanism in the process of social construction. The role that the media plays in this construction of reality has greater consequences in some societies, including the United States, because members of society are reliant on the media to distribute information from and about them (Altheide, 1984). Electronic visual media, including film, are particularly important in this construction, as they are accessible and easy to comprehend; most individuals, including all age ranges, have access to visual media. Additionally, due to having both visual and auditory components, visual media also reaches across individuals with different learning and reading abilities.

Fictional visual media influences how people think and feel about crime and justice (Welsh, Fleming, & Dowler, 2011). The emergence of film “nationalized the content of entertainment” by making its portrayals of issues and events available to every stratum in the United States (Surette, 1998, p. 29). Motion pictures became so widely available that the motion picture industry quickly reflected and shaped American society. Accordingly, film came to have a tremendous social impact, as seen by its influence on public values, behaviors, and political views. Films became unique in that they were not only a social event, but also a source of social information; movies reach people directly to provide information and images that are used to construct personal reality (Gusfield, 1989). Motion pictures have thus helped to create a national social perspective, as different individuals from various social strata now share a key source of social information (Surette, 1998). The role of film as a significant source of information for crime is particularly important in regard to the current generation; this is a fundamentally



“visual’ generation that is able to more readily identify with images and visual movement than with traditional forms of printed text” (Rothe & Ross, 2007, p. 331).

Watching movies has become one of the leading leisure activities in the United States (Bulman, 2005). Aside from the aforementioned impact that the media, in general, plays in shaping beliefs, the representations of behavior in film also have persuasive effects on viewers’ attitudes and behaviors (Appel, 2008; Welsh, Fleming, & Dowler, 2011). Pirikis, Blood, Francis, and McCallum (2006), for example, determined that the cultural definitions of mental illness in motion pictures affected their audiences’ attitudes toward mental illness. Research has also examined the media’s influence on perceptions of crime in general. Motion pictures influence public opinion; however, the complexity of the link between motion pictures and public opinion of prostitution remains unknown.

Because the average person has limited alternative sources of information regarding criminality, it increases the entertainment value of film. Prostitution, in particular, is a closed industry that is largely concealed from most citizens’ view. As few individuals have direct contact with prostitutes, media representations comprise a key means of shaping perspectives about both prostitutes as well as prostitution as an industry (Hallgrimsdottir, Phillips, Benoit, & Walby, 2008). Kappeler and Potter (2005) state that the mass media thus provide a mortar that is used to fill gaps in knowledge for unfamiliar social phenomenon, thereby providing a simplistic explanation for events and processes that cannot be easily understood. This has resulted in an inaccurate and often romanticized image of prostitutes in both the mass media and public imagination (Van Brunschot, Sydie, & Krull, 1999).

## **Prior Research on Media and Prostitution**

Prior research has examined representations of prostitution across various media outlets, including reality television, television series, and newspapers. The results contended that media discourses disguise the empirical reality of prostitution, including the role of socioeconomic and gender inequalities, and instead focused on individual sensationalized accounts of prostitutes (Dunn, 2012; Gibbs Van Brunschot, Sydie, & Krull, 1999; Hallgrimsdottir, Phillips, Benoit, & Walby, 2008; McLaughlin, 1991; Strega et al., 2014). The representation of prostitution in entertainment media, specifically film, has also been explored, though at a lesser extent. However, most of these studies have been limited to only a few films (see Baler, 2014; Small, 2012; Szörényi & Eate, 2014), have focused on the international sex trade (see Baker 2014; Szörényi & Eate, 2014), or brothel prostitution (see Giusta & Scuriatti, 2005).

## **The Present Study**

It has been suggested that the entertainment media depicts illustrations of crime and justice that are the opposite of what is found in reality (Surette, 1998), and the aforementioned literature on media research involving prostitution seems to substantiate these claims. Due to this distorted presentation of concepts and social issues, bounded by the decisions of editors and producers, society develops distorted reflections of crime, criminals, and victims (Zucker, 1978). This begs the question: Does a particular reality emerge from the portrayal of prostitution projected in motion pictures? The extent to which the media, including film, influence one's socially constructed reality remains uncertain. However, the available research on the entertainment media's effects allows one to draw some basic conclusions. The general consensus is that the media's portrayal of crime creates a broad public reality of crime (Surette,

1998). This influence, combined with other factors, including one's social and physical environment, plays a role in the final shaping of society's beliefs (Warr, 1980). Because the media is a platform where social reality is both reflected as well as developed (Ferrell, 1999), it is important to examine media contributions to our social knowledge base on crime. These social constructions convey the possibility of creating misinformation about the nature and causes of prostitution, and they also reinforce dominant ideologies about this issue in regard to justice and punishment.

The current research tested a media constructionist perspective on the extent to which films containing prostitutes reflect reality. The purpose of this research was to gain understanding of the presentation and depiction of the female, street-level prostitute culture in modern motion pictures utilizing media content analysis. Because what is both included and excluded from media stories shapes the public's knowledge, belief, and understanding about prostitutes and prostitution (Strega et al., 2014), the research aimed to ascertain how street prostitution is depicted to viewing audiences and the implications of how these portrayals might impact the social construction of prostitution. As such, the objectives of this research were twofold: 1) to examine the nature of the film industry portrayal of entrance into, economic need, childhood victimization, pimps, drugs/alcohol, victimization, and mental/physical health in female street-level prostitution in the United States; and 2) to determine if this media coverage is analogous to extant research on these aspects of prostitution culture.

A sample comprised of 15 full-length motion pictures that involved female, street-level prostitutes, representing the top-US-grossing films released between 1990 and 2014, was examined. Eighteen research questions, representing seven concepts derived from the extant literature on street prostitutes and prostitute culture, were analyzed using quantitative content

analysis, specifically media content analysis. The social implication of the findings is that media representations of prostitution may influence viewers' judgments and decisions about prostitution policy.

To the extent that the portrayal of prostitution is inaccurate, it can contribute to societal misunderstandings of prostitutes (Welsh, Fleming, & Dowler, 2011). A well-informed public brings about rational policy construction. For the public to be knowledgeable on issues of street-level prostitutes and prostitution, the media, as one of the primary sources of shaping beliefs, needs to provide accurate information. Given research that indicates that film plays an active role in the construction of social phenomena, principally in conditions such as prostitution where alternate information is unavailable, there is a need to examine the portrayal of crime in film. This research contributes to the literature by evaluating the extent to which portrayals street-level prostitution in motion pictures are in accordance with the characteristics of street-level prostitution in the real world.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **LIFE AS A STREET PROSTITUTE**

#### **Entrance and Turning Out**

There is no one single causal model for the initial entry into prostitution; factors influencing this entry involve poor interactions with conventional society, family instability and abuse, economic necessity, addiction, the desire for new and exciting experiences, psychological disorders, and force by a third party (Cobbina & Oselin, 2011; Dalla, 2006; Flowers, 1998; Roe-Sepowitz, 2012; Shdaimah & Wiechelt, 2012; Williamson & Folaron, 2003). Rather, it has been suggested that a combination or confluence of factors create risks that evolve to lead to entrance and continued work in prostitution. These multiple interdependent personal and contextual factors are not uniformly present for all prostitutes; and if present, it is often to different degrees (Dalla, 2002). When those entering into prostitution become seasoned into it, they are, in pimp jargon, “turned out” (Leidholdt, 2004; Williamson & Baker, 2009). This period of training and initiation is generally conducted by a pimp or by veteran prostitutes.

In examining Camden, New Jersey, street prostitutes’ sexual behaviors, Freund, Leonard, and Lee (1989) discovered that the starting age at which women began prostituting ranged from 12 to 29, with 47% starting before the age of 18. Correspondingly, Cobbina & Oselin (2011) interviewed 40 female street prostitutes from five U.S. cities and found that 50% entered prostitution at age 18 or younger; among these juveniles, the average age of entrance was 14.7 years.

What is common among street prostitutes is their sense that they had no options but to sell sex for money. After interviewing women currently and formerly engaged in prostitution, Shdaimah & Wiechelt (2012) concluded that women would not have chosen to work as prostitutes if they thought that realistic alternatives were available to them. Given their personal and social circumstances, some women saw the entrance into prostitution as a rational choice. Nonetheless, it is important to examine the voluntary nature of this entry within the social and economic situations that shape the constraints and opportunities in their lives (Sanders, 2004). Dalla (2001) addresses this element of choice by stating that “streetwalking prostitution is not freely chosen over a vast array of alternative career choices; rather, women who sell themselves on the streets do so because of lack of (perceived or real) options” (p. 1091). Put differently, many street prostitutes are engaging in survival sex, or the providing sexual services in exchange for food, protection, housing, drugs, and money (Greene, Ennett, & Ringwalt, 1999). After interviewing prostituted women, Kennedy, Klein, Bristowe, and Cooper (2007) concluded that the most common pattern of entry into prostitution is women and girls being persuaded to prostitute themselves to financially benefit someone else, including pimps/boyfriends, authority figures/parents, and lesbian partners. For others, manipulation, intimidation, and force by a third party are the determining factors. The limited resources available to most women who enter into street-level prostitution and their exercise of differing levels of agency will be discussed below.

### **Juveniles and Runaways**

It is difficult to pinpoint the age at which women enter prostitution. However, it is generally agreed that most women and girls enter street-level prostitution before turning 18 (Farley & Barkan, 1998; Silbert & Pines, 1981; Valera, Sawyer, & Schiraldi, 2000; Weisberg,

1985). For example, Clawson, Dutch, Solomon, & Grace (2009) reported that in the United States, girls, on average, first enter into prostitution between the ages of 12 and 14.

In addition to having been abused as children, minors who are prostituted are likely to have experienced various types of family disruption. Research has demonstrated that these girls are more likely to have been raised in homes where addiction was present (Clawson et al., 2009). For example, Silbert and Pines (1981) reported that 89-92% of young adults involved in prostitution reported extreme drug and/or alcohol abuse by a parent. Similarly, the Center for Impact Research (2001) reported that of 222 female prostitutes interviewed in Chicago, 83% were from homes where one or both parents were substance abusers, and Roe-Sepowitz (2012) reported 72% of prostitutes had a parent or guardian in their home during childhood with an alcohol or drug problem. Additionally, juvenile prostitutes are more likely to have experienced intimate partner violence (22-51%) in their childhood homes, with the most common experience being witnessing their mother being physically abused by a partner (Silbert & Pines, 1981). In addition to coming from chaotic homes, another common factor among juvenile prostitutes is losing a parent through abandonment, divorce, or death (Clawson et al., 2009; Norton-Hawk, 2002). Seng (1989) also reported that 45.5% of prostitution involved children were school dropouts.

Silbert and Pines (1982) identified a well-defined pathway into prostitution in which juveniles experienced physical, sexual, and emotional abuse in their homes and ran away as a means of escaping the abuse. They were subsequently recruited and befriended by a pimp who sexually exploited the juvenile in exchange for survival on the streets. Pimps target these vulnerable and socially isolated adolescents and then establish a relationship based on dependency (Morselli & Savoie-Gargiso, 2014). After the pimp has established dependency and

control, he begins to encourage or force prostitution, and so begins the aforementioned routine of “turning out” the girl.

These themes of trauma, disruption, and abandonment in childhood, which result in isolation and feelings of separation, are central to narratives of juveniles who become involved in prostitution (Clawson et al., 2009). Many of these girls run away from their homes, including treatment centers, foster homes, and group homes, which places them at an increased chance of being targeted by a pimp. This running away from home is not so much an act of defiance as a last resort to self-protection; they perceive living on the streets as being less dangerous than living in their home environment (Hyde, 2005). Because of their young age and having come from chaotic environments, these children often lack problem-solving skills and the ability to meet their basic survival needs, including food and shelter (Martinez, 2006; Robertson & Toro, 1999). This not only makes them more vulnerable to pimps, but also forces them to turn to “survival sex” to meet their basic needs (Hood-Brown; 1998; Miller & Schwartz, 1995; Robertson & Toro, 1999; Seng, 1989). Estes & Weiner (2001) illustrated this danger by determining that 71% of the 1,682,900 runaway or throwaway youth in the United States in 1999 were at risk for prostitution. The significance of a pimp in juvenile prostitution is evident in Norton-Hawk’s (2004) comparison of pimp- and non-pimp-controlled prostitutes: Pimp-controlled women were more likely to be runaways (90% versus 60%), to have run away by age 12 (56% versus 33%), and to have run away more than 3 times (72% versus 54%) (p. 192).

In examining juvenile entry into prostitution, Roe-Sepowitz (2012) illustrated marked differences between those who began prostituting as juveniles versus in adulthood. The juvenile group reported entering prostitution for protection more often than those who began prostituting as adults. Those who started as juveniles reported a greater history of running away and having



experienced childhood emotional abuse more than women who entered sex work in adulthood (p. 570). Those who entered as juveniles also demonstrated more symptoms of dissociation than did those who entered as adults. Adult entry prostitutes, however, experienced more serious drug and alcohol problems than did those who entered prostitution in adolescence.

Juvenile prostitutes are also in a dangerous position because they are frequently uneducated about pregnancy, birth control, and sexually transmitted diseases (Farley, 2004). Women who are pushed or deceived into prostitution prior to maturity have been found to have more negative health outcomes than women who begin prostituting later in life (Decker, McCauley, Phuengsamran, Janyam, & Silverman, 2011; Hossain, Zimmerman, Abas, Light, & Watts, 2010). Juveniles who are prostituted experience these poor health consequences because their agency is compromised, they often do not have access to healthcare, their risk of sexual violence is high, and they are more vulnerable to infection (Muftić & Finn, 2013).

Many juvenile prostitutes are from among the over one million runaway or throwaway children in America who find themselves homeless each year (Estes & Weiner, 2001; Reid, 2012; Saewyc, MacKay, Anderson, & Drozda, 2008). In fact, it is estimated that because of their increased vulnerability, runaway youth are more than 40 times more likely to be victims of sexual exploitation (McClanahan, McClelland, Abram, & Teplin, 1999). A history of running away in adolescence has been found to be related to entering prostitution at a younger age (Roe-Sepowitz, 2012).

Among juvenile prostitutes, up to 77% report being runaways (Seng, 1989). Mitchell, Finkelhor, and Wolak (2010) similarly reported that 60% of the adolescent prostitutes included in the National Juvenile Prostitution Study had histories as runaways, and Roe-Sepowicz (2012) reported that two-thirds of the prostitutes in her study examining juvenile entry into prostitution

had a history of running away from home. Nadon, Koverola, and Schluderman (1998) provide additional insight into the incidence of running away; after interviewing adolescent prostitutes and adolescent non-prostitutes regarding their experiences of childhood victimization, they reported that 87% of the underage prostitutes in their sample recounted running away from their homes, compared to 61% of non-prostitute adolescents. The runaway-prostitution link was also illustrated in a national study examining homeless runaway youth that reported that 55% of these youth engaged in prostitution for money or survival needs (Estes & Weiner, 2001). The majority of adult prostitutes also report having been runaways. For example, Silbert & Pines (1982) found that 96% of their sample of female prostitutes in San Francisco, CA, were previously juvenile runaways. Norton-Hawk (2002) and Raphael and Shapiro (2002) reported 72% and 56% of female prostitutes in Boston and Chicago, respectively, had also been runaways.

### **Glamour and Excitement**

Women involved in pimp-controlled prostitution were often persuaded and manipulated, generally as adolescents, into prostitution because they imagined it would be exciting (Williamson & Baker, 2009). Young women, in particular, seemed to be attracted to what they perceived as a glamorous lifestyle and easy money, which initially eclipsed the harsh reality of working as a street prostitute. Kennedy et al. (2007), for example, described how young street prostitutes were influenced by their perception of seasoned prostitutes appearing to always have plenty of cash, which enabled them to be able to afford to take cabs everywhere they wanted. They failed to notice that the prostitutes were only taking cabs to and from work.

In their research comparing adult and adolescent entry into street prostitution, Cobbina and Oselin (2011) reported that among adolescents, there were two typologies for entrance: those

fleeing abuse who acted as a prostitute as a means of reclaiming control over their lives (60% of their sample), and those who were not fleeing abuse (40%). Those who were not fleeing abuse reported being economically motivated and also viewing prostitution as exciting and glamorous (p. 318). Others have also reported that women are drawn to prostitution because they were enamored by the perceived “thrill and adventures” that came with prostitution (Potterat, Phillips, Rothenberg, & Darrow, 1995, p. 333). Similarly, after interviewing female pimp-controlled prostitutes, Williamson and Cluse-Tolar (2002) concluded the following:

Although pimps never guaranteed emotional or financial security, the potential for success inspired women to test the waters in this new life. There was a sense of belonging that women longed for, a sense of exciting hope for the future, an adventure that would take them from their meager existence into a life with a man who told them they had special skills, intelligence, and beauty (p. 1081).

Even after experiencing the potential for harm, though, it has been reported that some street prostitutes thrive on the excitement of the streets. In conducting extensive interviews with street prostitutes, Dalla (2002) reported one subject stating that “it was a high just getting home alive some nights,” which the author attributed to the woman having “become so emotionally numb that life-threatening situations were necessary in order to feel any sensation at all” (p. 70).

### **Spouses / Partners**

Recent empirical literature has pointed to the similarities between intimate partner violence and prostitution (Stark & Hodgson, 2003; Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002). This literature has illustrated the likeness in techniques of control used by both abusive partners and

pimps, such as physical injuries, substance abuse, and barriers to healthcare. For example, Romero-Daza, Weeks, and Singer (2003) conducted extensive qualitative interviews with female prostitutes and found that 75% of these women were physically abused by their husbands and boyfriends. This is consistent with the findings of el-Bassel, Witte, Wada, Gilbert, & Wallace (2001), who reported that 73% of street prostitutes interviewed had experienced physical or sexual abuse from intimate partners. It is also not uncommon to find that johns/dates and pimps are frequently abusive husbands and boyfriends (Leidholdt, 2003).

In addition to these similarities, it has also been noted that many spouses or partners are the very individuals who turn these women out and introduce them to street-level prostitution. This process often begins with boyfriends and husbands using girlfriends and wives in pornography. These men produce pornography of their partners, typically without their consent, which are then sold in a thriving market for amateur films and photographs, including websites such as *Turning Wife Into a Whore* and *Wives that Whore from Home* (Stark & Hodgson, 2003). Abusive men also frequently convert their wives and girlfriends into their personal sex slaves by commanding them to perform sexual acts in exchange for basic necessities and money (Leidholdt, 2003). Leidholdt and Raymod (1990) noted that many prostitutes were abandoned by or escaped from abusive partners and forced into prostitution as a way to support themselves and their children.

When the male partner lives a drug-using lifestyle, women have been forced to supply him drugs through sex trading (el-Bassel et al., 2001). For example, Dalla (2002) discovered that approximately 19% of the women she interviewed who were involved in street prostitution were initiated to transactional sex by boyfriends and husbands who persuaded or forced persistent involvement in transactional sex as a means of supporting their own drug habits.

## Financial Need

Recent inquiry has studied some of the more systemic factors that influence street prostitution, including poverty and limited employment opportunities, and have noted that prostitution is often the best of “extremely circumscribed options” that women have available in order to survive (Shdaimah & Wiechelt, 2012, p. 24). Poverty/financial need is considered to be a primary motivator for entrance into street work, and women are enticed into prostitution for financial gain due to having few alternatives for income (Baseman, Ross, & Williams, 1999; Dalla, 2002; El-Bassel et al., 2001; Giobbe, 1991; Du Mont & McGregor, 2004; Kennedy et al., 2007; Leidholdt, 2003; Maxwell & Maxwell, 2000; Monrow, 2005; Romero-Daza, Weeks, & Singer, 2003; Vanwesenbeeck, 2010; Williamson & Folaron, 2003). After conducting research with sex tourists, prostitutes, and clients in nine countries, Julia O’Connell Davidson (1999) stated that “wealthy, powerful individuals do not typically elect to prostitute themselves” (p. 3); additional literature echoes this sentiment. To be sure, it has been noted that a disproportionate number of those involved in sex work are poor women and children (Hood-Brown, 1998; Monroe, 2005). Consider, for example, Joanna Phoenix’s (2000) article on women’s prolonged immersion in prostitution:

Just as Lombroso and Ferrero’s (1895), the Gluecks’ (1934), Benjamin and Masters’ (1964), McLeod’s (1982) and Hoigard and Finstad’s (1992) prostitute-women respondents lived extremely impoverished lives, so too did the women on whom this article is based. They were, above all else, poor women struggling to survive in extraordinarily adverse economic and social conditions and making the best choices they felt they could make at the time they made them. Indeed, for all the respondents, their experiences of prostitution interlocked around their experiences of poverty (p. 39).

Those who do prostitute themselves typically see no other way of surviving, as they are in dire need of money, food, and shelter. In their seminal research on entrance into prostitution, Silbert and Pines (1982) interviewed 200 street-level prostitutes and reported that the leading motivation for entrance into street prostitution was destitution. These women most frequently lived in a social context where they were dependent on boyfriends or husbands, the state/welfare, or on casual, part-time/low-pay employment for survival (Phoenix, 2000). In response, women viewed prostitution as a means by which they could be socially and economically independent. This is especially evident in the Center for Impact Research's examination of the prostitution of women and girls in metropolitan Chicago, which found that the amount of street-level prostitution decreases early each month when those who would otherwise be prostituting receive public aid benefits (O'Leary & Howard, 2001). In one of the largest studies examining prostitution to date, Farley et al. (2003) surveyed 854 people engaged in prostitution in nine countries, including the U. S., and reported that 89% of subjects wanted to leave prostitution but voiced to researchers that they did not perceive themselves as having alternate options for economic survival. Additionally, Williamson and Folaron (2003), who interviewed women previously working as street prostitutes, reported that most of their subjects reported having attempted to leave prostitution, but upon finding themselves once again living in poverty, re-entered the life (p. 284).

In their study of inner-city prostitutes in the United States, Valera et al. (2000) reported that 66.7% of female street prostitutes recounted current or former homelessness. Similarly, Farley and Barkan (1998) noted that 84% of the prostitutes in their study reported current or past homelessness. Homeless women have reported that there are few opportunities for them to support themselves through legitimate means, so they often engage in prostitution as a means of

economic survival (El-Bassel et al., 1997; Wenzel, Leake, & Gelberg, 2001; Whitbeck & Simons, 1993). These dire situations were further illustrated by Kurtz, Surratt, Inciardi, and Kiley (2004) who surveyed 294 female street prostitutes and found that homeless women charged their dates, on average, 15-20% less than non-homeless prostitutes, largely due to their economic desperation. This economic desperation can also be seen among those who enter prostitution as juveniles. These girls are minors and thus unable to obtain legal and/or conventional employment and often have no choice but to seek out alternative ways of earning money. Lloyd (2005) stated that these low-income adolescent girls are at an increased risk of recruitment into prostitution and may also find it more difficult to leave.

It is worth noting that female street prostitutes are typically the primary providers for their children, which also is a motivator for entrance into street prostitution. When considering the perils of street prostitution, it is apparent that few women and girls would voluntarily select the occupation if they were not restricted by a lack of education and/or the a dearth of legitimate employment opportunities that pay a living wage (Young, Boyd, & Hubbell, 2000). Women who began prostituting due to financial necessity frequently began using drugs as a means of deadening the reality of the prostitution. After becoming addicted to drugs, an additional financial burden is added, which leaves the women feeling trapped (Erikson, Butters, McGillicuddy, & Hallgren, 2000; Kennedy et al., 2007). Dalla (2002) illustrated that of those she studied who did not enter prostitution to finance a pre-existing drug habit, 89% became habitual drug users as they continued in sex work. Prostitution thus becomes one of the few alternatives for low-income women with limited education, little access to legitimate opportunities, and drug addictions who are in environments with few other alternatives for survival (Romero-Daza, Weeks, & Singer, 2003). Interestingly, many women who engage in

transactional sex do not identify exchanging sex for drugs, money, or basic necessities as prostitution; instead, they view it simply as a means of getting by in life (O’Leary & Howard, 2001). Some women who exchange sex for money do not consider this exchange to truly be prostitution when it is done to meet basic survival needs (Hood-Brown, 1998). Simply put, many women and girls who would otherwise live on the street trade sex for food or a place to sleep.

While prostitution may assist in providing basic needs, it is important to recognize that most women remain poor while working as street-level prostitutes (Hood-Brown, 1998). These women enter prostitution impoverished and this desperation leaves them willing to accept very small sums of money or basic provisions in exchange for sex.

### **Social/Community Disadvantage**

Maxwell & Maxwell (2000) found that lack of legitimate employment, which is a strong gauge of one’s economic situation, is also a significant indicator of participation in transactional sex. In the neighborhoods where their subjects lived, however, the women’s need to work as a prostitute “was heightened by insufficient opportunities for legitimate employment” (p. 799).

Being in a vulnerable economic and social situation also places these women at risk for being targeted by pimps/traffickers. These individuals tend to target those who have few alternative opportunities and those who are unable to meet basic needs, and they exploit women and girls in disadvantaged communities (Clawson et al., 2009). For example, Clawson and colleagues’ examination of human sex trafficking within the United States reported that vulnerable women are sometimes recruited from homeless shelters to ultimately be exploited (p. 8).



## **Childhood Victimization**

There is an abundance of literature documenting sexual victimization, particularly as children, prior to entering prostitution. Research has demonstrated that physical and/or sexual abuse in childhood significantly predicts involvement in prostitution in adolescents and women (Simons & Whitbeck, 1991). In comparison with women in the general population, there is a higher incidence of childhood sexual abuse among female prostitutes (James & Meyerding, 1977; Silbert & Pines, 1981; Simons & Whitbeck, 1991). In fact, researchers believe that childhood sexual abuse victimization is a catalyst to various processes that subsequently enhance the likelihood that the victim will become involved in prostitution among other deviant acts (Simons & Whitbeck, 1991).

In one of the first empirical studies of prostitution, Silbert and Pines (1983) surveyed 200 street prostitutes and reported that 60% of participants were sexually exploited as minors, with a mean age of victimization of ten. Among these cases, 59% involved vaginal penetration with the penis. In 81% of these cases, force, including physical (25%), emotional coercion (23%), and both emotional and physical (33%), was used. The sexual exploitation also resulted in severe physical harm including bruises (68%), cuts (51%), shock (19%), broken bones (3%), and concussions (2%). The researchers further determined that the vast majority of these victims lost their virginity through this exploitation (p. 286). The research also explored other forms of child abuse and stated that 62% had suffered physical abuse and 70% were emotionally abused.

Of their sample of one hundred street prostitutes, Valera et al. (2000) reported 44% being victim to unwanted sexual touching or sexual contact with an adult when they were children, and 39% recalled being hit by a parent or caretaker until they were bruised or otherwise injured (p. 151). In a study of adult prostitutes who were involved in commercial sexual exploitation before

age 18, 80% of participants reported experiencing sexual abuse as children (Nixon, Tutty, Downe, Gerkoff, & Ursal, 2002). Similarly, 88% of domestic trafficking victims in Muftić & Finn's (2013) comparison of international and domestic trafficking victims gave accounts of experiencing childhood physical and/or sexual abuse victimization. Dalla et al. (2003) conducted in-depth, personal interviews with 43 street prostitutes and reported 74% disclosed experiencing childhood sexual abuse, with 25% of these child sexual abuse victims being victimized by more than one individual. Among the 294 street-level prostitutes surveyed by Kurtz et al. (2004), 86% indicated being physically abused and 70% sexually abused during childhood. Roe-Sepowitz's (2012) research on childhood emotional abuse among 71 adult prostitutes also reported similar experiences of abuse, with 79% experiencing sexual abuse, 55% experiencing physical abuse, and 45% experiencing emotional abuse. A more broad examination of childhood victimization and crime victimization matched children who were abused and/or neglected children with children who were non-abused/non-neglected and followed them prospectively into adulthood; results indicated that individuals who were child abuse victims (physical, sexual, and neglect) were significantly more likely to have been runaways and/or be involved in prostitution (McIntyre and Widom, 2011).

Victimological literature has illustrated that women who are sexually victimized early in life are at increased risk for subsequent physical and sexual victimization as adolescents and adults (Finkelhor & Browne, 1988). Two possible explanations for this relationship have been outlined. The first suggests that these victims develop a self-concept and personality that makes them targets for men who seek to exploit them (Finkelhor & Browne, 1988). It is believed that the abuse not only isolates the woman's emotions from sexuality, but also serves to underline her self-perception as a sexual object and as sexually corrupted (James & Meyerding, 1977). The

second explanation posits that the early sexual victimization enhances the probability that the woman will engage in a risky lifestyle involving alcohol/drug use and criminality, which subsequently enhances her vulnerability to becoming a victim (Simons & Whitbeck, 1991). The empirical literature seems to offer more support for the latter explanation. In particular, research comparing youth subjected to physical/sexual abuse and youth who did not has illustrated that abused children exhibit more social skill deficits, resulting in being more likely to be rejected by conventional peer groups and thus more likely to socialize with delinquent peers, leading to involvement in multiple forms of delinquent behavior (Howes, 1988; Simons & Whitbeck, 1991). As outlined in the aforementioned discussion on runaways and prostitution, one of the primary reasons that girls run away from home is to escape abuse: principally sexual abuse.

Simons and Whitbeck (1991) suggested that sexually abused girls run away from their unsafe environments and then become involved in street life. This forces them to associate with social networks that include street people and other runaways who engage in deviant and illegal, acts including prostitution as a means of supporting themselves. After ending up on the streets, these girls often become enmeshed in a system of individuals engaged in sexual acts as a means of survival. These adolescents are those who are most vulnerable to becoming involved in pimp-controlled prostitution. When comparing pimp-controlled versus non-pimp controlled women, the pimp-controlled women tend to have come from more chaotic and defective upbringing; these women are more likely to have a family background that involved being verbally abused as a child (70% versus 47%), being physically abused as a child (50% versus 43%) and being sexually abused as a child (50% versus 37%) (Norton-Hawk, 2004).

Research on the recruitment process for prostitution has demonstrated that authority figures often use their position of power to recruit women into prostitution. This authority figure

is commonly a parent or family member (Kennedy et al., 2007). Twelve percent of the women interviewed by Kennedy et al. reported being forced to prostitute by their mother, father, foster parent, or older sibling. Of these women, some were expected to engage in transactional sex to support parent(s)' drug addictions. Others worked with their mothers, who were also prostitutes (p. 11).

To be sure, most women who are victims of sexual abuse do not become prostitutes, but, as illustrated above, most research indicates that the majority female prostitutes have endured sexual and/or physical abuse as children. Thus, it is important to note that it is generally believed that there is an indirect relationship between childhood sexual abuse and subsequent prostitution, which is mediated by runaway behavior (Nandon, Koverola, & Schludermann, 1998; Seng, 1989; Simons & Whitbeck, 1991). In exploring the relationship between sexual abuse and adolescent prostitution, Seng (1989) illustrated this proposition by concluding that the link between childhood sexual abuse and adolescent prostitution requires runaway behavior as an intervening variable. According to Seng, "it is not so much that sexual abuse leads to prostitution as it is that running away leads to prostitution" (p. 673). The aforementioned research by Silbert and Pines (1983) also established that 70% of those who had been sexually exploited as children believed that this victimization affected their decision to become a prostitute; 17% of these women also reported running away from home to avoid the sexual abuse (p. 286). Similarly, Shaw and Butler (1989) have stressed that while the literature seems to point to the devastating prevalence of dissent and disruption among juvenile prostitutes, it remains unclear if these problems are directly caused by or indirectly precipitate involvement in prostitution.

The links between childhood abuse, running away, and later involvement in prostitution have been consistently illustrated (Nandon, Koverola, & Schludermann, 1998; Silbert & Pines, 1981; Simons & Whitbeck, 1991). However, the risk factors of juvenile prostitution, including running away from home, parental substance use, childhood abuse, are usually intercorrelated (Roe-Sepowitz, 2012). This is likely because many homes containing one risk factor frequently also have other risk factors present (Dube et al., 2003).

### **Pimps / Daddies**

It is estimated that women with evident alternate options to entering into street-level prostitution of their own desire account for only one percent of women working in this field (Davidson, 1998). The majority of street prostitution is believed to involve pimps and other sex industry entrepreneurs. Pimps are individuals who “control the actions and live off the proceeds of one or more women who work the street” (Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002, p. 1074). These men typically have several women working for them concurrently in an arrangement often referred to as a “stable” (Dalla, Xia, & Kennedy, 2003). Pimps also frequently work with others who are involved in illicit street-level activity, such as gang members and drug dealers who often expect to receive a percentage of the income made by prostitutes and/or sexual access to the women. Giobbe (1993) reported that 53% of women entered street prostitution with pimps, and more than 80% of the sample became involved with a pimp over their involvement in prostitution. Williamson and Cluse-Tolar (2002) reported that each of the 21 women in their study of former street prostitutes in the Midwest had a pimp. Women with pimps are less likely to have graduated from high school, seldom have had retained conventional employment, reported earlier sexual experiences, and had higher incidence of drug use than street prostitutes

without pimps (Williamson & Baker, 2009). As previously illustrated, while most street prostitutes were raised in dysfunctional environments, families of pimp-controlled women had more severe problems, including parents who heavily abused drugs and alcohol (Norton-Hawk, 2004, p. 191). In fact, pimps often target vulnerable adolescents and subsequently develop relationships with these youth whereby the youth comes to depend on the pimp (Morselli & Savoie-Gargiso, 2014). After providing the emotional support that the adolescent had been lacking in her home environment, the pimp then begins to encourage prostitution to repay the debt she has incurred whilst under his care. Typically, the situation does not allow for the debt to be paid off, and the girls/women are threatened harm if they do not continue to prostitute themselves (Dalla , 2002; Kennedy et al., 2007). Territo & Glover (2014) describe the process as follows:

Once a trafficker/pimp identifies the physical and/or psychological needs of a child, he seeks to fill them. If the child lacks a loving parental presence, the trafficker/pimp morphs his tactics to become the parent figure. If a youth needs a safe place to sleep, the trafficker/pimp provides housing. In this way, traffickers/pimps work to create a dependency between the minor and themselves (p. 112).

The role of pimps in adolescent prostitution cannot be understated. Williamson & Baker (2009) noted that pimp-controlled prostitutes began sex work at an earlier age than non-pimp-controlled prostitutes, and Norton-Hawk's interviews with urban street prostitutes revealed that prostitutes with pimps were significantly more likely to first regularly engage in transactional sex by the age of 14 than women without pimps (30% vs. 7%) (p. 191). Street prostitutes, particularly young women and adolescents, commonly call their pimps "daddy." As Read

(2014) has illustrated, this infantilizes the prostitute and places the pimp in a position of power, protection, and discipline (p. 68). This empowers the pimp and simultaneously places the girl in a subordinate position.

Pimps frequently use pornography as a means of preparing women and girls for prostitution (Stark & Hodgson, 2003; Territo & Glover, 2014). It has been reported that pimps encourage prostitutes to imitate scenes from pornographic films as a means of teaching them how to prostitute. Stark & Hodgson (2003) recall an interview with a woman who was prostituted as a teen in which the prostitute recalled her pimp “practicing” with her the acts in pornographic photos as a means of helping her to prepare to be turned out as a prostitute (p. 21). The same woman recalled her pimp creating pornography with her to use to prepare other teenagers to become prostitutes.

It is generally believed that pimps control prostitutes by understanding the wants/needs of these women, including money, shelter, clothing, food, and drugs, and control those wants through threats, intimidation, and violence (Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002). In fact, there is an abundance of literature that has made known that pimps are frequent perpetrators of violence against prostitutes (Arnold, Steward, & McNeece, 2001; Giobbe, 1993; Kennedy et al., 2007; Norton-Hawk, 2004; Silbert & Pines, 1981, 1982, 1983; Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002). Silbert and Pines (1982), for example, reported that one-third of the women in their study recalled being beaten by pimps. Similarly, Norton-Hawk’s (2004) study examining the differences between pimp-controlled and non-pimp-controlled prostitutes revealed that pimp-controlled prostitutes experience more than twice the amount of physical and sexual violence by their johns/dates, and suggested that the higher level of violence is likely the result of pimps

demanding that these women reach a monetary quota. Other studies have reported similar incidence of assault by pimps (see Giobbe 1993).

After examining prostitution in Chicago, Raphael and Shapiro (2004) revealed that half of the women included in their sample had been physically abused and 35% had been sexually abused by their pimps (p. 248). Some evidence has even suggested that involvement of a pimp presents a conceivable risk to the well-being of prostitutes; prostitutes who reported being involved with an abusive pimp experienced detrimental subsequent health outcomes, including “physical health problems, mental health problems, co-occurring health issues, and suicidal ideations” (Muftić & Finn, 2013, p. 1879).

Pimps further subordinate prostitutes by requiring them to earn a specific amount of money and then controlling the money that the women earn (Dalla, 2002). Specifically, prostitutes with pimps generally have to turn most, if not all, of their money over to the pimp (Dalla, 2002; Hood-Brown, 1998; Read, 2014) and are at risk of abuse from pimps if they do not bring in sufficient income (Arnold, Stewart, & McNeece, 2001). Thus, while many of these women entered into prostitution with the understanding it can be profitable, research has shown that it is rarely profitable for the prostitute herself.

It should be noted, though, that there is a small body of literature that shows a more complicated relationship between prostitutes and pimps in which the prostitutes benefit from a collaborative, evenly balanced relationship (Marcus, Horning, Curtis, Sanson, & Thompson, 2014; Marcus et al., 2012; May, Harocopos, & Hough, 2000; Morselli & Savoie-Gargiso, 2014; Shelby, 2002). This research suggests that the relationship between prostitute and pimp can be collaborative, and while the pimp provides a service, he does not manage the worker. Morselli & Savoie-Gargiso (2014), for example, concluded that many new prostitutes are easily



manipulated and exploited in the early stages of the pimp-prostitute relationship. It is possible, however, that “some prostitutes become indispensable to the pimps who manage them” (p. 263). Savoie-Gargiso further states that experienced prostitutes, including those once coerced and manipulated, might obtain increased responsibilities after working with a pimp for several years, eventually obtaining a position of power in the prostitution network. Territo and Glover (2014) explain that pimps often use these tactics to distance themselves from the risk of discovery by the police; they frequently use a “bottom bitch/girl” to manage the details of the other prostitutes’ exploitation, which allows the pimp to remain distant from the crime he is committing (p. 113). In their national juvenile prostitution study, Mitchel, Finkelhor, & Wolak (2010) also reported that older prostitutes help pimps recruit or monitor juveniles; consequently, it was illustrated that these females had transitioned from a position of exploited to exploiter. However, it is worth noting that the sample populations in these studies tended to state that use of pimps in these areas was relatively uncommon, thereby suggesting that perhaps these areas are exceptions to the traditional pimp-prostitute relationship.

### **Johns / Dates**

Historically, society’s response to prostitution was to arrest the women who were selling sex, and sometimes arrest a pimp. The johns/dates (customers) were typically either released without being arrested/cited, or received relatively minor sanctions in comparison to the prostitutes and/or pimps (Territo & Glover, 2014). This is often thought to be because the johns are empowered by patriarchal systems and misogynistic cultures whereby the commercial sex is viewed as the fault of the women who are prostituting themselves. As such, most law enforcement attention was on arresting prostitutes. Recently, however, demand for transactional

sex has been acknowledged as a major driver of commercial sex markets, and operations have begun to focus on the demand rather than the supply of transactional sex. Reverse stings, for example, became widespread in the late 1980s; these operations use female police officers posing as street-level prostitutes as a means to arrest johns. Once arrested, a variety of non-traditional sanctions have been employed, including vehicle seizures, driver's license suspension, shaming (most frequently through police press releases), and john schools (education or treatment programs) (Territo & Glover, 2014).

Whereas the typical adult street prostitute is female, poor, and/or a single parent, the typical john/date is a married white male who lives in the suburbs and works either in a skilled trade or a white collar job (Freund et al., 1989; Kissil & Davey, 2010; Monroe, 2005). Dalla (2002) reported that ten of the 43 street prostitutes interviewed in a Midwestern city had regular clients, meaning the prostitutes had long-standing relations with particular johns in addition to having non-regular dates. Repeat clients were also reported in Freund et al.'s (1989) report on street prostitutes in Camden, New Jersey, whereby nineteen of twenty subjects reported that 14-100% of dates were with repeat clients (p. 465).

While prostitutes and johns usually negotiate the charge for specific acts in advance, the women do not always get this money from the men. Johns often refuse to pay the woman, take the money back, often by force, following the meeting, or assault the woman while knowing that he had never intended on exchanging money (Hood-Brown, 1998). It is well established that the majority of the violence experienced by female prostitutes is perpetrated by their own dates/johns (Coston & Ross, 1998; Farley & Barkan, 1998; Kurtz et al., 2004; Silbert & Pines, 1983). However, Martin Monto, who has studied over 2,300 arrested clients of prostitutes, has concluded that "a relatively small proportion of clients may be responsible for most of the

violence against prostitutes” (Monto, 2000, p. 76). He later added that the data do not suggest that most johns are violent (p. 176). Violence against prostitutes will be discussed in detail below.

## **Drugs and Alcohol**

The relationship between prostitution and drug and alcohol use is undeniable, as drug abuse among street-level prostitutes is very high (Baseman et al., 1999; Dalla, 2002; Hood-Brown, 1998; Nadon et al., 1998; Silbert & Pines, 1981; Sterk & Elifson, 1990). A report on the prevalence of prostitution in metropolitan Chicago included data from approximately 60 drug/alcohol abuse treatment programs that were surveyed and indicated that 60-100% of their female clients have regularly engaged in transactional sex for drugs or money (O’Leary & Howard, 2001, p. 29). Muftić and Finn (2013) reported numbers in a similar range, with 94% of domestic sex trafficking victims and 75% of non-trafficked sex workers being addicted to drugs and/or alcohol (p. 1873).

The drug-prostitution overlap is somewhat expected because prostitution and drug markets are typically found in the same or adjacent areas (Sterk & Elifson, 1990). However, there is debate over the relative timing of this relationship. Some argue that, as a means of financing their addiction, those already using drugs and alcohol turn to selling sex. Conversely, it has been illustrated that some women, particularly those who are involuntarily working as prostitutes, resort to using alcohol and drugs to escape the reality of their life. The relationships observed have generally been bivariate correlations, with limited studies that have assessed the temporal order drug use and prostitution, and even fewer using longitudinal methodology. It is

typically agreed, however, that roughly equal numbers of women were addicts before engaging in transactional sex and after becoming prostitutes (James, 1976; Silbert, Pines, & Lynch, 1982).

Goldstein (1979) was one of the first to propose that addiction preceded prostitution. Among lower class prostitutes in particular, it was believed that addiction to heroin preceded transactional sex, which became the way that the women met the economic requisites following addiction. Potterat et al. (1998) provided support for this perspective in demonstrating that injection drug use commonly preceded entrance into prostitution, with 75% of the prostitutes in their study injecting drugs before beginning prostitution. Similarly, Sterk and Elison (1990) reported that 74% of the female prostitutes in their sample were using drugs prior to prostitution activities, and the majority of these women asserted that they would not be involved in transactional sex if they were not addicted to drugs. There have also been testimonies that drug addicted young women sleep with drug dealers in exchange for drugs. These dealers will supply the women with drugs for a short period of time, but then only continue providing drugs if the women provide sexual favors for his friends (Kennedy et al., 2007).

The rampant use of crack-cocaine in the 1980s is also believed to have played a key part in why some women resorted to prostitution (Dalla, 2002; Erikson et al., 2000; Farley & Barkan, 1998; Maxwell & Maxwell, 2000). In fact, it was suggested that the widespread use of crack in low-income neighborhoods increased the number of women working as street prostitutes in the 1980s and 1990s (Ratner, 1993). Further, Maxwell and Maxwell's (2000) research examining the occurrence of prostitution and drug use showed that regular crack use was correlated with larger annual frequencies of transactional sex (p. 800). This study did note, however, that crack cocaine use only precipitated prostitution among younger women. Sterk and Elifson (1990) reported that among the females prostitutes in their study who smoked crack cocaine, almost half

reported being addicted to the drug and engaging in sexual acts in exchange for either the drug or money to buy the drug before they began self-identifying as a prostitute (p. 213).

Maher & Curtis' (1992) examination of the impact of crack-cocaine on sex work revealed that the advent of the drug and the subsequent influx of large numbers of women into prostitution produced changes in how street-level prostitution operated, including a lowered going rate for transactional sex, which made prostitution less lucrative. Maher and Daley (1996) wrote of the New York City sex trade, "The market became flooded with novice sex workers, the going rate for sexual transactions decreased, and 'deviant' expectations by dates increased, as did the levels of violence and victimization" (p. 483-484). The desperate and often violent conditions of crack-using street-level prostitutes make it probable that these women would experience psychological distress and turn to increased drug use as a way to relieve that distress (Young et al., 2000).

Research supporting the addiction-followed-by-prostitution model has varied in regard to the percentage of women who enter prostitution along a similar track. Kennedy et al. (2007) and Coy (2009), for example, reported that 16% and 14% of women respectively interviewed acknowledged drugs as the pretext for their involvement in street-level prostitution. In interviews with 43 street-level prostitutes, Dalla (2002) discovered that 37% were enticed into prostitution to fund an existing drug addiction. Potterat et al. (1998), however, reported that 66% of the females in their study used drugs prior to engaging in transactional sex, whereas 18% began using drugs and selling sex simultaneously, and 16% did not begin using drugs until after they had begun prostituting themselves. Other research has failed to support the argument that drug use explains entry into prostitution, but has demonstrated significantly more drug use among prostitutes than others (McClanahan et al., 1999).

Other research suggests a cycle of selling sex to buy drugs whilst simultaneously relying on drugs to cope with the emotional trauma and stigma of prostitution (Coy, 2009; Farley & Barkan, 1998; Graham & Wish, 1994; Kramer, 2004; Kurtz et al., 2004; Sanders, 2004, Sterk & Elifson, 1990). Kennedy et al. (2007) explain that those women who entered into prostitution out of financial need often began using drugs and/or alcohol to numb themselves from the reality of prostitution. Dalla (2002) similarly reported that 89% of women who did not enter prostitution to finance a pre-existing addiction reported becoming frequent drug users as they continued working in street-level transactional sex. These prostituting women have been found to be significantly more likely to use illegal substances because they give the women a greater sense of control, decrease feelings of guilt, and help them to avoid pain that accompanies sexual distress (Young et al., 2000).

Kramer's (2004) research on the emotional experiences of performing prostitution clearly illustrates how street-level prostitutes use alcohol and drugs to cope with emotions: 59% and 28% of the sample revealed that they used illegal drugs and alcohol, respectively, while engaging in transactional sex to "numb out" (p. 191). 70% reported using drugs and/or alcohol to detach emotionally when performing sexual acts, and 44% indicated that they self-medicate with these substances to cope with the fear that accompanies prostitution. Of the 119 women included in the study, 54% reported that it was necessary to be high to engage in transactional sex. A prostitute interviewed by Kurtz et al. (2004) illustrated how getting high was the only way many prostitutes can endure sex work: "It's easier, it's like more comfortable to do it. When you're not high, you think about doing it twice, three times. You're like, 'I don't want to do it.'" (p. 367).

Young et al. (2000) reached similar findings in their examination of exploring drug use as way to cope with the psychological anguish of prostitution. In their comparison of prostituting and non-prostituting women, the prostituting women were found to be significantly more likely to use drugs to improve their confidence, enhance their sense of control, decrease feelings of guilt, and to minimize sexual distress (p. 795). Interestingly, it was also reported that it is likely that even those who used drugs before entering into prostitution become heavier drug users after engaging in transactional sex, suggesting that prostitution and drug use is a “self-perpetuating cycle” in which the involvement in one leads to an increase in the other (p. 795). Once the addiction has developed, it only adds another level of financial difficulty to these women, leaving them further trapped in prostitution. Arnold et al. (2000) recounted that the addiction to drugs, whether preceding or following entrance into prostitution, fueled desires to return to the streets and overpowered the women’s efforts to quit prostituting.

There is also a relationship between drug and alcohol use and victimization. This use has been shown to increase one’s interactions in criminogenic environments, thereby increasing her susceptibility to victimization (Sampson & Lauritsen, 1990). El-Bassel et al. (2001) reported that women who used cocaine and were intravenous drug users were more likely to recount physical and/or sexual abuse by johns/dates than were women who did not use those drugs. It is common for street-level prostitutes in particular to cope with their victimization by abusing drugs and alcohol. For example, Williamson & Baker (2009) described the experience of a young prostitute who had repeatedly been raped:

I buried that in my sub-conscience. I buried it with drugs and alcohol... I buried it deep and I wasn’t afraid to go out. I became a little more careful, a little bit. But the crack cocaine had taken over at that point that I guess it just stopped mattering (p. 36).

Kramer (2004) went so far as saying that women needed to be high so as to endure prostitution, as it enables them to detach from the experience of being sexually exploited and also evade the fear of being physically or sexually victimized.

Pimps also play a role in creating and/or maintaining addiction in their prostitutes. Consider, for example, that it is not uncommon for pimps to pay their workers with drugs. There have also been reports of pimps deliberately addicting women to cocaine or heroin and forcing them to provide sexual services in exchange for a regular crack or heroin hit (Stark & Hodgson, 2004).

It should be stressed that although empirical literature points to vast disturbance and struggle in street-level prostitutes' lives, particularly among adolescents, it is unclear whether these difficulties directly cause or indirectly precipitate prostitution (Vanwesenbeeck, 2001), as the combination of personal development, situational factors, and previous life experiences all seem to be involved in pushing one toward prostitution (Shaw & Butler, 1998). Based on the available literature, it would appear that the drug-prostitution link is a self-perpetuating cycle wherein involvement with one results in involvement with the other. Put differently, despite the fact that some engage in transactional sex to fund an established drug habit, they typically increase their substance abuse as a means of coping with the negative emotions that accompany prostitution. Despite the dispute regarding the direction of the causal link, though, it is evident that the use of alcohol and/or drugs among street-level prostitutes is extensive.

### **Victimization**

Although the victimization of prostitutes often began in childhood, it does not appear to cease when they enter adulthood. Violent victimization is a common occurrence among prostitutes, particularly those working on the streets. As previously outlined, some of this



violence is at the hands of pimps as a means of maintaining control over the women. Pimps frequently aim to break a woman down physically and emotionally/psychologically before turning her out into prostitution, which includes hitting, punching, starving, raping, and verbally abusing the woman (Stark & Hodgson, 2003). Sterk and Elifson (1990) reported that 89% of their sample of prostitutes with a pimp had been physically assaulted by their pimps. An established body of literature also illustrates the high prevalence of violence initiated by clients, or dates, with high rates of date violence consistently reported in a variety of published reports (Miller & Schwartz, 1995; Williamson & Folaron, 2003; Youngs & Ioannou, 2013). In fact, the main concern for most prostitutes is being the victim of violence (Barnard, 1993; Coston & Ross, 1998). Coston and Ross' (1998) interviews with prostitutes revealed that the self-reported greatest fear among prostitutes was being killed, followed by: 2) being mugged; 3) getting arrested; 4) serving jail time; and 5) being identified if injured or killed. This fear seems to be warranted; Potterat et al. (2004) reported that prostitutes are nearly 18 times more likely to be murdered than non-prostitutes of similar demographics. Furthermore, a May 2014 article published in the *American Journal of Public Health* reported on a systematic review of 41 peer-reviewed articles examining the overall prevalence of various violence measures among prostitutes (Deering et al., 2014). The authors found that experience of any or combined workplace violence, physical workplace violence, and sexual workplace violence ranged from 45 to 75%.

The research conducted by Silbert and Pines (1981, 1982, 1983) was some of the earliest to illustrate the extensive sexual and physical violence experienced by prostitutes. Among those included in their study, 70% reported being raped in prostitution, 65% were physically assaulted by johns/dates, and 66% were assaulted by pimps. Thirty-six percent of the women in the

sample reported being physically assaulted on a regular basis. Another widely-cited study is that of Farley and Barkan (1998) who conducted interviews with 130 prostitutes in San Francisco. Of these women, 82% described being physically battered since beginning sex work; 55% were assaulted by johns/dates and 30% were assaulted by non-date males.

Arguably the highest incidence of victimization was reported in Muftić and Finn's (2013) comparison of international, domestic, and non-trafficked prostitutes. Fifty percent of international trafficking victims, 94% of domestic trafficking victims, and 100% of non-trafficked prostitutes in their study reported exposure to violence. Among domestic trafficking victims, 89% experienced physical violence, 83% reported sexual violence, and 100% indicated they had been psychologically victimized. Whereas no international trafficking victims in their sample were abused by a pimp, 75% of domestic trafficking victims and 94% of non-trafficked women reported such abuse. Further, 42% of international trafficking victims reported being attacked by a date, and 83% and 63% of domestically-trafficked and non-trafficked women, respectively, described such abuse (p. 1872).

Another report illustrating the high incidence of violence among female prostitutes noted that 86% of respondents in the sample recounted being physically assaulted since entering prostitution; most of these assaults (81%) were at the hands of customers/dates (Valera et al., 2000). The same study reported that 74% of participants had been raped while working as a prostitute. Like physical assault, the majority of assailants (72%) were johns/dates. This study is also beneficial in understanding the repeat victimization of prostitutes; 23% reported being raped once in prostitution, 61% 2-5 times, 10% 6-20 times, and 7% over twenty times (p. 152).

Interviews with forty-three female street prostitutes in the Midwest also revealed similar percentages, with 72% of participants discussing incidents of "severe abuse" from partners,

clients, and/or pimps (Dalla, 2002). However, the qualitative responses of these women further illustrate the severe danger these women face. One participant stated, “There were times when the only way out of a situation was by the grace of God” (p. 70). When asked about the risk of harm associated with street-level prostitution, another participant stated, “you just give them what they want and pray they don’t kill you” (p. 70).

Williamson and Folaron’s (2001) qualitative study of street prostitutes’ exposure to date violence revealed that 92% of their sample had experienced such violence, which included being slapped, punched, kicked, or hit (92%); being choked or beaten (62%); being pushed from a moving vehicle (31%); being raped or repeated attempted rape (62%); being tied up against their will (23%); being beaten with a blunt object (23%); being stabbed repeatedly (15%); being assaulted and robbed (62%); and being tortured with perversion<sup>2</sup> (31% and 8%) (p. 467).

In a project examining the connection between violence, drug use, prostitution, and HIV risk, 61% of subjects reported being raped while working in street-level prostitution (Romero-Daza et al., 2003). Ninety percent of women in the same study recounted being violently victimized by customers. One subject reported that violence often follows the woman asking for payment for services:

I got pushed out of the car because the man didn’t want to pay me. He snatched the money out [of my hands] and he was kicking me with his feet and I fell out of the car, and my pants’ leg was caught in the car and that’s when he run over my feet. I got dragged; I was hurt real bad. I stayed in the hospital I think for seven days because when I fell out of the car I had holes, not scratches but holes, deep holes. I was pregnant with

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<sup>2</sup> Tortured with perversion was defined as “being stuffed into a trunk, having a knife inserted into the vagina, being forced to sit on a gear shift anally, branded, and being severely bitten on the vagina and nipples” (Williamson & Folaron, 2001, p. 463).

twins and I didn't know it (p. 248).

After interviewing 222 women involved in prostitution in Chicago, Raphael and Shapiro (2002) reported that 39% were raped while working in prostitution; 22% of these victims were raped more than ten times. Also on the lower-end of victimization incidence in the extant literature, Valera, Sawyer, and Schiraldi (2001) reported that 44% of street prostitutes surveyed in Washington DC had been raped since they began prostituting; 60% of perpetrators were johns/dates. Research involving 294 street-level prostitutes in Miami also revealed similar incidences of violent victimization (Kurtz et al., 2004); 26% had been beaten, 14% had been raped or gang raped, and 8% had been shot at or cut in the previous year.

The inherent danger of street-level prostitution is obvious, and the literature seems to confirm that the most violent aspect of this work is interacting with dates. As indicated above, estimates of sexual assault of prostitutes range from 39% (Raphael & Shapiro, 2002) to 74% (Valera et al., 2000). In the United States, the lifetime prevalence of rape among all women is 18.3%, which further illustrates that the reality of violence is a regular and consistent feature of street-level prostitution, far exceeding the threat experienced by women in the general population.

Criminological and victimological research has also purported that use/abuse of alcohol and/or drugs can also encourage contact with criminal environments, thus increasing one's susceptibility to being victimized (Sampson & Lauritsen, 1990; Sterk & Elifson, 1990). Similarly, being under the influence of drugs/alcohol can also make these women more prone to victimization, as their dates see this as an opportunity to take advantage of them. Sterk and Elifson (1990), for example, found that among 106 female drug-using street-level prostitutes, 30% were physically assaulted and robbed for their earnings, and 18% were forced to perform

sexual acts in which they initially refused to engage. These street-level prostitutes are also at risk of victimization from other drug users who are driven by the need for money or for drugs (Romero-Daza et al., 2003). It has also been suggested that the widespread violence directed at street prostitutes is intensified by drug use by individuals in these settings that can elicit unpredictable, often aggressive behaviors (Arnold et al., 2000).

The violent victimization of street-level prostitutes is frequently typified by the use of weapons, multiple assaults, and serious physical and psychological sequelae (Farley & Barkan, 1998; Lowman, 2000). Du Mont and McGregor's (2004) examination of sexual assaults of prostitutes and non-prostitutes also revealed that prostitutes were more likely to have higher global injury scores<sup>3</sup>, which is consistent with literature proposing that violence directed at prostitutes often involves more physical force and greater injury. It has been conceived that prostitutes often become the target of attack by men who feel the need to emotionally and/or physically abuse women, and these women can be particularly attractive targets because they are often not viewed as legitimate victims (Arnold et al., 2001; Cunnington, 1984).

## **Mental Health**

While the physical violence of prostitution is severe, the emotional trauma of prostitution likely has a far greater impact on the women involved. It has been illustrated that female street-level prostitutes are frequently survivors of sexual abuse, whether as children, adults, or as prostitutes. These survivors of sexual abuse frequently experience trauma-related symptoms. When examining prostitutes specifically, most of these women experience some sort of mental health problem (Cimino, 2012; Farley et al., 2003; Leidholdt, 2003; Mitchell et al., 2010; Muftić

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<sup>3</sup> These injuries included extra genital and genital injuries, including bruises, lacerations, fractures, bites, swelling, and redness (Du Mont & McGregor, 2004, p. 85).

and Finn, 2013; Ross, Farley, & Schwartz, 2004; Weitzer, 2009; Williamson & Folaron, 2003; Young et al., 2000). While one is unable to make causal inferences from these reports, they suggest that for many women, street-level prostitution may be a factor in poor mental health. The emotional impact of prostitution has affected prostitutes' sense of self-worth, and has resulted in increased vulnerability, and feelings of helplessness, fear, and disempowerment (Gorry, Roen, & Reilly, 2010). High rates of dissociative disorders, self-destructive behaviors (overdoses, cutting, and attempted asphyxiation by hanging), suicide attempts, and clinical depression have also been demonstrated by current and former street-level prostitutes (Clawson et al., 2009; Coy, 2009; Farley, 2004; Giobbe, 1993; Lloyd, 2005). Suicide attempts are also common among prostitutes. For example, Hood-Brown (1998) reported that over 80% of the long-term participants in a program that aimed to help women leave prostitution had seriously attempted suicide. Muftić and Finn (2013) reported that 80% of domestic sex trafficking victims and 40% of non-trafficked prostitutes contemplated suicide while involved in prostitution. It has also been suggested that adolescent prostitutes may display symptoms of Stockholm syndrome, whereby as a means of survival, these girls identify with the pimps who are prostituting them (Graham & Wish, 1994).

Kramer (2004) surveyed female prostitutes as a means of obtaining insight into their emotional experiences while prostituting. Ninety percent of the 119 women in the sample reported at least one form of negative emotional experience during prostitution. Of those, 73% indicated that prostitution was emotionally painful, and 77% reported decreases in self-esteem since becoming a prostitute. The emotional trauma prostitutes suffer is not only the result of being physically and sexually victimized, but also psychological injury from pimps restricting their movement and concerns about retaliation (Briere & Spinazolla, 2005; Muftić and Finn,

2013). For example, Farley et al. (2003) reported that seven in ten prostituted women described having their freedom of movement restricted.

In comparing women who successfully exited street prostitution to women who had been unsuccessful, Dalla (2006) noted that those who were successful did not mention emotional or mental health problems (p. 286). However, among those who had been unsuccessful, 54% reported mental illness diagnoses including bipolar disorder, clinical depression, and obsessive compulsive disorder, thereby illustrating the substantial mental illnesses these women frequently suffer. El-Bassel et al. (1997) examined the association between transactional sex and psychosomatic suffering by comparing prostitutes and non-prostitutes among a sample of street-recruited poor, inner-city women. Results indicated that prostitutes had significantly higher degrees of psychosomatic suffering than non-prostitutes, particularly on subscales of psychosis and depression (p. 68-69). El-Bassel and colleagues concluded that the psychological distress experienced by these women was the result of the dangerous and degrading circumstances surrounding prostitution. Similarly, Chudakov, Ilan, Belmaker, & Cwikel (2002) reported that exposure to trauma whilst working as a prostitute increased the occurrence of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among those women.

Dissociation, or emotionally leaving the body, is common under conditions of extreme stress, and has been documented in tortured prisoners of war, sexually abused children, and battered, raped, or prostituted women (Herman, 1997). Research is beginning to point to dissociation being a common psychological defense strategy among prostitutes. For instance, dissociation in prostitutes has been found to result from sexual victimization in childhood as well as sexual violence experienced as an adult prostitute (Farley, 2004; Ross et al., 2004). Coy (2009) explored women's accounts of prostitution and found that dissociation allowed women to

stay calm during transactional sex. Further, this process of emotionally detaching from the body during these encounters became an instinctive reaction. Coy quoted one prostitute as saying “At first it made me feel degraded but now I just switch off. Pretend I’m not there.” (p. 69). These dissociative and numbing symptoms have repeatedly been illustrated in the extant literature (Du Mont & McGregor, 2004; Farley & Barkan, 1990; Kramer, 2004; Valera et al., 2000; Vanwesenbeeck, 1994). Vanwesenbeeck (1994) and Farley (2004) even go so far as stating that the ability to dissociate may be a requirement for surviving prostitution. The aforementioned use of drugs and alcohol is also used to detach emotionally. For example, Kramer (2004) reported that 59% of prostitutes use illicit substances while prostituting to “numb out” and 70% use substances to detach emotionally (p. 195). Giobbe (1991) illustrated the dissociative response to prostitution that was described by an adult prostitute who was sexually assaulted as a child:

Prostitution is like rape. It’s like when I was 15 years old and I was raped. I used to experience leaving my body. I mean that’s what I did when that man raped me. I went to the ceiling and I numbed myself because I didn’t want to feel what I was feeling. I was very frightened. And while I was a prostitute I used to do that all the time. I would numb my feelings. I wouldn’t even feel like I was in my body. I would actually leave my body and go somewhere else with my thoughts and with my feelings until he got off me and it was over with. I don’t know how else to explain it except that it felt like rape. It was rape to me (p. 144).

Ross et al. (2004) posit that these dissociative symptoms may persist for many years after exiting prostitution. While dissociation is a psychological response to protect the woman from the emotional impact of prostitution, it enhances her probability of additional victimization as she



also dissociates in response to “danger cues” that are similar to the initial trauma (Ross et al., 2004, p. 205).

The aforementioned self-harm is thought to be a coping mechanism. Cutting, for example, has been suggested to be a form of agency that refutes the psychological vulnerability resulting from abuse and sustained in prostitution (Jeffreys, 2000). Self-harm has also been identified as a means of enabling women to cope with feelings of unimportance and violation (Riley, 2002).

As the result of the chronic trauma that many prostitutes have experienced, these girls and women often develop symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD encompasses symptoms resulting from traumatic events, and both childhood sexual abuse and revictimization whilst prostituting have been linked to high levels of PTSD (Du Mont & McGregor, 2004; Farley, 2004). Adolescent and adult prostitutes, for example, have described having flashbacks to incidents of childhood sexual victimization as they prostitute (Farley et al., 1998). The act of prostituting keeps alive the trauma of childhood victimization for the girl or woman. In Farley et al.’s (2003) study of prostitutes in nine countries, 68% of respondents met the criteria for PTSD, leading the researchers to conclude that PTSD is normative among prostituted women. It has also been put forward that this PTSD is likely related not only to childhood victimization, but also to the chronic victimization that female street-prostitutes experience (Du Mont & McGregor, 2004). Valera et al. (2000) surveyed inner-city street prostitutes and determined that due to their exposure to violent acts on a regular basis, 42% of the sample, considerably higher than the incidence (7.8%) in the general population, met the DSM-IV criteria for PTSD (p. 154). Others have acknowledged that the high rate of PTSD among female prostitutes is caused by a lifetime of victimization of violence, both as children

and as adult prostitutes, instead of merely the act of prostituting by itself (Farley & Barkan, 1998).

### **Physical Health**

Prostitution places women at risk for negative health outcomes. These women are exposed to treacherous working environments and also have increased chances of contracting infectious diseases. Illness and poor nutrition are also common among prostitutes as a result to minimal access to adequate health care (Mitchell et al., 2010). Survey data from street and escort prostitutes indicated that 52% of respondents reported that participation in sex acts as a prostitute was physically painful (Kramer, 2004).

The National Institute of Health funded a study that examined mortality in a long-term (1967-1999) cohort of nearly 2,000 prostitutes in Colorado Springs (Potterat et al., 2004). When compared to the general population, adjusting for age and race, the standardized mortality ratio was 1.9, or 90% higher than comparable non-prostitute women (p. 780). The average age of death was 34, and unsurprisingly, few of these women died of natural causes. Homicide was the leading cause of death (19%), followed by drug ingestion (18%), accidents (12%), and alcohol-related causes (9%) (p. 781). In comparison, active prostitutes were 17.7 times more likely to be murdered than women of comparable age and race during the period of study. This study revealed that “no population of women studied previously has had a crude mortality rate, standardized mortality ratio, or percentage of deaths due to murder even approximating those observed in our cohort” (p. 783). The workplace homicide rate for prostitutes was 204 per 100,000. In comparing this homicide rate to the highest female workplace homicide rate in the U.S. during the 1980s (female liquor store workers = 4 per 100,000), the researchers concluded

that female prostitutes “face the most dangerous occupational environment in the United States” (p. 784).

Prostitutes are at increased risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) (Farley & Kelley, 2000). The use of condoms can help protect the women, but there is little consensus on their use in transactional sex. Romero-Daza et al (2003) reported that the majority of the women in their sample demand that their dates use condoms. However, this demand is often limited to sexual acts involving vaginal or anal penetration, still placing the woman at risk of contracting a disease if performing unprotected oral sex. Conversely, Freund et al. (1989) discovered that only 30% of street prostitutes in their sample used condoms at each sexual encounter. Women who are in prostitution due to coercion or defeat have been determined to be less likely negotiate for use of condoms (Muftić & Finn, 2013). As previously noted, some women reported that dates paid extra to have unprotected sex (Dalla, 2002), and others who are prostituting in exchange for drugs or drug money only often report never using condoms. This group of prostitutes also tends to have restricted access to health care, and due to their age and isolation, their knowledge of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, is often limited. Even those who mandate the use of condoms when engaging in consensual transactional sex are often not able to safeguard against potential diseases when they are victims of sexual violence.

## **Children**

The reality of life as a prostitute affects more than just the women who are involved. Many prostitutes struggle with being mothers. Weiner (1996) found that over two-thirds of female prostitutes have at least one child. It has also been reported that these women have an

average of 2.25 to 3.4 children each, and some have up to seven children (Dalla, 2004; Weiner, 1996). While 94% of the former prostitutes included in Dalla's (2006) narrative on exiting street-level prostitution reported having children, only 14% of these children lived with their mothers. Muftić and Finn (2013) examined female sex trafficking victims in the United States and reported that 80% of non-trafficked sex workers and 75% of domestic trafficking victims no longer had custody of their children, who were either taken into the custody of social services and/or adopted by a relative (p. 1874). Similar findings were reported in a study conducted in a community social service program for street-level sex workers in Florida where the majority of clients no longer had physical or legal custody of their minor children (Arnold, Steward, & McNeece, 2000). Most of the current/former prostitutes who did not have custody of their children indicated that regaining legal custody was a primary goal (p. 125). However, while many women voluntarily relinquish or are stripped of custody of their minor children, others battle being a prostitute as well as a mother (Kissil & Davey, 2010).

As previously discussed, irregular condom use is not uncommon among some prostitutes. Some women report always using protection, but others have conveyed using condoms only with strangers but not with regular dates or their pimps (Dalla, 2002). Some prostitutes have noted that clients pay extra to have unprotected sex. Not surprisingly, these women are sometimes impregnated by johns. Dalla (2002) related that 22 of 43 prostitutes that she interviewed were impregnated either by partners or johns, and carried the pregnancies to term.

### **Barriers to Leaving**

The majority of female street prostitutes have indicated that they would like to leave prostitution. Valera et al. (2000), for example, stated that 67% of prostitutes in their sample

wanted to leave sex work, and survey data indicated that 94% of a sample of street prostitutes in Phoenix would leave sex work for a different job with similar earnings (Kramer, 2004).

Similarly, of 854 prostitutes in nine countries, 89% indicated that they wanted to exit sex work but had no other means for economic survival (Farley et al., 2003).

Many of the same circumstances that drove women into sex work, such as financial need, substance abuse/drug addiction, and pressure from others, are also contributing features that make it difficult to leave (Baker, 2010; Cimino, 2012; Sanders, 2007). Their economic situations act as barriers to leaving prostitution, which is illustrated in literature highlighting women performing survival sex, or engaging in transactional sex for basic necessities including food or housing (Dalla, 2006).

Pimp-controlled prostitutes are often intimidated by what might happen if they report or attempt to leave their pimps (Norton-Hawk, 2004; Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002; Silbert & Pines, 1982; Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002). For many women, leaving a pimp means abandoning all she has and being faced with the serious possibility of becoming homeless (Hood-Brown, 1998). Prostitutes frequently rely heavily on their pimps for support; likewise, pimps benefit greatly from prostitutes' activities. The combination of "coercion, deception, and violence from pimps" has also been found to "normalize and reinforce prostitution" (Cimino, 2012, p. 1237). As many of these women have experienced a lifetime of victimization, they are most at risk to stay with pimps (Dalla et al., 2003).

Pimp-controlled prostitutes often are so fearful of and intimidated by their pimps that they rarely speak out against them. One reason for this is that the abusive methods used to control the women eventually leads to the prostitute developing adverse attitudes about law enforcement and positive sentiments about their pimp (Territo & Glover, 2014). This trauma

bonding is often the result of her suffering from the “Stockholm syndrome,” a group of psychological symptoms that occur in some persons who are held captive (p. 13). Because the woman feels that she cannot successfully leave prostitution, she may develop a protecting relationship with the pimp with the goal of demonstrating her fidelity to him, which increases her chances for survival. Additional characteristics of the Stockholm syndrome include difficulty leaving one’s captor and a longstanding fear of reprisal (Farley & Graham, 1995).

Female prostitutes have few resources. Most have not graduated from high school, and few have work or vocational experience outside of prostitution (Leidholdt & Raymond, 1990). Street-level prostitutes are typically impoverished and lack the resources or means to begin a new life outside of prostitution. Their lack of education and job skills, as well as the fact that many have criminal histories, also further hinders their ability to gain legitimate employment (Raphael & Shapiro, 2002; Sanders, 2007).

In El-Bassel et al.’s (1997) comparison of prostitutes and non-prostitutes, it was suggested that due to the nature and illegality of their occupation, feelings of stigmatization likely contribute to the psychological distress of prostitutes. Given the conditions under which prostitutes work and survive, it is not surprising that they feel stigmatized by society (El-Bassel et al., 1997; Young, Boyd & Hubbel, 2000). This stigma results from experiences the women have with pestering and other negative social reactions; as a consequence, prostitutes are not honest about their lives. Sanders (2004), for example reported that 95% of the prostitutes she interviewed kept their involvement in prostitution hidden from those in their private life. This stigma of prostitution remains even for those who have left prostitution, as they fear someone might find out about their history. As Sanders reported, current and former prostitutes said that “avoiding ‘being discovered’ was sometimes more important than preventing violence; they

could recover from a beating but if loved ones discovered the truth, the personal and emotional loss would be insurmountable” (p. 568). Because of these feelings of stigmatization, current and former prostitutes often feel guilty about their lives as prostitutes and begin using alcohol and/or drugs as a way of curtailing those emotions (Young et al., 2000).

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The impact of the mass media can best be understood through the theoretical perspective of social constructionism. This theory posits that individuals create reality based on their own knowledge and experiences, interactions with others, and through the influence of the media. The role of the media cannot be understated. In the United States, citizens are flooded by the media on a regular basis: the influence of television, print media, radio, film, and the Internet has become nearly unavoidable. With technological advances, the messages of the media reach a large number of individuals. Because most members of society do not have direct experience with crime or the criminal justice system, social construction is markedly important; citizens rely on sources outside of their direct personal experience to create their perceived reality of situations encompassing crime and the individuals involved in them. This chapter discusses the theory of social constructionism, the film industry as a subsidiary of the mass media industry, and the impact of media exposure in regard to social constructionism.

#### **Social Construction**

There are two perspectives to social problems: objectivism and constructionism. Objectivists view social problems as conditions or acts that are harmful to society. Manis, a representative of the objectivistic school, wrote that “social problems are those social conditions identified by scientific inquiry and values as detrimental to human well-being” (1976, p. 25). As



such, one could consider any situation that brings about death or disease to be a social problem. The traditional Marxist perspective is considered to be consistent with objectivism, as it accepts a social problem as any condition that harms a sizeable amount of people as a consequence of practices, including oppression, sexism, racism, and exploitation (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2009; Liazos, 1982). In contrast to the objectivist view is that of constructionism, which perceives social problems as a complex phenomenon in which problems are socially created by individuals.

Social constructionism underscores the collective knowledge and beliefs held by groups of people (Spector & Kitsuse, 1997); these shared meanings are thought to be the result of common social relationships. According to social constructionism, a social problem emerges when there is a “collective definition” (Blumer, 1971) of a problem based on the extent to which the public is concerned over a condition or issue (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2009). In other words, a condition that objectivists have defined as a problem only becomes a social problem (via constructionism) when it is described as or perceived to be problematic. These social problems do not simply exist; “they are constructed by the human mind” (p. 88). As outlined by Goode & Ben-Yehuda (2009):

The objective existence of a harmful condition does not, by itself or in and of itself, constitute a social problem. Merely because a disease kills the members of a society does not mean that it constitutes a social problem among these people; if they do not conceptualize or define the disease as a problem, according to the constructionist, to these people, it is not a social problem (p. 151).

Because, according to social constructionism, a social problem only exists when a group of individuals in a given society views a certain condition as wrong, expresses concern over the

condition, and subsequently takes steps to correct it, a considerable number of individuals must consider the condition or phenomenon to be wrong in order for it to garner attention. In addition, these individuals must then engage in “claims-making”: a plea from that rallying party that action be taken to remedy the condition (Spector & Kitsuse, 1997). The extent to which this constructed reality prevails is strongly influenced by “shifting cultural trends and social forces” (Suerette, 2015, p. 31). In fact, it is possible for society to be in one state, but its members may perceive it to be in an alternative state and thus act accordingly. These conditions can also change; what is a social condition at one instance might be ignored at a different occasion without there being any substantial variation in the actual condition.

So how does a condition or behavior become labeled or regarded as a social problem? Constructionists underscore three primary roles in this process: interests, resources, and legitimacy. In regard to interests, those who stand to profit in some way from discovering a problem are going to be more motivated to do so (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2009). Because a group’s interests might be advanced in this process does not necessarily negate the credibility or seriousness of the problem; it simply locates the source and dynamics of the special interests. Those groups that have the means to command resources, including access to the media, money, large numbers of members, and/or political figures, have better chances at being effective in defining the condition as a social problem. Finally, those groups with representatives who are well respected and deemed credible are going to be viewed as more legitimate in defining a new social problem. It is important to recognize that organizational self-interests are frequently at the forefront of the progression of social construction. This is evident when examining the contribution of the media to constructing (or discounting) social problems.

Social constructionists posit that opinions of social problems change as a society's knowledge about those conditions change. Suerette (2015) outlines four sources by which people acquire social knowledge: (1) personal experiences; (2) significant others, including peers, family, and friends; (3) social groups and institutions, such as schools, churches, and government agencies; and (4) the media. While personal experience is the most impactful source of knowledge, individuals also obtain information from others' experiences and from the portrayals found in the media. The latter three sources of knowledge form one's symbolic reality, which is comprised of any events one has not personally witnessed but believes to have occurred, as well as any facts that one did not personally collect but believes to be true. Most of what people believe about the world comes from symbolic reality, and in industrialized societies, the media dominates our formation of symbolic reality (Suerette, 2015). Print, news, and entertainment media distribute knowledge, and what society sees as social problems are often framed by this content. This role is crucial because those individuals and organizations who are forwarding constructions tend to compete for media attention, with those who are most powerful and dramatic winning the media's favor. As such, the media act as a filter by giving certain constructions more credibility and public exposure than others, thereby making it difficult for other constructions to receive attention. According to Suerette:

The most important result of the social reality construction competition is that the winning dominant construction directs public policy. The social policies supported by the public and the solutions forwarded by the policy makers are tied to the successful construction. For crime and justice, this socially constructed reality will define the conditions, trends, and factors accepted as causes of crime; the behaviors that are seen as

criminal; and the criminal justice policies accepted as reasonable and likely to be successful (p. 34).

The role of the media in social construction is further described as a “mediated experience,” which occurs when a person experiences an incident through the media and comes closer to understanding what it is actually like to experience that event for himself (Suerette, 2005, p. 25). Crime and justice are common mediated experiences because an individual can experience crime through the media and have the sensation of actually experiencing an event. Films play an imperative part in this process, as they provide continuous action, sound, and home delivery. Most Americans have little direct experience with crime (Potter & Kappeler, 1998); thus, the mediated experience offered by film has been identified as the most important element for defining most people’s reality of crime and justice (Adoni & Mane, 1984; Sparks, 1992). It is important to note that the link between media construction and viewers’ attitudes and perceptions is not a passive process (Welsh et al., 2011). Additionally, audiences tend to demonstrate preferences for media, including films, that affirm their viewpoints over those that contest or conflict with their beliefs.

### **The Film Industry and Constructed Beliefs**

For centuries, the primary method for distributing knowledge was via direct oral communication, and reaching larger audiences was slow, as it was limited by time and place. With new technologies, the media can disseminate information instantaneously. Film was the first medium that afforded the media with the capacity to reach all of society (Suerette, 2015). Early in the twentieth century, the film industry nationalized media content by making movies

available to every stratum in the United States and abroad. Because they were universally available and widely consumed, films both reflected and shaped American culture. Indeed, motion pictures became the premier form of commercial entertainment in the world. Because movies could cross geographic, economic, and racial lines, they were the first medium “able to bypass the traditional socializing agents of church, school, family, and community and directly reach individuals with information and images” (Suerette, 2015, p. 12). Watching movies has now become one of the leading leisure activities in the United States (Bulman, 2005).

Movies have made crime a central theme (Potter & Kappeler, 1998). Because the average person has limited alternative sources of information regarding criminality, it increases the entertainment value of film and provides an escape from reality. This entertainment provides views of realities that are often not otherwise seen. Fictional media sources, including film, also have persuasive effects on public beliefs, including how people think and feel about crime and justice (Appel, 2008; Welsh, Fleming, & Dowler, 2011). Rafter (2006), for example, suggested that crime films not only mirror era-specific viewpoints of society, but also “shape the ways we think about these issues” (p. 3). This is particularly true for those crimes that are relatively infrequent. While fictional narratives do not inevitably include a line of argument, as do news stories, they usually ensue a plot with schematic divisions that include settings, reactions, and consequences (Appel, 2008). In the end, there is generally a resolution that brings together all of the sub-plotlines and the viewer is typically left feeling a sense of justice.

The audience’s perception of a just outcome is exceedingly important in film. Research has illustrated that the liking of a film is dependent upon whether the outcome of a story is seen as just or unjust (Appel, 2008; Raney, 2005). Put simply, viewers tend to prefer a story if the hero is rewarded and/or the bad guy is penalized. When the ending is perceived as unjust, the

audience may feel negatively about the film, thereby making it less likely that they will view similar movies in the future. Because the motion picture industry depends on its audience, just outcomes can typically be expected. These fictional narratives with just-world messages are influential in shaping and changing beliefs, as they correspond with society's conviction that the world is a just place (Appel, 2008). However, in the real world, justice is not always restored, and individuals experience unforeseeable misfortunes over which they have little control. Society, on the other hand, typically believes that these victims have control over their social situations and that their outcomes are predictable (Lipkis, Dalbert, & Siegler, 1996). Research has demonstrated that people who believe, as frequently depicted in film, that the society is a just place tend to have poor conceptions about victims and tend to blame the victims for their misfortune (Montada, 1998).

### **The Motion Picture Oligopoly**

One would be remiss not to discuss ownership of media organizations, as ownership of major media is now massively concentrated. Historically, there have been numerous small, diverse media competitors. Since the 1980s, however, the mass media has been dominated by a concentrated group of powerful U.S. corporations (Fenwick, 2009). As a result, these for-profit organizations command the majority of mass media. Consequently, the range of information that is disseminated has narrowed.

As of early-2015, there were six major film studios that represent six diversified media conglomerates whose film production and distribution affiliates jointly dominate 80-85% of U.S. and Canadian box office revenue (Bettig & Hall, 2012). Each of these six companies is listed in the top 500 on the Forbes Global 2,000, the annual ranking of the top 2000 public companies in

the world. Five of the six are also listed on the Fortune 500, which ranks the top 500 U.S. closely held and public corporations; Sony Corporation, which had the highest revenue of the six in 2014, is excluded from the Fortune 500 list because it is headquartered in Japan. These top six studios are listed by revenue in Table 1.

Table 1

Major Film Studios

Media Conglomerate	Film Studio	2014 Revenue	Global 2000 Rank (2015)	Fortune 500 Rank (2015)	U.S./Canada Market Share
Sony Corp.	Columbia Pictures	\$76.9B	478	-	12.5%
Comcast	Universal Pictures	\$68.8B	46	44	11.8%
Walt Disney Co.	Walt Disney Pictures	\$49.8B	84	61	15.7%
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Fox	20 <sup>th</sup> Century Fox	\$32.6B	150	85	18.8%
Time Warner.	Warner Bros. Pictures	\$28.1B	163	102	15.1%
Viacom	Paramount Pictures	\$13.9B	424	210	10.1%

Sony Corporation is a multinational conglomerate corporation, focused primarily on electronics (televisions, refrigerators, audio-visual equipment, cameras, and computers), video games (PlayStation), medical equipment, and entertainment (motion pictures, music, music publishing). Sony Pictures Entertainment is the American subsidiary of Sony Corporation and oversees the company's motion picture, television production, and media distribution operations. Sony Pictures Entertainment owns the Columbia TriStar Motion Picture Group (*Spider-Man* films, *Ghostbusters*, *The DaVinci Code*).

Comcast Corporation, the largest broadcasting and cable television company in the world by revenue, reported earnings of \$68.8 billion in 2014. Comcast is the biggest cable company and home internet service provider and the third leading home telephone service provider in the U.S. In 2011, Comcast acquired NBC Universal from General Electric; it now operates multiple fully- or partially-owned cable channels (E! Entertainment Television, Golf Channel, Esquire Network, Comcast Sports, MLB Network, NBC Sports Network, NBCSN, TV One, and Sprout), as well as many local channels. In addition, Comcast Corporation is a producer of both television programs and feature films; it owns Universal Pictures (*ET: The Extra Terrestrial*, *Jurassic Park*, *Jaws*, *Twister*, *Despicable Me*).

The Walt Disney Company is a multinational entertainment and mass media conglomerate that reported earnings of \$49.8 billion in 2014. While Disney began in animation, it now has operations that include radio, music, television, live-action film, and theme parks. Disney owns and operates the broadcast television network ABC, along with networks that include ABC Family, Disney Channel, and ESPN. While the Walt Disney Company has been a leader in the motion picture industry for decades, it solidified its status as a leading film giant when it acquired Touchstone Pictures (*Beaches*, *Pretty Woman*, *Armageddon*, *Pearl Harbor*) in 1988, Marvel Studios (*X-Men*, *The Avengers*, *Hulk*, *Iron Man* trilogy, *Thor*, *Captain America*) in 2009, and Lucasfilm (*Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* sagas) in 2012. The Walt Disney Company's film studio, Walt Disney Studios, alone generated an estimated income of \$1.5 billion in 2014, largely due to the success of films such as *Planes* and *Frozen*, which were both released in late-2013, and *Maleficent*, released in May 2014.

Twenty-First Century Fox, Inc. is another multinational mass media corporation with holdings including the Fox television network (*American Idol*, *Glee*, *NFL Football*, *Super Bowl*,



*The Simpsons*) and Fox Entertainment Group, which owns the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox film studio (*Avatar, Life of Pi, Taken*). In 2013, the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox film studio took over distribution of DreamWorks Animation films (*Shrek* films, *Madagascar, Kung Fu Panda*). Twenty-First Century Fox, Inc. reported revenue of \$32.6 billion in 2014.

Time Warner, Inc., is the world's next largest television and film entertainment company (in terms of revenue), with a reported \$28.1 billion in revenue in 2014. The current Time Warner was formed in 1990 when Time Inc. merged with Warner Communications. Time Warner's subsidiaries include HBO, Turner Broadcasting System (CNN, HLN, TNT, TBS, TruTV, Cartoon Network, Turner Classic Movies), and Hanna-Barbera Productions (*The Flintstones, Yogi Bear, Scooby-Doo, The Jetsons, The Smurfs*). Time Warner, Inc. also operates the film studios Warner Bros. Pictures (*American Sniper, The Dark Knight, Harry Potter* films), New Line Cinema (*Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* trilogies), and Castle Rock Entertainment (*The Shawshank Redemption, The Green Mile*).

Rounding out the top six major film studio owners is Viacom, Inc., with primary interests in film and cable television. Viacom owns television networks that include BET, CMT, Comedy Central, MTV, Nickelodeon, and VH1. Viacom's film production units include MTV Films (*Jackass, Beavis and Butt-head*) and Nickelodeon Movies (*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, The SpongeBob Movie*). Viacom also owns Paramount Pictures Corporation (*Transformers, Forrest Gump, Star Trek, Mission: Impossible, Ghost*). Viacom, Inc. reported \$13.9 billion in revenue in 2014.

With recent mergers, there is also considerable overlap between the different conglomerates. Take, for example, Marvel Studios, which produced *Iron Man* (2008), *Iron Man 2* (2010), *Thor* (2011), and *Captain America: The First Avenger* (2011). Although produced by

Marvel, all four of these films were distributed by Paramount Pictures, which is owned by Viacom. Marvel Studios, a subsidiary of Marvel Entertainment, was purchased by The Walt Disney Company for \$4 billion in 2009. As part of the acquisition, the distribution rights for all four films were transferred from Paramount to Disney. Another example of the intersection of these conglomerates is Hulu, an online video service that offers a selection of movies and television shows. The company is mutually owned by NBC Universal Television Group (a subsidiary of Comcast), Fox Broadcasting Company (a subsidiary of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fox), and the Disney ABC Television Group (a subsidiary of the Walt Disney Company).

While all six of these media conglomerates are separate entities, each operating its own film studio(s), they are curiously similar. As of early 2015, they have a hold over the majority of the mass media in the United States and continue to branch out internationally. It is evident that the film industry is no longer an unit unto itself (Fenwick, 2006); it is controlled by corporations that have other media interests. This control over the media, including motion pictures, has a tremendous impact on the type of media content that is generated. As such, it is critical to recognize the perspective in which films are produced. Six corporations with tremendous wealth and power, along with shared ideology and values, are governing the greater part of the American media construction. As a result, the media produced is highly duplicative and replicates the interests of these powerful conglomerates (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992). Put differently, a handful of very powerful corporations own the majority of media and therefore determine what media is acceptable for its audience. When discussing the role of concentrated media ownership and its role in social constructionism, Gamson et al. (1992) wrote:

We walk around with media-generated images of the world, using them to construct meaning about political and social issues. The lens through which we receive these

images is not neutral but evinces the power and point of view of the political and economic elites who operate and focus it. And the special genius of this system is to make the whole process seem so normal and natural that the very art of social construction is invisible (p. 374).

### **Media Effects Models**

The role of film as a significant source of information for crime is particularly important in regard to the current generation; this is a fundamentally “visual” generation that is able to more readily identify with images and visual movement than with traditional forms of printed text” (Rothe & Ross, 2007, p. 331). However, films tend to distort the picture of crime, criminals, and crime control. As such, the mass-mediated construction of crime and criminality tends to project criminal stereotypes and perpetuate crime myths (Barak, 1988). However, the media does not impact all viewers in the same way. To that end, extensive research has been conducted in the discipline of communication to examine media effects. A review of this literature points to a variety of different forces as the impetus for media effects, which can be summarized by four simplified models of these various effects (Perse, 2000). Each of the four models places emphasis on various factors of media content and/or the audience as the primary source of the media effect. The four media effects models are outlined in Table 2 and discussed in detail below.

The direct effects models ignore the role of the audience and focus entirely on media content as the explanation for the influence on its audience (Perse, 2000). Behavioral, cognitive, or affective effects are seen as occurring shortly after the media exposure, and are similar across viewers, and are “consistent with the goals of the media producer” (p. 29). These models are

useful in understanding how media effects occur when the audience is either incapable of refuting the media's message, or has little knowledge about an issue/problem whereby they are reliant on the media for this knowledge. The direct effects models also prove valuable when the content motivates the audience to react unconsciously. In this sense, the media utilizes variables to "arouse and command attention" (p. 33), which typically results in short-term effects.

Whereas the direct effects models disregard audience variables and focuses solely on media content, the conditional effects models emphasize the audience; they are termed the "conditional" models because the media effects are thought to be conditional on the audience member. These models allow for an understanding of why media effects occur, as well as situations in which media effects do not occur. In addition, they recognize that media effects are not uniform, and different viewers are affected by the same content in different ways. This is possible because audience members are understood to be able to avoid exposure to media, as well as reject the influence of media. First, the audience generally chooses media content that is consistent with their existing views and interests. Then, audience members have the capacity to selectively perceive the media content based on those views, experiences, and interests.

According to the conditional models, three variables can intervene in the process of media effects: social categories, social relationships, and individual differences (Perse, 2000). Social categories include demographic characteristics (age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, education, location, socio-economic status, religion, political affiliation, occupation), social relationships include social connections and interpersonal interactions of the audience members whilst viewing the media, and individual differences refer to variables that differentiate one person from another (personality, established viewpoints, prior experiences, physical/mental states, and attitudes toward the media). The cognitive, affective, or behavioral effects of the

media can either occur immediately following exposure to the message or after repeated exposure. These effects may be either short- or long-term.

Cumulative effects models are the third group of models. Perse states that of central importance of cumulative effects models is the “ubiquitous nature of certain media content that overrides any potential of the audience to limit exposure to certain messages” (2000, p. 42). Because the focus is the repetition of messages in the media, the models see the audience as irrelevant because they are unable to avoid certain media messages. These models are named for the posited effect of the cumulative exposure to media messages rather than a single episode. As the result of this repeated exposure, the audience develops a perception of reality that mirrors that which is represented by the media. According to these models, effects are more subtle and limited to cognitions and affect.

Cognitive-transactional models comprise the fourth group of media effect models, which are drawn from cognitive psychology. Cognitive-transactional models have a dual focus on both media content and audience variables that suggest the media impact grows from cognitive reactions to the media content (Perse, 2000). The transactional piece of the models signifies that both media content and audience characteristics are significant in understanding media effects. This approach emphasizes that knowledge is organized into schemas, or mental structures that represent an individual’s knowledge about a concept. Cognitive-transactional models embrace the notion of priming to propose that “audiences are primed to watch, remember and thus potentially be influenced by, certain kinds of content rather than others” (Ross & Nightengale, 2003).

Table 2

## Media Effects Models: Summary

	Nature of Effects	Media Content Variables	Audience Variables
Direct	Immediate, uniform, observable; Short-term; Emphasis on change	Salience, arousal, realism	Not relevant
Conditional	Individualized; Reinforcement as well as change; Cognitive, affective, and behavioral; Long- or short-term	Not relevant	Social categories; Social relationships; Individual differences
Cumulative	Based on cumulative exposure; Cognitive or affect; Rarely behavioral; Enduring effects	Consistent across channels; Repetition	Not relevant
Cognitive-Transactional	Immediate and short-term; Based on one-shot exposure; Cognitive and affective; Behavioral effects possible	Salience of visual cues	Schema make-up;

*Note.* Adapted from “Models of Media Effects,” by E. M. Perse, 2000, *Media Effects and Society*, p. 51. Copyright 2002 by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

The four aforementioned models are abridged descriptions for media effects, which were designed to concentrate attention to specific explanations for these effects. Each model places emphasis on the principal explanation(s) for media effects. No single model is thought to be complete, though, as fully ignoring media content (i.e. conditional model) or audience characteristics (i.e. cumulative model) is unrealistic in practice. Rather, the most comprehensive explanations for media effects combine components of each model (Perse, 2000).

## Prostitution and Media Authenticity

Research has shown that the media shapes what audiences perceive as important matters and the content in which these matters are viewed. As such, there is value in examining whether the images presented in prostitution films are accurate and representative portrayals of those involved in prostitution. Thus far, little research has assessed the accuracy of how street-level prostitutes are depicted in films. In an effort to determine authenticity of prostitution in the media, one must broaden his/her scope to review more general depictions of various forms of prostitution across various mediums of the media. Over the last two decades, research in the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Canada, has examined how the Internet, newspapers, film, and television movies have represented various forms of prostitution (see Table 3).

Table 3

### Media Representation of Prostitution

Source	Country	Medium
Baker (2014)	U.S.	Film/TV
Coy, Wakeling, & Garner (2011)	UK	Internet/Film/TV
Farvid & Glass (2014)	New Zealand	Newspaper
Giusta & Scuriatti (2005)	UK	Film
Hallgrímsdóttir et al. (2008)	Canada	Newspaper
Johnston, Friedman, & Shafer (2014)	U.S.	Newspaper
Saewyc et al. (2013)	Canada	Newspaper
Small (2012)	U.S.	Film/TV
Strega et al. (2014)	Canada	Newspaper
Szörényi & Eate (2014)	U.S.	Film
Van Brunschot, Sydie, & Krull (1999)	Canada	Newspaper

The majority of this research has examined the role that print media (newspapers) had in shaping public discourse regarding prostitution. Farvid & Glass (2014) reviewed 32 newspaper

articles from New Zealand that addressed brothel and street-level prostitution. They concluded that the media tended to focus on “aspects of the sex industry that transgressed firm social norms,” including child prostitution and street-level prostitution (p. 61). Additionally, the focus of the media was on the women who sell sex, with no concern for power relations in the country that produced inequalities between genders and social classes, subsequently producing women participating in transactional sex as a means of survival.

Three of the research articles reviewing the print media’s depiction of prostitution analyzed Canadian newspaper articles. Saewyc et al. (2013) examined 835 articles to compare representations to existing research about sexually exploited youth. They reported that a stereotypical image of sexual exploitation was perpetuated and likely contributed to stigma and reduced the willingness of society to assist these youth. Strega et al. (2014) examined articles written about street prostitution that were published in Western Canadian cities between 2006-2009 and concluded that while the media documented violence directed at an individual prostitute, “little or no mention is given to the routine violence and abuse workers are subjected to not only by customers... but also from people who intentionally target them on the street” (p. 20). Van Brunschot, Sydie, and Krull (1999) reviewed articles on prostitution included in the Canadian News Index from 1981-1995; they reported that the media coverage suggested that female criminals “use their sexuality for economic and material gain” and concluded, “[T]he prostitute, historically and currently, remains one of the enduring metaphors for female sexuality under patriarchy” (p. 68). Hallgrímsdóttir et al. (2008) compared newspaper narratives printed in one Canadian city between 1870-1910 to those from the same city published between 1980 and 2004. The authors reported that stigmas of prostitution are not constant. Rather they “reveal



themselves to be both deeply ecological and accommodating to a range of concerns about female sexuality and normative behavior that are sensitive to historical time” (p. 120).

Johnston, Friedman, and Shafer (2014) reviewed 140 U.S. newspaper articles about sex trafficking that were published in 2009. Their analyses revealed that official sources (law enforcement, policymakers) dominated the coverage; survivors of sex trafficking and victim advocates were quoted the least. Additionally, the reporting of trafficking was “overwhelmingly framed as a crime issue” (p. 419) with nearly two-thirds of the article not presenting any dialogue of solutions to the problem of sex trafficking. By only alerting the readers to the problem, it presented trafficking as a single case or event that required no additional intervention. This is problematic because these stories “did little to help readers understand that trafficking in their communities was part of a broader network and thus, an ongoing story” (p. 431).

Five research projects have explored the depiction of various forms of prostitution/sexual exploitation by the film media. The first, Guista and Scuriatti’s (2005) scrutiny of the film *Moulin Rouge*, was not conducted from a criminological/victimological lens, but rather to examine how the film sparked a consumer demand for clothes similar to those worn by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Parisian courtesans depicted in the film. In the second, Szörényi & Eate (2014) analyzed two films with plots centered on international sex trafficking that were made for the U.S. market: *Trade*, a film that was released on 90 screens, and *Taken*, which grossed approximately \$145,000,000. The authors write that both films illustrated “the popular imagination’s continual reliance on representations of white men as ‘rescuers’ of women and children figured as victims of (usually) external moral threat...” (p. 619). It is concluded that these men are “appropriating the problem of trafficking in the service of a US-led neo-imperialism bolstered by masculinism

and xenophobia, and implicitly problematizing women's independence and justifying the control of their movements and sexuality" (p. 608).

The third project analyzed the portrayal of sex trafficking in Hollywood and independent films. Baker (2014) also included the aforementioned films *Trade* and *Taken* in her sample, as well as five additional films: *Holly* (an independent drama released on 11 screens in the U.S.), *Trading Women* (a documentary), *Sacrifice* (a PBS television documentary), and *Very Young Girls* (a documentary). The NBC Dateline special *Children for Sale* was also included in the analysis. The author concluded that *Trade*, *Taken*, *Holly*, and *Children for Sale* deployed a "criminalization frame, whereby sex trafficking is portrayed as the result of organized crime, so the solutions are always criminal-justice solutions," to include passing laws, prosecuting offenders, and increasing homeland security as a means of protecting women (p. 224). It is noted that these films tended to ignore social and economic factors that contribute to sex trafficking, while portraying women as passive and in need of protection. The remaining films were found to portray sex trafficking in more "complex and nuanced ways" (p. 208), which avoided "sensationalizing, simplifying, or exoticizing the issue" (p. 218).

The fourth example analyzed three different films about sex trafficking: *Lilja 4-Ever* (a crime drama that was released to seven screens in the U.S.), *Born into Brothels* (a documentary), and *Human Trafficking* (a cable television film). The author approached her analyses from a human rights viewpoint and noted that the articulation of human rights violations in film was extremely limited (Small, 2012), and stated that the films included in her analyses present sex trafficking as a "foregone conclusion" (p. 439). The analyses further lead to the conclusion that films tended to focus on "disempowered individuals to the exclusion of institutional and structural conditions that reproduce inequality" (p. 439).

The final research project examined the mainstreaming of the commercial sex into popular culture, including the Internet, film, and television. Coy, Wakeling, and Garner (2011) first analyzed the British television comedy *Respectable*, the film *Moulin Rouge*, the American television show *Pimp My Ride*, and the UK website *Pimp my Bride*. It was determined that representation of and references to prostitution in these sources normalized commercialized sex, and often associated transactional sex as a form of female empowerment and entertainment. The authors concluded that “the increasing use of prostitution as a motif and marketing device in popular culture obscures empirical realities of violence, exploitation and harm and the structural inequalities on which the sex industry is built” (p. 447).

### **The Current Study**

The role that the media, in particular the film industry, plays in public perceptions and understandings of crime cannot be understated. The media serves as a platform wherein social reality is reflected, as well as negotiated and developed (Welsh, Fleming, & Dowler, 2011). Therefore, it is important to examine the film industry’s contribution to society’s knowledge base about crime, as these constructions can contribute to creating misinformation and reinforce dominant ideologies about crime and justice. The present study tests a media constructionist perspective on the extent to which films involving prostitutes reflect reality.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Objectives**

The objectives of this research were twofold. The first was to examine the nature of the film industry's portrayal of females engaging in street-level prostitution in the United States in the following areas: 1) entry into sex work; 2) the economic need behind the women's involvement; 3) experiences of childhood victimization; 4) presence and role of pimps; 5) drug/alcohol abuse; 6) victimization; and 7) mental/physical health. The second objective was to determine if this media coverage is analogous to extant research on these aspects of prostitution culture. The purpose of this research is to advance understanding of the presentation and depiction of the female, street-level prostitute culture in 15 modern motion pictures utilizing media content analysis.

### **Sampling**

Most previous studies on prostitution or trafficking have been limited to a few films (see Baker, 2014; Small, 2012; Szörényi & Eate, 2014), that have focused on the international sex trade (see Baker 2014; Szörényi & Eate, 2014), brothel prostitution (see Giusta & Scuriatti, 2005) or have examined either popular culture as a whole (see Coy et al., 2011) or only print media (see Farvid & Glass, 2014; Johnston, Friedman, & Shafer, 2014; Saewyc et al., 2013; Strega et al., 2014), rather than the specific role of the motion picture industry. Due to the

limitations in existing research, few concrete conclusions can be drawn regarding the culture of female, street-level prostitution as expressed in modern films.

Because sampling issues have limited the generalizability of prior studies of prostitution, a sampling technique was employed that: 1) identified the universe of prostitution films within a specific timeframe; and 2) excluded films that failed to meet the particular conditions outlined below. Prior media research examining social issues has noted that film is a historical byproduct of the generation in which it was produced, resulting in film tendency to reflect era-specific matters (Cheatwood, 1998; Fenwick, 2009). The period chosen for the present research commenced in 1990 and culminated in 2014. Only major motion pictures were examined, excluding made-for television movies, miniseries, and films that were released straight to video format. These other media formats “are produced with different considerations of audience, ratings systems, duration, financial backing, and artistic production qualities” (Fenwick, 2009, p. 97).

### **Sampling Procedure**

The Unified Film Population Identification Methodology (UFPIM) (Wilson, 2008) was utilized to determine the universe of prostitution films from which the sample was chosen. The UFPIM was developed to overcome some of the criticisms of prior film research in regard to using non-probability sampling. UFPIM involves three phases: 1) operationalizing a definition, based in relevant literature, of the film genre one wishes to isolate; 2) identifying a base film list using key words, movie genre, and year; and 3) reviewing plot summaries for each film from at least two sources to ensure that the films in the final population meet the desired parameters (Wilson, 2008). The UFPIM specifically recommends using the Internet Movie Data Base

(IMDb), one of, if not the largest public accessible database of movie information, readily available via the Internet, for phases two and three.

### **Phase 1**

The film genre was operationalized as reality-based theatrically released films between 1990 and 2014 that took place in the United States where one or more female actors played a female street-level prostitute. Given this operationalization, films that depicted transsexual or male street prostitutes were excluded, as were films that depicted street-level prostitution outside of the United States. Additionally, scenarios or films that did not appear to be based in reality, such as alien encounters, science fiction, and/or futuristic depictions, were excluded from the genre.

The 1990 to 2014 time period was selected because, as previously indicated, film is a historical byproduct of the generation from which it is produced. It is believed that film reinforces what is assumed to be a strong correspondence to a country's social, economic, and cultural life and films produced in that nation (Waller, n.d.). Movies serve as historical evidence of social attitudes, including the unconscious assumptions of societies. As such, these films reflect matters and beliefs of the most recent era. Additionally, the 1990s marked the beginning of film distribution online, making the distribution of films produced in the 1990s available to the home audience, thereby reaching a wider and more diverse range of viewers. The upper limit on the sample range reflects the most recent films that have been released both in the theater and subsequently to home video.

The 1990s mark an important decade of change and progression in film history. It was at this time that the home video market first became a key element in total revenue for a film. In 1980, two in 100 homes had a video cassette recorder (VCR) (Compaine & Comery, 2000). By

the mid-1980s, VCR ownership had increased to approximately 50% of American households, and by the early 1990s, 75% owned VCRs (Grant & Meadows, 2014). As a result, audiences had increased; more of the population was viewing rented or purchased videos in their homes.

Profits from motion pictures had traditionally been from a single source: the box office. However, in 1988, annual video rentals exceeded theatrical box office revenue for the first time. In 1990, home video sales first exceeded video rentals, and for the first time, film studios grossed more revenue from video cassette sales than video rentals (Nichols, 1990). However, when the 1990 home video sales and home video rentals were combined, it became the largest overall source of revenue for the major studios and distributors (Noam, 2009). Whereas 76% of U.S. studio revenue came from box office sales in 1980, it dipped to 34% by 1990. At the same time, home video sales provided 1% of revenue in 1980, and 43% by 1990 (Hellman & Soramäki, 1994). Between 1988 and 1990 alone, U.S. home video revenue had increased by nearly 45% (Noam, 2009).

It is important to note that the increase in home video revenue does not indicate that audiences stopped or decreased going to movie theaters. Whereas movie-going seems to have initially dropped when VCRs became more commonplace, between 1988 and 1999, box office attendance increased 35% (Compaine & Comery, 2000). The 1930s and 1940s are often referred to as the Golden Age of movies, but the 1990s represent the time when the Big Six movie companies attained their greatest power and profitability. Simply put, starting in 1990, more people were watching movies in theaters and at home. Thus, starting in 1990, more individuals were in a position to be influenced by the content of these films.

The sample was limited to films that were both produced in and had prostitution scenes in the U.S. because film history is generally understood in national terms, and national cinemas are

frequently a subject for historians. For example, there are a vast number of books devoted to American cinema; similar texts can be found for New Zealand and Japan. As such, beliefs about prostitution will vary by country, subsequently impacting policies regarding the criminality of transactional sex.

Prostitutes and their clients can be of either sex. However, male prostitution cannot be understood within the same framework as female prostitution. Clients of male prostitutes, for example, are predominately male (Helfgott, 2008), and 73% of these males also regularly have sex with female prostitutes (Morse, Simon, Balson, & Osofsky, 1992). Additionally, male prostitutes have very different experiences than female prostitutes. It is often argued that males who engage in transactional sex are in a position of sexual power, whereas female sex workers are frequently in positions of sexual victimization (Helfgott, 2008).

In discussing differences in male versus female prostitutes, it is also important to consider the social construction of gender, which highlights the power imbalance between males and females. Male solicitation of female prostitutes has been tied to cultural ideas about male and female sexuality and sex-role stereotypes (Hoigard & Finstad, 1992). Most female street-level prostitutes are dominated, harassed, assaulted, and battered (Farley & Kelly, 2000); men working as prostitutes typically do not share this similar status as women (Carpenter, 1998). Further, male prostitutes usually work independently, which allows them to leave prostitution more easily than women, who frequently work for pimps. It is because of these reasons that the focus of this research is the female prostitute.

## **Phase 2**

At the time of this research, the IMDb provided compiled lists of top-US-grossing feature films involving prostitutes for the decades 1990-1999, 2000-2009, and 2010-2014. These three



lists were already limited to films that were released in the U.S. during those decades and included an actor that played some form of prostitute. These lists included films from 22 different film genres: action, animation, comedy, documentary, family, film-noir, horror, musical, romance, sport, war, adventure, biography, crime, drama, fantasy, history, music, mystery, sci-fi, thriller, and western. The 1990-1999, 2000-2009, and 2010-2014 lists included 742, 447, and 271 titles, respectively, arranged by the gross amount of money that each film earned. Based on the lists alone, it was impossible to determine the country in which the film took place, the gender of the prostitute, the type(s) of prostitution that were depicted in the film, and the reality of the films. The top twenty films from 1990-1999 and 2000-2009, and the top ten films from 2010-2014, representing the top-grossing US films that included prostitution from each decade, were extracted for further analysis (N = 50).

### **Phase 3**

#### *Stage 1*

To maintain consistency, a coding sheet was developed based on the operational definition of reality-based, theatrically released films between 1990 and 2014 that took place in the United States where one or more female actors played a female street-level prostitute. The present study is a celluloid representation of contemporary female street prostitution in the United States; because of the focus on American culture, only films produced in the United States were included. The coding sheet asked five questions consistent with the parameters set by this operational definition, each allowing the option of a yes or no answer. The answer of “yes” to any of the questions resulted in the film’s being excluded from the universe of films. The questions were as follows:

1. Does anything indicate that the film does not take place in the United States?

2. Does anything indicate that the prostitute character depicted in the film is not a female?
3. Does anything indicate that the actor portraying the role of a prostitute is not a female?
4. Does anything indicate that the type of prostitution portrayed in the film is not street prostitution?
5. Does anything indicate that the film takes place in an unrealistic scenario?

### *Stage 2*

Consistent with the procedure outlined in UFPIM (Wilson, 2008), plot summaries from three sources were reviewed for each of the forty films to determine their appropriateness for this study. These sources included the plot summaries found on the IMDb, editorial reviews/plot summaries found on Amazon.com, and descriptions/reviews from *VideoHound's Golden Movie Retriever* (2015), a book containing reviews of over 28,000 movies. The redundancy of using three sources for review was implemented to ensure an accurate depiction of each film before viewing the films that remained in the sample following Phase 3.

As described in Stage 1 above, an answer of “yes” to any of the five questions resulted in the films exclusion from consideration as a female street prostitute film. Any film that was not excluded during these reviews prior to viewing was subsequently removed if, after watching, it was established that the movie actually did not meet the operational definition of what constitutes a female street prostitute film.

### **UFPIM Results**

At the end of Phase 2, a base film list of fifty films representing the top-grossing films from each decade was produced. In Stage 2 of Phase 3, 121 plot summaries from the IMDb,

Amazon, and *VideoHound* were evaluated using the coding sheet, resulting in a final population of 15 films. During this process, 35 films were excluded for a variety of reasons (See Appendix A). Of those films, four (*Evita*, *The Last Samurai*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, and *Taken*) were excluded for not taking place in the United States, two (*Bad Boys 2* and *The Bucket List*) were excluded for the scene involving a prostitute occurring outside of the United States, eleven (*Any Given Sunday*, *Catch Me If You Can*, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, *Date Night*, *The Departed*, *The Hangover Part III*, *Kill Bill: Vol 2*, *L.A. Confidential*, *Payback*, *Rising Sun*, and *The Wolf of Wall Street*) were excluded for involving a type of prostitution other than street prostitution, five (*Interview with the Vampire*, *Sin City*, *Ted*, *Total Recall*, and *Wolverine*) were excluded for being unrealistic, four films (*Along Came Polly*, *Blades of Glory*, *Set it Off*, and *Wedding Crashers*) only made references to prostitution, but did not have characters portraying prostitutes, two films (*The Hangover* and *The Hangover Part II*) had a transsexual prostitute, and five films (*Road to Perdition*, *Seabiscuit*, *Unforgiven*, *Wild Wild West*, and *Young Guns II*) were historical fiction that were not representative of modern culture. Two films met multiple exclusion criteria. In addition to not involving street prostitution, *Mona Lisa Smile* was set in 1953. *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* did not take place in the United States and also was not a realistic portrayal of modern-day pirates. The final population for the 1990-2014 female street prostitute genre totaled 15 films. (See Table 4).

The final sample consisted of 15 films that represented the top-US-grossing films released between 1990 and 2014 that fit the definition of a female street prostitute film (see Table 4). As such, the final sample of 15 films spans 24 years, and represented the most recent major motion pictures that involved characters of female street prostitutes that Hollywood has produced. Because only the top-grossing films were considered for inclusion, they all had

Table 4

Film Sample: 1990 – 2014

Title	Year	Director	Star(s)	Rating	Box Office Gross (Inflation-Adjusted)
<i>21 Jump Street</i>	2012	Phil Lord; Christopher Miller	Jonah Hill; Channing Tatum	R	142M
<i>Borat</i>	2006	Larry Charles	Sacha Baron Cohen	R	160.3M
<i>Casino</i>	1995	Martin Scorsese	Robert De Niro; Joe Pesci; Sharon Stone	R	79.6M
<i>8MM</i>	1999	Joel Schumacher	Nicolas Cage	R	58.4M
<i>The Equalizer</i>	2014	Antoine Fuqua	Denzel Washington	R	101.5M
<i>Eyes Wide Shut</i>	1999	Stanley Kubrick	Tom Cruise; Nicole Kidman	R	89.4M
<i>Flight</i>	2012	Robert Zemeckis	Denzel Washington	R	96.2M
<i>Heat</i>	1995	Michael Mann	Al Pacino; Robert DeNiro	R	126.6M
<i>The Heat</i>	2013	Paul Feig	Sandra Bullock; Melissa McCarthy	R	160.4M
<i>Miami Vice</i>	2006	Michael Mann	Colin Farrell; Jamie Foxx	R	79.1M
<i>The Mirror has Two Faces</i>	1996	Barbara Streisand	Barbara Streisand; Jeff Bridges	PG-13	76.3M
<i>Out for Justice</i>	1991	John Flynn	Steven Seagal	R	77M
<i>Pretty Woman</i>	1990	Garry Marshall	Julia Roberts; Richard Gere	R	344.6M
<i>Se7en</i>	1995	David Fincher	Morgan Freeman; Brad Pitt	R	188M
<i>Unlawful Entry</i>	1992	Jonathan Kaplan	Kurt Russell; Ray Liotta; Madeline Stowe	R	112.4M

relatively large viewing audiences. Thus, it can logically be argued that it was likely that those who watched films that contained a female street prostitute from 1990 to 2014 have seen at least one of the films in the final sample.

## **Research Questions**

To examine the issues described above, 18 research questions, in seven substantive areas that were identified as facets of street-level prostitute culture, were posed for the purpose of this study. Each of these areas included a set of questions that will guide the data collection for each film in the sample.

### **Entrance into Prostitution**

Q1: What is the nature of entrance into street-level prostitution presented in films?

Specifically, what are the contextual components in which entrance into prostitution is portrayed within film?

Q2: Is the portrayal of entrance into street-level prostitution depicted in films similar to the portrayal presented in extant criminological and victimological literature?

### **Economic Need**

Q3: What is the nature of the economic need of street-level prostitutes presented in films?

Specifically, what are the contextual components in which economic/financial need is portrayed within film?

Q4: Is the portrayal of the economic need of street-level prostitutes depicted in films similar to the portrayal presented in extant criminological and victimological literature?

### **Childhood Victimization**

Q5: What is the frequency of childhood physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect/abandonment presented in films?

Q6: What is the nature of childhood physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect/abandonment presented in films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which childhood physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect/abandonment are presented within film?

Q7: Is the portrayal of childhood physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect/abandonment depicted in films similar to the portrayal presented in the extant criminological and victimological literature?

### **Pimps**

Q8: What is the frequency of pimp-controlled prostitution presented in films?

Q9: What is the nature of pimp-controlled prostitution presented in films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which pimp-controlled prostitution is presented within film?

Q10: Is the portrayal of pimp-controlled prostitution depicted in films similar to the portrayal presented in the extant criminological and victimological literature?

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

Q11: What is the frequency of drug/alcohol use/abuse presented in films?

Q12: What is the nature of drug/alcohol use/abuse presented in films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which drug/alcohol use/abuse is presented within films?

Q13: Is the portrayal of drug/alcohol use/abuse depicted in films similar to the portrayal presented in the extant criminological and victimological literature?

### **Victimization**

Q14: What is the frequency of physical, sexual, and/or emotional victimization presented in films?

Q15: What is the nature of physical, sexual, and/or emotional victimization presented in films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse is presented within films?

Q16: Is the portrayal of physical, sexual, and/or emotional victimization depicted in films similar to the portrayal in the extant criminological and victimological literature?

### **Mental and Physical Health**

Q17: What is the nature of prostitutes' mental and physical health presented in films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which mental and physical health are presented within films?

Q18: Is the portrayal of mental and physical health depicted in films similar to the portrayal in the extant criminological and victimological literature?

### **Data Collection**

The primary data used in this research consists of descriptions of the variables described in the Research Questions. These data were extracted by viewing the 15 films in the sample. Visual images and verbal text (using both auditory listening and closed captioning) were

examined. On average, the primary researcher viewed each film four times. All films were available either in DVD format or Amazon or Netflix streaming.

## **Procedure**

### **Measurement: Codebook Construction**

The coding scheme was derived from past research on street-level prostitution. Each variable had options that are mutually exclusive and exhaustive. The coding scheme also allowed for examination of both latent and manifest content. It has been noted that latent constructs are subjective and rely on the researcher/coder's interpretation of the content's meaning (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005). However, Neuendorf (2011) has illustrated that with considerable codebook definition and in-depth coder training, quantitative content analysis may achieve direct measurement of latent constructs (p. 282).

The coding scheme was comprised of three different coding forms that accompanied each film in the sample. The Film Analysis coding form included general information about the film (see Appendix B), and the Character Analysis coding form was used to obtain basic demographic information about principal and supporting characters in the film, including their role as a prostitute, pimp, or john/date (see Appendix C). The Prostitute Analysis coding form (see Appendix D) included coding for the seven substantive areas that were identified as facets of street-level prostitute culture, including: 1) entrance into prostitution, 2) economic need, 3) childhood victimization, 4) pimps, 5) drugs/alcohol, 6) victimization, and 7) mental/physical health. A comprehensive written Codebook, which included the list of variables and conceptual definitions, accompanied the Coding Forms and provided coders with a consistent framework for conducting the research (See Appendix E).



## **Training**

In addition to the primary researcher/coder, two individuals were selected as secondary coders for this project. In order to ensure replicability, it is generally assumed that nearly any person may act as a coder, so selecting coders does not necessitate any prior expert knowledge or skill (Neuendorf, 2011). One secondary coder held a Ph.D. in pathophysiology and had over 35 years' experience as a researcher. The second secondary coder held a Bachelor's degree in business and had no prior research experience. Neither secondary coder had experience in media research or, more generally, social science research.

Human-coded content analysis was employed; films were viewed and coded by humans and computer software (SPSS) was used to assist in subsequent analysis. As such, it was necessary to first train individuals as part of the coding protocol to ensure the measurement process was valid and reliable. Per established guidelines, this training involved a full discussion of the coding scheme, as well as a group coding session.

## **Reliability**

When human coding is used, reliability is essential. Two reliability subsamples were utilized for this project. The first provided content for a pilot reliability test before coding the entire sample of films began. This pilot test allowed for the researcher to change the coding scheme to maximize reliability. The first film subsample was selected to maximize the variance on key dimensions of interest (Neuendorf, 2011), particularly prostitute victimization. Specifically, the primary researcher chose a film to code that was known to include evidence of key variables of interest, which allowed the opportunity for all coders to become skillful in recognizing these instances. After codebook training, all three coders watched the film separately and then met to discuss the results. The codebook was then reviewed and revised as

necessary; secondary coders were also re-briefed to ensure descriptions and instructions were clear (Macnamara, 2005). The second reliability subsample was used to assess intercoder reliability, which will be discussed in the next section.

### **Data Collection**

A sample of 15 full-length motion pictures, representing the top-US-grossing films released between 1990 and 2014, was analyzed using three related coding forms to gather information from each of the films (see Appendices B through D). Variables were coded at the character level, and supplementary information on the film as a whole was recorded. In using DVDs and streaming videos, the researcher was able to stop, pause, and slow down the film in order to aid in coding. Closed captioning was available in each of the films in the sample, which served as an on-screen transcript of the films. Detailed notes were also kept for further analysis.

The second reliability subsample provided data for the final reliability test, as establishing intercoder reliability is a necessary criterion when human coding is employed. This reliability sub-sample served as a means of ensuring that the obtained coding of films was not the “idiosyncratic result” of the primary researcher’s “subjective judgement” (Tinsley & Weiss, 1975). Neuendorf (2011) recommends randomly selecting a subset of 10-20% of the main sample to be included in the reliability subsample. Four films (27% of the sample films) were randomly selected for the secondary coders to view. Blind coding was conducted by these coders, who were not advised of the purpose of the research so as to minimize bias. Also, coders did not see one another’s coding before the completion of the assessment to minimize the tendency to skew results to meet a desired goal (Macnamara, 2005). For nominal- and ordinal-level variables, agreement controlling for chance is the contemporary required standard (Neuendorf, 2011). As such, Cohen’s kappa, or multi-coder kappa, was used to assess reliability

for those measures; a chance-corrected agreement coefficient of at least .60 is considered an acceptable coefficient. Table 5 includes an extraction of the intercoder reliability analysis results, with percent agreement and Cohen's K covariation measured for the most important variables under review.

Table 5

Intercoder Reliability: Instrument Construction

Variable	Percent Agreement	Covariation (Cohen's K)	Cohen's K Significance
Socio-economic status during prostitution	.75	.60	.070
Child sexual abuse	1.00	1.00	.046
Pimp control	1.00	1.00	.006
Drug use	1.00	1.00	.046
Physical assault	1.00	1.00	.006
Sexual assault	1.00	1.00	.046
Trauma	1.00	1.00	.046

Across variables, reliability was high. Cohen's kappa was perfect for six items: child sexual abuse, pimp control, drug use, physical assault, sexual assault, and trauma ( $\kappa = 1.00$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Reliability was only .60 ( $p = .07$ ) for socio-economic status during prostitution. While still an acceptable coefficient, it should be noted that socio-economic status is difficult to code, as it is a socially constructed concept that, even when clearly conceptualized, can have different meanings for different individuals. There was one film on which the primary and secondary coder disagreed in regard to socio-economic status during prostitution, with one coding the prostitute's status as "working/lower class" and the other coding it as "middle class." When discussing the rationale for these codings, both coders were in agreement that the prostitute had all the necessities for survival, along with some luxuries. However, one coder felt as if the apartment building in which she lived was in poor condition; because of this, the socio-economic

status was coded as “working/lower class.” This lower level of reliability could potentially have an adverse effect on the findings regarding the representation of prostitutes’ socio-economic status in major motion pictures.

To conduct the final analysis, variables were coded at the film, character, and prostitute level, and additional information was recorded for each film as a whole. All 15 films were previewed for content before being viewed for coding purposes, and all films in the sample were viewed by the primary coder and at least one secondary coder. Several factors impacted the time required to review an individual film, including the length of the movie, the role of the prostitute(s), and the number of prostitutes in each film. Work on each film ranged from five to 18 hours; some especially complex films were watched up to 6 times. Each coder maintained comprehensive field notes while viewing the films; these are available for future exploration.

Variables were coded by hand and entered into SPSS. Because all of the films are available in streaming and/or DVD format, coders stopped, watched in slow-motion, and paused the movies to aid in the coding process. Additionally, all of the films had closed-captioning, which was used as a transcript of the film. After all of the coding was finished, the primary and secondary coders conferred about the films that were viewed.

## **Data Analysis**

All research questions were examined using quantitative content analysis, specifically media content analysis. Content analysis is “a technique for gathering and analyzing the content, or information and symbols, contained in written documents or other communication medium (e.g., photographs, movies, song lyrics, advertisements)” (Neuman, 2006, p. 44). This type of analysis allows researchers to systematically examine and classify the contents of a body of

work, typically for the purpose of determining the presence of certain concepts, and can be applied almost anywhere communication occurs (Cohn, 2009). This conceptual analysis involves selecting concepts to be analyzed and ascertaining the frequency of that concept in whatever medium is being studied. In criminal justice and criminology, content analysis has been used to study an extensive range of topics. Recent analysis has included juveniles' exposure to tobacco and alcohol in YouTube music videos (Cranwell et al., 2015), media reactions to school shootings (Barbieri & Connell, 2015), supermax prison policies regarding the mentally ill (Butler, Johnson, & Griffin, 2014), and representations of illegal driving and deviant behavior in advertising (Feinberg, Dufur, Famelow, & Fisher, 2014).

Media content analysis is a dedicated subset of this well-established research methodology that Harold Lasswell (1927) introduced as a systematic method to study propaganda in the mass media; it subsequently became popular in the 1920s and 1930s as a research methodology for investigating communication content of movies, and has since become a principal research method for investigating depictions of violence as well as women in both television and film (Macnamara, 2005). It has also previously been used by researchers who have examined prostitution, trafficking, and sexual exploitation in the media on a smaller scale (Baker, 2014; Coy, Wakeling, & Garner, 2011; Della Giusta & Scuriatti, 2005; Farvid & Glass, 2014; Johnston, Friedman, & Shafer, 2014; Saewyc et al., 2013; Small, 2012; Strega et al., 2014; Szörényi & Eate, 2014). Media content analysis was selected because of its utility in description; it provides insights into the images and messages as represented in film. Media content analysis also allowed for exploration of the potential effect these representations may have on audiences.

According to Kimberly Neuendorf (2011), a well-known contemporary researcher who uses media content analysis, content analysis “relies on the scientific method, including attention to objectivity/intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing” (p. 277). As such, the methodological decisions for this research were guided by the scientific method. Specific methodological considerations are discussed in detail in the sub-sections to follow.

### **Variable Construction and Measurement**

Eighteen research questions, representing seven concepts derived from the literature review, were examined using media content analysis. Each of these variables is discussed below. For each individual film, the researcher recorded information on the basic information of the film, including time period of the film, number of principle and supporting characters, the country in which the film took place, and whether the film was based on a true story (see Appendix B). The code 999 was used for all “don’t know/can’t tell” responses. Demographic information was also coded for each principle and supporting character (1 = Principle, 2 = Supporting), including gender (1 = Male, 2 = Female), race (1 = Caucasian, 2 = African American, 3 = Hispanic, 4 = Asian, 5 = Native American, 6 = Other, 9 = Don’t know), socio-economic status (1 = Working/lower class, 2 = Middle class, 3 = Upper/upper-middle class) , and if s/he was a prostitute, pimp, or john/date (each coded individually as 1 = Yes, 2 = No), age, and education. Age was measured at the ordinal level using the following: 1 = Infant (0-2 years), 2 = Child (3-12 years), 3 = Adolescent (13-18 years), 4 = Young adult (19-24), 5 = Adult (25-39), 6 = Middle-aged adult (40-54), 7 = Mature Adult (55-64), 8 = Senior (65+). The apparent level of education was also measured at the ordinal level with a scheme ranging from 1-6: 1 = Less than

high school, 2 = High school graduate, 3 = Some college, 4 = College graduate, 5 = Graduate education. (See Appendix C)

To explore the key substantive areas from which the research questions were developed, an extensive Prostitute Analysis Coding Form was developed and completed for each primary or supporting prostitute character in every film (see Appendix D). The 18 research questions were analyzed using this protocol which examined each of the substance areas that follow.

### **Entrance into Prostitution**

Entrance into prostitution was measured by a series of variables. Each film was coded as to whether or not it depicted a woman being recruited into prostitution (1 = Yes, 2 = No). If the film depicted a woman being recruited, the recruiter was noted (1 = Pimp, 2 = Madam, 3 = Parent, 4 = Spouse/Partner, 5 = Prostitute, 6 = Other, 7 = N/A). It was also noted if the prostitute was trafficked into prostitution (1 = Yes, domestically; 2 = Yes, internationally; 3 = No), and if the film suggested that the prostitute(s) were voluntarily engaging in prostitution (1 = Yes, 2 = No).

When possible, the researcher also coded the approximate age at which the prostitute(s) in the film entered sex work (1 = <13, 2 = 13-17, 3 = 18+). In addition, it was noted whether the film made any indication as to whether the prostitute was a juvenile runaway when she entered prostitution (1 = Yes, 2 = No). Depiction of the woman/girl being “turned out” was also noted (1 = Yes, 2 = No); if turning out was recorded, the type of activities that are depicted in this process were noted if possible (1 = Pornography, 2 = Forced sexual activity, 3 = Physical abuse, 4 = Mentoring by other prostitutes, 5 = Other, 6 = N/A). Finally, a description of all of these actions/scenes was recorded in detail so that comparisons between films could be made.

### **Economic Need**

The socio-economic status of prostitutes both before entering into prostitution and once acting as a prostitute were noted (1 = Working/lower class, 2 = Middle class, 3 = Upper/middle class). These variables aimed to determine the woman's financial need before entering into prostitution, as well as whether the film suggested she was able to live/survive on the money made working as a prostitute. As additional indicators of socio-economic status, current and prior homelessness were also recorded (1 = Yes, 2 = No).

To assist in determining the portrayal of how lucrative prostitution was in the films, the following were coded: prostitute getting paid by a client/date, prostitute negotiating the cost of her services, prostitute giving some/all of her earnings to a pimp, prostitute having to financially support children (1 = Yes, 2 = No). Further, to have an improved understanding of the necessity of sex work as a means of survival, it was noted whether the prostitute had other options as a means of obtaining income (1 = Yes, 2 = No). A description of all of these actions/scenes was recorded in detail so that comparisons between films could be made.

### **Childhood Victimization**

The current research seeks to identify indication of childhood victimization of prostitutes in the films. Each prostitute was coded as having been victimized in childhood (1 = Yes, 2 = No). If childhood victimization was recorded, the type of victimization (Sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect/abandonment, bullying) and the perpetrator of the abuse (1 = Male parent/guardian, 2 = Female parent/guardian, 3 = Male step-parent, 4 = Female step-parent, 5 = Sibling, 6 = Other relative, 7 = Other) were noted. In addition, whether or not the woman ran away due to this victimization and whether or not the woman was targeted for prostitution



due to this victimization were noted (1 = Yes, 2 = No). The researcher also coded whether it appeared that this childhood victimization played a role in the woman's involvement in prostitution (1 = Yes, 2 = No). To enable comparison between films, descriptions of all of these scenarios were recorded in detail

### **Pimps**

The presence of pimps was measured. If a prostitute had a pimp (1 = Yes, 2 = No), it was noted whether the pimp recruited the woman into prostitution, if the pimp had other woman/girls working for him, if the prostitute turned over some/all of her earnings to this pimp, and if the pimp provided drugs and/or alcohol to the woman. All of these variables were coded 1 = Yes, 2 = No, 9 = Don't know. Additionally, the coding form included measures for the prostitute being abused by her pimp (Physically, Sexually, Emotionally, Financially) and the amount of control the pimp had over the woman (1 = A lot, 2 = Some, 3 = None). A description of each of these activities/scenarios was recorded in detail to enable comparisons between films.

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

Drug and alcohol use by prostitutes were measured by a series of variables. It was first determined which, if any, substances were used by each prostitute (1 = Alcohol, 2 = Marijuana, 3 = Ecstasy, 4 = Cocaine, 5 = Heroin, 6 = Methamphetamine, 7 = Prescription Medications, 8 = Other). If a prostitute used any of these substances, it was noted if the use was voluntary (1 = Always, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Never). Additionally, when a film included a prostitute using drugs/alcohol, it was noted whether she engaged in sexual acts for drugs, if she was using drugs/alcohol while performing sexual acts, if she was working as a prostitute to support a drug

habit, if a pimp provided the substances to the prostitute, and if appeared as if the drugs/alcohol were being used as a coping mechanism. All of these variables were coded as 1 = Yes and 2 = No. A description was recorded for each of the above indicators so that comparisons between films could be made.

### **Victimization**

This research aimed to identify the types of victimization, if any, each prostitute character experiences whilst working as a prostitute. The types of victimization included were drawn from the extant literature on prostitute victimization. For each prostitute, it was recorded which type(s) of victimization she experienced (sexual assault, physical assault, non-payment for sexual services, homicide). For each type of victimization experienced, the perpetrator was noted (1 = Date/john, 2 = Pimp, 3 = Other), as was whether the perpetrator and/or prostitute was intoxicated (1 = Date/john intoxicated, 2 = Pimp intoxicated, 3 = Other perpetrator intoxicated, 4 = Prostitute intoxicated, 5 = Neither intoxicated). It was also noted whether the incident was reported to the police (1 = Reported, 2 = Not reported). For each victimization, the severity of injuries sustained, using the American Medical Association's Abbreviated Injury Scale, was also noted (1 = No injury; 2 = Mild; 3 = Moderate; 4 = Severe, not life-threatening; 5 = Severe, life-threatening, survival probable; 6 = Critical, survival uncertain; 7 = Fatal, 8 = N/A). Finally, detailed narratives of each victimization were noted in order to permit comparisons between films.

### **Mental and Physical Health**

The prostitutes' mental and physical health was also measured by a series of variables. First, it was coded if the prostitute displayed any trauma-related behaviors, including low self-

worth, helplessness, fear, cutting, overdose, suicide attempts, suicide, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, psychosis, dissociation, PTSD, and other. Each of these variables was coded as 1 = Yes, 2 = No. Detailed descriptions of each indicator of poor mental health were recorded. To measure physical health, aside from injuries noted in the victimization variables, it was also recorded if sexual acts were ever physically painful (1 = Yes, 2 = No), if there was discussion of sexually transmitted infections (1 = Yes, 2 = No), and if condoms were regularly used (1 = Yes, 2 = No). A description of each indicator of physical health was recorded in detail to allow for comparisons between films.

### **Study Limitations**

No research is without limitations. However, the methodology employed in the present study minimized possible problems. To begin, the Unified Film Population Identification methodology was utilized to identify the sample used in this research. While an improvement over prior research that has used non-probability sampling, it is important to note that this method is not without limitations. The Internet Movie Data Base was used in Phase 2 of the UFPIM method as a pre-existing list of films released in the U.S. during the decades under consideration that included an actor that played some form of prostitute. Although the UFPIM recommends using the Internet Movie Database, it is possible that films were excluded when constructing this list. However, the three lists consisted of a total of 1,460 films, from which the top-grossing from each decade were included in the population of films for the sample. With such a large list of films containing prostitutes, it is unlikely that a substantial number of films were excluded.

As noted, the sample only included the decades 1990-1999, 2000-2009, and 2010-2014. As such, the generalizability of the results is only to this time period. However, this approach is consistent with research on social issues that has identified film as a historical byproduct of the generation in which it was produced (Cheatwood, 1998; Fenwick, 2009). This allows the present research to be confidently interpreted as a reflection of era-specific matters. However, it is recognized that public opinion and discourse on these matters change. It is noted that there would be utility in subsequent research comparing the portrayal of prostitutes in film between various eras. Nonetheless, while generalizability might be somewhat limited by the era, having a representative and sufficiently large sample, along with a thorough methodology, allowed the researcher to report findings with confidence (Macnamara, 2005).

The analysis employed also merits discussion in this section on limitations. Quantitative media content analysis provides investigators with a collection of valuable means for examining messages and images, created by the motion picture industry, and for investigating messages that contain information about prostitution. Nevertheless, rigorous methodological standards have not consistently been employed in media research, particularly in regard to matters involving validity and reliability. To address these concerns, this research was conducted with attention to detail and rigor, and was directed in accordance with the scientific method. As previously mentioned, the Unified Film Population Identification methodology was utilized to identify the sample used in this research. This sampling method allowed for the researcher to readily identify and set replicable parameters for a specific film population. This allowed for far richer analysis of film depictions than has been seen in the past. Utilizing this sampling methodology also helped to maximize objectivity by minimizing any bias of the researcher.

Objectivity was also maximized by utilizing an *a priori* design. The deductive approach to this research involved making decisions about variables, the measurement of those variables, and the coding rules before coding began. Extensive exploratory work was undertaken to identify the issues and variables appropriate for study; this research was subsequently drawn on to develop the coding scheme utilized in this study. The Codebook was available to coders before viewing the films; the comprehensive Codebook provided a consistent framework for conducting the research (Macnamara, 2005).

Measurement in content analysis has also been criticized. To address previous shortcomings of similar research, measures of variables were assessed in a similar fashion as measures in surveys and experiments. Each variable had indicators that were mutually exclusive and exhaustive and were measured at the highest possible level of measurement. However, it is recognized that many of the variables under consideration are impossible to measure above the nominal- or ordinal level. Substantial background research also allowed for considerable codebook definition to aid in the direct measurement of latent constructs in addition to manifest content.

Recent criminological and victimiological research in the realm of media analysis have not used a second coder (see Baker, 2014; Coy, Wakeling, & Garner, 2011; Eigenberg & Baro, 2003; Guista & Scuriatti, 2005; Stack, Bowman, & Lester, 2012; Szörényi & Eate, 2014; Welsh, Fleming, & Dowler, 2011). The present research, however, relied on trained individuals as an integral part of the measurement process. To ensure this process was valid and reliable, coder training involved both discussion of the coding scheme as well as group coding sessions. To assure replicability, the selection of coders was not based on prior expertise; the secondary coders included two individuals with very different education levels and research experience.

Because human coding was utilized, reliability was an essential component of this research. Using Neuendorf's (2011) proposed criteria for maximizing reliability in content analyses, two reliability subsamples were utilized; the first served as a pilot reliability test and the second provided material for the final analyses. The pilot test involved the researcher selecting a film to provide the opportunity to become skilled at identifying the variables of particular interest, including drug use, victimization, and mental health. To assess intercoder reliability, nominal data were analyzed using agreement controlling for chance; ordinal data were analyzed using covariation. A common criticism of content analysis is poor documentation of reliability assessment. Reliability coefficients in this research were reported separately for variables (see Table 5 and Table 6).

Because this research utilized quantitative content analysis, it is important to consider the degree to which quantitative indicators can be interpreted as the social impact they might have. As such, one would be naïve to draw conclusions regarding this impact from the size and frequency of messages and images in film. Quantitative media content analysis is often unable to capture the context within which these messages and images can be meaningful. To address this limitation, the coding sheets included areas for the coder(s) to provide qualitative information regarding relevant scenes. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the message, as well as comparisons between films.

Finally, it has been acknowledged that replicability is a key criterion for all scientific research (Macnamara, 2005). Research using content analysis has been strongly criticized because it is difficult for other researchers to duplicate the research to corroborate or challenge the results. Because this research involved content analysis, it will be important that subsequent

discussion this research include disclosure of the related methodology and procedures, including the Codebook.

## CHAPTER FIVE:

### RESULTS

The objectives of this research were twofold. The first was to examine the nature of the film industry's portrayal of females engaging in street-level prostitution in the United States in the following areas: 1) entry into sex work; 2) the economic need behind the women's involvement; 3) experiences of childhood victimization; 4) presence and role of pimps; 5) drug/alcohol abuse; 6) victimization; and 7) mental/physical health. The second objective was to determine if this media coverage is analogous to extant research on these aspects of prostitution culture. A summary of the portrayal of the variables outlined in the first objective will be will be discussed, with quantitative results presented in tabular format. Supplemental information in regard to the context of these variables is also presented. A comparison of these depictions to the extant literature follows.

#### **Intercoder Reliability**

Table 6 includes an extraction of the intercoder reliability results for the analysis of all 15 motion pictures, with percent agreement and Cohen's  $K$  covariation measured for the most important variables under review. Across variables, reliability was high. Cohen's kappa was perfect for three items: child sexual abuse, pimp control, and drug use ( $\kappa = 1.00, p < .000$ ). Reliability was .75 for socio-economic status, .819 for physical assault, .722 for sexual assault, and .883 for trauma. This substantial agreement for all four variables was also statistically



significant ( $p < .000$ ). These results represent a high degree of agreement among the independent coders and are above the accepted reliability standards for both Cohen's kappa and percent agreement. As a result, the interpretation of the results that follow can be considered objective and valid.

Table 6

Intercoder Reliability: Final Analysis

Variable	Percent Agreement	Covariation (Cohen's <i>K</i> )	Cohen's <i>K</i> Significance
Socio-economic status during prostitution	.866	.750	.000
Child sexual abuse	1.00	1.00	.000
Pimp control	1.00	1.00	.000
Drug use	1.00	1.00	.000
Physical assault	.866	.819	.000
Sexual assault	.866	.722	.000
Trauma	.933	.883	.000

### Entrance into Prostitution

Entrance into prostitution was examined by asking: What is the nature of entrance into street-level prostitution presented in films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which entrance into prostitution is portrayed within film? Entrance into street-level prostitution was recorded while watching each film. Of particular interest were how the prostitute entered sex work, if she did so voluntarily, and the age at which she began participating in transactional sex. Also of importance were by whom she was recruited, if she was trafficked, if she had been a juvenile runaway. These findings are outlined in Table 7 and discussed in detail below.

Table 7

## Entrance into Prostitution

	Entrance Discussed	Recruited By	Trafficked	Age of Entrance	Juvenile Runaway	Voluntary
<i>21 Jump Street</i>	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
<i>Borat</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Casino</i>	-	-	No	13-17	-	Yes
<i>8MM</i>	-	-	No	13-17	Yes	-
<i>The Equalizer</i>	Yes	Pimp	Yes	<13	-	No
<i>Eyes Wide Shut</i>	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
<i>Flight</i>	-	-	No	-	-	Yes
<i>Heat</i>	-	-	-	13-17	-	-
<i>Miami Vice</i>	-	-	-	-	-	No
<i>Mirror Has 2 Faces</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Out for Justice</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Pretty Woman</i>	Yes	Prostitute	No	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Se7en</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>The Heat</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Unlawful Entry</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Entrance: Recruitment and Trafficking**

None of the 15 films in the sample contained scenes with images portraying the women first entering or being recruited into prostitution; additionally, there were no depictions of women/girls being turned out in any of the films. Rather, all of the women were presented as already working in street-level prostitution. Only two of the fifteen films (*The Equalizer* and *Pretty Woman*) retrospectively addressed entrance into prostitution. In *The Equalizer*, the audience learns that the primary prostitute, Alina, was trafficked into the United States as a young child to work as a prostitute; there is no elaboration as to the details of her exact age or the context under which she was trafficked. In *Pretty Woman*, Vivian, the lead character, who is also a prostitute, recalls that she met another prostitute who “was a hooker and made it sound so great” (Milchan & Marshall, 1990).

The only film to depict sex trafficking was *The Equalizer*. In this film, Alina, a young girl, was brought from Russia to the United States to work as a prostitute. In a scene that takes place in a hospital's intensive care unit after Alina was brutally beaten by her pimp, another prostitute speaks of their being trafficked. She states that Alina "thought her life could be hers one day. Slavi (the pimp) reminded her it never would be" (Black & Fuqua, 2014). The details of her being trafficked were not discussed, but it is evident that both girls are under Slavi's control, and that is unlikely to change.

### **Age of Entrance**

The exact age at which the prostitute character began sex work was not part of the dialogue in any of the films in the sample. However, four of the total 15 films (*Casino*, *8MM*, *The Equalizer*, and *Heat*) contained either imagery or dialogue that suggested the age at which the women entered prostitution. For example, when discussing her former pimp/boyfriend, Ginger, the prostitute in *Casino*, states, "I've been with Lester since I was a kid." While the exact age at which she began prostituting is unknown, the viewer is led to believe that she was at least younger than 18. Both coders independently interpreted her age at entrance as 13-17. A similar situation exists in *8MM*; the film provides that the girl is a juvenile runaway, and scenes at her childhood home contain recent photographs that place the girl around 15-16 years of age.

*Heat* is a film about a group of armed thieves who start to feel the heat from law enforcement after leaving a clue at the scene of one of their crimes. While prostitution does not play a key role in the storyline, the audience learns that Waingro, one of the robbers, is also a serial killer who kills young prostitutes. The only scene containing a prostitute shows the young girl putting money into her purse and preparing to leave the hotel she recently shared with a date.

In her dialog with Waingro, the unnamed prostitute says, “Ok baby, time to go... this was the monster fuck of my young life. Now I got to get my ass street-side, sugar” (Mann, 1995). When she is later found dead, police estimate her age to be 16-17.

Of the four films that suggested ages of entrance into prostitution, *The Equalizer* is the only one to imply that the prostitute entered sex work when younger than 13 years old. As previously noted, Alina was trafficked from Russia to the United States when she was “very young.” Present time in the film depicts her as an established prostitute who is in her mid- to late- teens, leading the audience to assume she was several years younger when she began engaging in transactional sex. Later in the film, Robert McCall, a former black ops operative who befriended Alina after they both spent many nights in a 24/7 diner, approached the Russian Mafioso who was Alina’s pimp in an attempt to purchase her freedom. The pimp refused the \$9,800 offer, stating “That girl is still child [sic]. That makes her prime earner. I can still sell her as virgin” (Black & Fuqua, 2014).

### **Juvenile Runaway**

Two films (*8MM* and *Pretty Woman*) indicated that the prostitute characters were currently or had formerly been juvenile runaways; the remaining 13 films in the sample made no reference to runaways. *8MM* follows Tom, a private investigator, as he seeks information about a young girl who is apparently killed in a pornographic snuff film. Tom learns that the girl is Mary Ann Matthews, who ran away to Hollywood with her boyfriend to become a film star. Mary Ann’s mother, Janet, who was very supportive of her daughter, had feared that Mary Ann ran away because she had slapped her daughter across the face. After finding Mary Ann’s diary, Tom determines that the slap, which was apparently a one-time incident, had nothing to do with

the teenager's running away; in her diary was a note that specifically told her mother that running away was not due to being slapped. Rather, she was in love with her boyfriend and they wanted to become famous. As previously noted, Mary Ann's exact age is unknown, as is the exact age at which she began prostituting.

*Pretty Woman*, the highest-grossing film when adjusting for inflation in the sample, tells the story of Vivian, a prostitute who is hired by a wealthy businessman, Edward Lewis, to serve as an escort for social events while he is in California on business; the two end up falling in love. Early in the film, Vivian states, "I only got through the eleventh grade" (Milchan & Marshall, 1990). She later tells Edward, "If there was a bum within a 50-mile radius, I was attracted to him. That's how I ended up here. I followed bum #3." While not explicitly stating that she was a juvenile runaway, the viewer is led to believe that the reason she did not complete high school was because she ran away with her boyfriend; however, much like the runaway in *8MM*, it is not known exactly at which age she began prostituting.

While the dead prostitute in *Heat* was determined to be 16-17 years old, there is no indication that she was a runaway. The girl's mother arrives at the crime scene, obviously distraught and asking "Where's my baby?" LAPD Lieutenant Vincent Hanna, the lead character played by Al Pacino, is shown embracing and comforting the victim's mother. This leads the audience to believe that the mother still cared about the child, with no indication that there was a strained familial relationship.

### **Voluntary Prostitution**

The depiction of women voluntarily engaging in prostitution was present in 5 of the 15 films (*21 Jump Street*, *Casino*, *Eyes Wide Shut*, *Flight*, and *Pretty Woman*). All five of these

films contain various scenes that depict the women as engaging in prostitution when they choose. *Pretty Woman* is the only film that has accompanying dialogue to convey that prostitution is a choice: Vivian says to her roommate/fellow prostitute, “We say who, we say when, we say how much” (Milchan & Marshall, 1990).

Two films (*The Equalizer* and *Miami Vice*) depicted woman involuntarily working as prostitutes. It is evident that Alina, the teenage sex trafficking victim in *The Equalizer*, was not voluntarily working as a prostitute. In one of the earlier scenes in the film, her pimp, Slavi, calls to inform her that she has a client; she responds “I don’t want to” (Black & Fuqua, 2014). However, Slavi threatens her and she reluctantly walks outside and gets in the vehicle with the john. In the following scene, she is shown with a large bruise on her face, purportedly from the john with whom Slavi forced her to go on a date. Later in the film, Alina is severely beaten by Slavi and is shown unconscious in the intensive care unit. One of Alina’s friends, who was also trafficked by Slavi, states that Slavi made an example of her, and that her life would never belong to her.

*Miami Vice* contained a total of five prostitutes, all of whom were minor characters in the film. In one scene, their pimp, Neptune, delivers the girls to a client at a nightclub; one girl is hesitant to go with the client, suggesting that she is not willingly engaging in prostitution. She is grabbed by the pimp and forcibly escorted out of the club. She and the pimp are then seen in an elevator, where it appears he is beating her. An undercover police officer witnesses the encounter and says to another officer, “Neptune should ease up on the merchandise” (Mann, 2006).

The remaining eight films do not provide enough information for the viewer to discern whether the prostitutes are voluntarily or involuntarily engaging in street-level prostitution.

## Comparison to the Extant Literature: Entrance

While there is no one single causal model for the initial entry into prostitution, it has been suggested that a combination or confluence of factors create risks that evolve to lead to entrance and continued work in prostitution. What is common among these women is that they perceive themselves as having no other options for survival (Dalla, 2001; Greene, Ennett, & Ringwalt, 1999; Sanders, 2004; Shdaimah & Wiechelt, 2012). Additionally, the women are often persuaded to prostitute themselves to financially benefit pimps/boyfriends, authority figures/parents, and lesbian partners (Kennedy et al., 200). It is generally agreed that most women and girls enter street-level prostitution before turning 18 (Farley & Barkan, 1998; Silbert & Pines, 1981; Valera, Sawyer, & Schiraldi, 2000; Weisberg, 1985). Research has also found that between 55% (Estes & Eeiner, 2001) and 96% (Silbert & Pines, 1982) of street-level prostitutes report having been juvenile runaways.

The films in this sample, representing the top-grossing films including prostitute characters of the last 25 years, included little discussion of the dynamics behind why women entered street prostitution. Only two of the fifteen films (*The Equalizer* and *Pretty Woman*) discussed how the women began working as prostitutes. It is worth noting, though, that both are consistent with the extant literature on entrance into prostitution. In *The Equalizer*, Alina was trafficked as a young child into the United States to work in prostitution. As such, she was under the age of 18, and her engaging in transactional sex benefits her pimp/trafficker. It is unknown what her home life and financial situation were before being trafficked. While the literature illustrates that over 50% of women enter street prostitution with pimps (Giobbe, 1993), *The Equalizer* is the only film in the sample that highlights this relationship.

Vivian, the prostitute in *Pretty Woman*, recounts running away from home as an adolescent and working several menial jobs that did not pay enough to pay her rent. She then met a prostitute who made prostitution “sound so great.” Consistent with research on prostitution, Vivian was a juvenile runaway who believed she had no other means of earning enough income to survive. The literature points to some young women being influenced by their perception of seasoned prostitutes always having money (Kennedy et al., 2007).

Consistent with research, the only four films in the sample to suggest an age of entrance into prostitution (*Casino*, *8MM*, *The Equalizer*, and *Heat*) all pointed to entrance before the age of eighteen. Only two of the 15 films (*8MM* and *Pretty Woman*) acknowledged that the prostitute character had been a juvenile runaway. However, the circumstances of their running away are in contrast to the current literature regarding prostitution and running away. It is typical for prostitutes to have run away as juveniles as a means of escaping chaotic and/or abusive home situations. The prostitute characters in both of these films ran away with boyfriends, and there is no indication that they were running away to escape a disordered or dangerous living situation.

### **Economic Need**

The economic need of prostitutes was examined by asking: What is the nature of the economic need of street-level prostitutes presented in films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which economic/financial need is portrayed within film? The economic needs of prostitutes were recorded while watching each film. These findings are outlined in Table 8. As can be seen in the table, none of the 15 films depicted the prostitutes as



having children to support or as being formerly homeless. The remaining variables are discussed below.

Table 8

Economic Need of Prostitutes

	SES Pre	Current SES	Formerly Homeless	Currently Homeless	Children to Support	Determine Cost	Money to Pimp
<i>21 Jump Street</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Borat</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Casino</i>	-	-	-	No	No	-	Yes
<i>8MM</i>	Low	Low	No	Yes	No	-	-
<i>The Equalizer</i>	-	Middle	-	No	No	-	Yes
<i>Eyes Wide Shut</i>	-	Middle	-	No	No	Yes	No
<i>Flight</i>	-	Low	-	No	No	-	No
<i>Heat</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Miami Vice</i>	-	-	-	-	-	No	Yes
<i>The Mirror Has...</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Out for Justice</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
<i>Pretty Woman</i>	Low	Low	-	No	No	Yes	No
<i>Se7en</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>The Heat</i>	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	-
<i>Unlawful Entry</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

### Socioeconomic Status Pre-Prostitution

Two of the fifteen films (*8MM* and *Pretty Woman*) provided insight into the socioeconomic status of the women before they began engaging in prostitution. In both of these films, the prostitutes came from a low socioeconomic standing. The remaining 13 films provided no indication of the women's social class/economic standing before prostitution.

The viewer is provided a glance at Mary Ann's pre-prostitution social class in *8MM* when a private investigator goes to the house from which she ran away as a juvenile, and thus before entering prostitution. The home is small and in poor condition. The viewer is provided several

glimpses of the interior of the home, which is outdated and contains few extra items that would indicate that the owner is able to purchase anything other than the basic necessities for survival.

In *Pretty Woman*, Vivian discussed how she became a prostitute: she ran away and followed her boyfriend to California and once there had no money, no friends, and no boyfriend. Edward asks if she chose prostitution as her profession, and she responded, “I worked at a couple of fast food places, parked cars at wrestling. And I couldn’t make the rent. I was too ashamed to go home... it’s not like anybody plans this. It’s not your childhood dream” (Milchan & Marshall, 1990). When Edward tells her that she could “be so much more,” she replies, “People put you down enough, you start to believe it.” The scene highlights her poor socioeconomic status before resorting to prostitution, as well as her feeling as if she truly has no other options for earning enough income to survive.

### **Socioeconomic Status of Prostitutes**

Five of the 15 films in the sample (*8MM*, *The Equalizer*, *Eyes Wide Shut*, *Flight*, and *Pretty Woman*) gave insight into the current socioeconomic status of the prostitutes. Of these, 3 depicted the prostitutes as being lower-class (*8MM*, *Flight*, and *Pretty Woman*), and 2 presented them as middle-class (*The Equalizer* and *Eyes Wide Shut*).

When investigating the disappearance of Mary Ann, the juvenile runaway in *8MM*, a private detective traces her last known address to a mission in Hollywood, California. This suggests that Mary Ann is lower class, as she is apparently homeless. *Flight* tells the story of Whip Whitaker, an airline pilot who successfully makes a controlled crash landing of a commercial plane whilst under the influence of cocaine and alcohol. In the hospital following the crash, Whip befriends Nicole Maggen, a prostitute who is being treated for a heroin

overdose. In developing Nicole's character, she is shown living in a run-down apartment where she is behind \$1,100 in rent. As she is trying to leave her apartment and evade her landlord, Nicole is shown loading very few belongings into an older, rusted vehicle which will not start. In a later scene, Nicole speaks of other jobs that she has held, including washing hair at a salon, and as a masseuse. As she progresses in her sobriety, she gets a job working in retail.

One of the opening scenes in *Pretty Woman* shows Vivian in her run-down apartment getting ready to work on the street. She uses a black marker to cover the scuffs on her boots, and as she is leaving, she overhears the landlord asking a neighbor for rent money. She does not have her rent money, so she escapes down the fire escape. Later that night, she meets a john and tells him that she charges \$100; he questions, "You make \$100 per hour and you've got a safety pin holding your boot up?"

Domino, the prostitute in *Eyes Wide Shut*, is depicted as being middle-class. Domino propositions Tom Cruise's character, Dr. William Harford, as he is out walking. The two go to Domino's apartment, which she shares with a friend. While the apartment building itself is somewhat unclean, Domino's apartment has all of the basic necessities, as well as some luxuries. For example, there is a large stack of wrapped Christmas presents on the counter, and Domino's bedroom is decorated with a variety of tribal masks hanging on the walls.

*The Equalizer* portrays Alina as middle class in several ways. First, she is shown frequenting a 24/7 diner every night, implying that she has the funds to eat outside of the home on a regular basis. Additionally, Alina reveals that she wants to become a singer and recently bought some new recording equipment in hopes of recording a demo album. In accordance with the conceptualization of middle-class as outlined in the Codebook (see Appendix E), this

suggests that both Domino and Alina have some luxuries in addition to the basic needs for survival.

### **Homelessness**

None of the 15 films in the sample include any indication that the prostitute characters had been homeless prior to engaging in prostitution. Five of the films (*Casino*, *The Equalizer*, *Eyes Wide Shut*, *Flight*, and *Pretty Woman*) provided information that insinuated the prostitutes had either an apartment or home of their own in which they lived; one film (*8MM*) revealed that the prostitute was homeless. In *8MM*, private investigator Tom Wells tracked Mary Ann Matthews, the runaway girl who subsequently engaged in prostitution and pornography, to California. Once there, he discovered that Mary Ann was homeless and living in a mission before she was killed.

### **Children**

None of the 15 films in the sample depicted prostitutes as mothers or as having to care for children. The only reference to children was in *Out for Justice*, where a prostitute, being beaten by her pimp, tells him that she is pregnant. This infuriates the pimp and he then hits her again.

### **Control over Cost**

Four films in the sample provide insight into whether the prostitutes have control over the cost of their services. Three suggest that the women can name and/or negotiate the cost (*Eyes Wide Shut*, *Pretty Woman*, and *The Heat*), and one (*Miami Vice*) shows a prostitute with no control over cost. The remaining 11 films in the sample do not provide information that would

allow the audience to determine the amount of power, if any, the prostitutes possess in regard to pricing their services.

When Domino solicits Dr. William Harford in *Eyes Wide Shut*, they agree that they need to talk about money. She names her price, asking “How does \$150 sound?” (Kubrick, 1999). Dr. Harford then gives complete control to Domino, stating he would leave the sex acts up to her. The two are shown kissing on her bed, but are interrupted when his wife calls and he must leave. The final scene with the two of them shows him paying her anyway. Based on Domino’s reaction, the audience is led to believe that he paid her well.

Like Domino, *Pretty Woman* depicts Vivian as having complete control over the cost of her services. When she first sees Edward’s Lotus approaching her corner, her roommate/fellow prostitute tells her not to take less than “a hundred.” When he stops, she approaches his car; he says he only needs directions, and she offers to provide them for \$5. After she gets in his car and directs him to his hotel, he invites her to come up. Vivian tells him that she will, but “can’t take less than \$100” (Milchan & Marshall, 1990). Once upstairs, he asks her how much it would cost for her to stay the entire night, to which she responds “\$300.” The next day, he asks her to stay for the entire week; she says it will cost \$4,000, and he counters with \$3,000. Vivian agrees to this price.

Like *Eyes Wide Shut* and *Pretty Woman*, *The Heat* also depicts the prostitute as being able to control cost. In an early scene in the comedy, a group of five prostitutes is standing on the street; one is speaking with a clean-cut man sitting in his Volvo station-wagon. The viewer is led to believe that the prostitute was able to determine and negotiate the price she charges for sexual activity because the man is heard saying, “...seems expensive... Can you break a \$100?” (Chernin & Geig, 2013).

In contrast to these three films, *Miami Vice* shows a group of prostitutes who have no voice in the cost of transactional sex. Instead, their pimp lists the price and there appears to be no negotiation. For example, in an early scene, he brings a group of his girls to a boat dock to meet a wealthy client. He presents the girls and tells the john, “One for three, or three for five” (Mann, 2006). The prostitutes themselves played no part in discussing the financials of the business.

### **Earnings to Pimp**

As will be discussed in the later section on pimp-controlled prostitution, there were four films in which the prostitute(s) had pimps. In all four of these films (*Casino*, *The Equalizer*, *Miami Vice*, and *Out for Justice*), the prostitutes were required to turn some/all of their earnings over to the pimp.

*Casino* presents a unique angle on a pimp-prostitute relationship because the woman is no longer working as a prostitute, and thus he is technically no longer her pimp. Ginger, the former prostitute, has married a wealthy casino owner and is not prostituting for the majority of the film. However, there are two scenes in the film in which she gives large sums of money to her former pimp. Because Ginger is still giving money to Lester, the former pimp, even after she has left sex work, the audience is led to believe that she gave him at least some of her earnings when she was working as a prostitute.

Alina, the prostitute in *The Equalizer*, remains under the control of the pimp that trafficked her into the United States as a young child. While there are not any scenes that directly show Slavi, the pimp, taking or being given Alina’s earnings, there is a scene in which

he says, “I can still sell her as virgin [sic]” (Black & Fuqua, 2014). This statement makes it clear that he profits from Alina’s engaging in transactional sex.

In *Miami Vice*, Neptune, the pimp, controls all of the financial matters of the girls working for him. For example, it was previously noted that he informed a john of the cost for his girls’ services; when the client attempts to pay for the prostitutes, Neptune tells him to “hit me later” (Mann, 2006). This implies that Neptune not only determines the cost of his girls, but is also paid directly, rather than the girls receiving the money. Additionally, in a scene where one of his girls is reluctant to go with a john, Neptune later tells her, “Do you know how much I’m losing tonight?” It is unknown how much, if any, of the money the girls are then given by Neptune.

Finally, the opening scene in *Out for Justice* displays a prostitute being beaten by her pimp. The pimp tells her that she owes him money. When the prostitute tells the pimp that she’s pregnant, the pimp becomes angry and hits her again.

### **Comparison to the Extant Literature: Socioeconomic Status**

Poverty/financial need is considered to be a primary motivator for entrance into street work, and women are enticed into prostitution for financial gain due to having few alternatives for income (Baseman, Ross, & Williams, 1999; Dalla, 2002; El-Bassel et al., 2001; Giobbe, 1991; Du Mont & McGregor, 2004; Kennedy et al., 2007; Leidholdt, 2003; Maxwell & Maxwell, 2000; Monrow, 2005; Romero-Daza, Weeks, & Singer, 2003; Vanwesenbeeck, 2010; Williamson & Folaron, 2003). Those who do prostitute themselves typically see no other way of surviving, as they are in dire need of money, food, and shelter. Homeless women in particular have reported that there are few opportunities for them to support themselves through legitimate

means, so they often engage in prostitution as a means of economic survival (El-Bassel et al., 1997; Wenzel, Leake, & Gelberg, 2001; Whitbeck & Simons, 1993).

The only two films in the sample to offer insight into the girl/woman's socioeconomic status pre-prostitution (*8MM* and *Pretty Woman*) were both consistent with the literature that points to engaging in transactional sex as a means of economic survival. In *8MM*, juvenile runaway Mary Ann has dreams of becoming an actress, but finds herself homeless in Hollywood. She begins prostituting herself, and then agrees to act in a pornographic film in hopes of launching her career as an actress. This is the only film in the sample to also illustrate the link between homelessness and prostitution. In *Pretty Woman*, Vivian was a high school dropout and also a juvenile runaway; once in California, she found that the menial jobs she was able to land were not enough to pay rent and survive. She subsequently began prostituting herself.

None of the prostitutes in the 15 films included in this sample were shown to have children; six of these films (*Casino*<sup>4</sup>, *8MM*, *The Equalizer*, *Eyes Wide Shut*, *Flight*, and *Pretty Woman*) provided enough information on the characters that the audience can conclude that they do not have children. The remaining films did not provide enough information for the audience to determine with certainty that the women were childless. This is in stark contrast with the literature on prostitutes. Werner (1996), for example, reported that over two-thirds of female prostitutes have at least one child. It has also been reported that prostitutes have an average of 2.25 to 3.4 children each, and some have up to seven children (Dalla, 2004; Weiner, 1996).

Five films in the sample provided insight into the woman's socioeconomic standing whilst working as a street prostitute (see Table 8). Consistent with the extant literature that maintains that most women remain poor while working as street-level prostitutes (Hood-Brown,

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<sup>4</sup> Ginger and Sam do eventually have a child, but this is after Ginger has left prostitution.



1998) are *8MM*, *Flight*, and *Pretty Woman*. In these three films, the prostitutes are either unable to pay their rent or are homeless. Two films, however, imply that the prostitutes are middle-class. *The Equalizer* and *Eyes Wide Shut* both show the women as having some luxury items that would suggest they make enough money to survive, plus an excess of income that allows them to purchase items that are beyond what is needed for basic existence. This middle-class existence is in opposition to the majority of the literature on prostitution which has shown that prostitution is rarely profitable for the woman herself.

The ability to set and/or negotiate the cost of services, as well as turning earnings over to pimps, will be compared to the extant literature in detail in the discussion on pimp-controlled prostitution.

### **Childhood Victimization**

The childhood victimization of prostitutes was examined by asking two questions. The first question asked: What is the frequency of childhood physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect/abandonment presented in films? The childhood victimization of prostitutes was recorded while watching each film. These findings are outlined in Table 9. As can be seen in the table, only three films (*8MM*, *The Equalizer*, and *Pretty Woman*) included any indication that the prostitute character had been abused or otherwise victimized as a child. The second question asked: What is the nature of childhood physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect/abandonment presented in films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which childhood physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect/abandonment are presented within film? The discussion of these results is below.

The childhood physical abuse in *8MM* involved one incident in which the girl's mother slapped her across the face. While the mother believes that this one slap was a reason for the girl

running away from home, the girl's diary states that it played no part in her decision to leave home. Instead, she left home to follow her boyfriend to Hollywood and to become a star. It should be noted that there is no indication of any other physical abuse in Mary Ann's childhood. Similarly, it is unknown if the reference to questionable parenting in *Pretty Woman* constitutes childhood victimization. Vivian states that "My mama used to lock me in the attic when I was bad, which was pretty often" (Milchan & Marshall, 1990). She does not elaborate on the punishment, nor is there any mention of any other abuse. While Vivian is a runaway, she states that she also ran away to follow a boyfriend to California, but there is no indication that her home environment played a role in her leaving home.

Table 9

Childhood Victimization

	Sexual	Physical	Emotional	Neglect	Bullying	Other
<i>21 Jump Street</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Borat</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Casino</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>8MM</i>	-	Yes	-	-	-	-
<i>The Equalizer</i>	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Eyes Wide Shut</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Flight</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Heat</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Miami Vice</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>The Mirror Has Two Faces</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Out for Justice</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Pretty Woman</i>	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
<i>Se7en</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>The Heat</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Unlawful Entry</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-

The childhood sexual abuse in *The Equalizer* is in reference to the fact that the prostitute was a victim of sex trafficking as a child. While no scenes contain images or dialogue in regard

to Alina engaging in sex as a child, her pimp/trafficker states that because of her young age, she can still be sold to johns as a virgin. As a minor, the girl cannot legally consent to sexual activity, and as a sex trafficking victim, she is not voluntarily engaging in prostitution. Thus, she is technically a victim of childhood sexual abuse.

### **Comparison to the Extant Literature: Childhood Victimization**

There is an abundance of literature documenting childhood physical and sexual abuse prior to entering prostitution. Research has pointed to between 44% (Valera et al., 2000) and 79% (Roe-Sepowitz, 2014) of street prostitutes being sexually abused as children, and childhood physical abuse among current/former prostitutes has been found to range from 39% (Valera et al., 2000) to 86% (Kurtz et al., 2004). As was illustrated in Table 9, the films in this sample are not consistent with the extant literature in regard to childhood abuse and victimization.

Only three films (*8MM*, *The Equalizer*, and *Pretty Woman*) suggested that the prostitute characters had been victims of abuse as children. However, it should be noted that this victimization is somewhat unclear/inconclusive in two of the films. For example, in *8MM*, Mary Ann's mother admits that she slapped her daughter across the face. The Codebook includes "inappropriate/excessive physical discipline" in its conceptualization. However, the film does not provide adequate information to conclude with certainty that the slap was inappropriate or excessive, as it is only mentioned by the mother in retrospect. Her remorse over the incident leads the audience to believe that it might have been inappropriate, but it is also noted that it was a one-time incident and not indicative of a pattern of behavior by the mother.

The childhood victimization incident in *Pretty Woman* is also somewhat ambiguous. Vivian recalls that her mother used to lock her in the attic when she was bad, which was "pretty often." While not necessarily indicative of abuse, both the primary and secondary coders felt

that this form of punishment should be coded as “other.” It should be noted that there was no indication of any other abuse or victimization in Vivian’s childhood.

The abuse coded in *The Equalizer* is also unique and not necessarily in accordance with that which is expounded in the literature. Alina was determined to be a victim of sexual abuse because she was trafficked as a child, thus engaging in sexual activity with clients as a minor. The audience is not privy to Alina’s experience before being trafficked, and this victimization only refers to her encounters once involved in prostitution.

## **Pimps**

The presence and role of pimps were examined by asking two questions. The first asked: What is the frequency of pimp-controlled prostitution presented in films? A prostitute having a pimp was recorded while watching each film. These findings are outlined in Table 10, which shows that prostitutes in 2 of the 15 films (*Flight*, and *Pretty Woman*) did not have pimps. Four of the 15 films (*Casino*, *The Equalizer*, *Miami Vice*, and *Out for Justice*) did depict pimp-controlled prostitution. In the remaining 9 films, it is unknown if the prostitute had a pimp.

The prostitute in *Flight* is presented as engaging in transactional sex when she needs money to purchase drugs. When she overdoses on drugs and enters treatment, there is no mention of a pimp, nor any events or scenes that lead the viewer to believe she worked for a pimp. In *Pretty Woman*, Vivian adamantly opposes having a pimp. When Vivian and her roommate/fellow prostitute, Kit, are discussing not having money for rent, Kit suggests that they should get a pimp. Vivian responds, “...he’ll ruin our lives and take our money. No” (Milchan & Marshall, 1990). Kit agrees, stating, “You’re right. We say who, when say when, we say how much.” It should be noted that while there is a pimp named Rojas in *The Heat*, it is unknown if

he is the pimp for the prostitutes that are shown. Rojas is never shown with the prostitutes, nor is there anything that indicates that the prostitutes work for him. Because of this, the film was not coded as having pimp-controlled prostitution present or absent.

Table 10

Pimp-Controlled Prostitution

	Pimp
<i>21 Jump Street</i>	-
<i>Borat</i>	-
<i>Casino</i>	Yes
<i>8MM</i>	-
<i>The Equalizer</i>	Yes
<i>Eyes Wide Shut</i>	-
<i>Flight</i>	No
<i>Heat</i>	-
<i>Miami Vice</i>	Yes
<i>The Mirror Has Two Faces</i>	-
<i>Out for Justice</i>	Yes
<i>Pretty Woman</i>	No
<i>Se7en</i>	-
<i>The Heat</i>	-
<i>Unlawful Entry</i>	-

As outlined in Table 10, there are four films in the sample that depicted pimp-controlled prostitution. In *Casino*, Sharon Stone plays Ginger, a prostitute who marries Sam “Ace” Rothstein, a wealthy mobster who runs a Las Vegas casino; Stone was nominated for an Academy Award for this role. While it appears that Ginger no longer works as a prostitute when she first marries Sam, she still has contact with Lester, her former pimp/boyfriend. In fact, on their wedding night, Sam overhears a crying Ginger on the phone with Lester telling him that she still loves him. Later in the film, Ginger asks Sam for \$25,000, but does not want to tell him what the money is for. Ginger goes to a bank to withdraw the money, and then she proceeds to a

restaurant where she gives Lester the money. Sam and his goons interrupt the meeting; Sam takes back the \$25,000, and his men are shown severely beating Lester. Ginger and Lester are also shown together later in the film. Ginger wants to divorce Sam, and Sam sends Ginger and their young daughter, Amy, away for a week-long shopping trip. Instead of shopping, though, Ginger has reunited with Lester; both have altered their appearance and intend to kidnap Amy and run away to Europe. After Sam convinces Ginger to return home with Amy, it is revealed that Ginger gave Lester \$25,000.

As previously noted, Alina, the prostitute in *The Equalizer*, was a victim of international minor sex trafficking and is still under the control of her pimp, Slavi. The group of prostitutes in *Miami Vice* work for a pimp named Neptune. And the unnamed prostitute in *Out for Justice* also worked for a pimp, who beat her because she owed him money.

For these four films that did include pimp characters, a second pimp-related research question was asked: What is the nature of pimp-controlled prostitution presented in films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which pimp-controlled prostitution is presented within film? These results are outlined in Table 11 and discussed in detail below.

Table 11

Role of Pimps

	Recruited Prostitute	Other Girls Working	Gave Money to Pimp	Drugs to Prostitute	Abusive	Control over Prostitute
<i>Casino</i>	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	Some
<i>The Equalizer</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	A Lot
<i>Miami Vice</i>	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	A Lot
<i>Out for Justice</i>	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Some

None of the pimps in these four films (*Casino*, *The Equalizer*, *Miami Vice*, and *Out for Justice*) were shown giving drugs to prostitutes. In *Casino*, both Ginger and Lester use drugs, but the pimp does not provide or force their use. As previously discussed, the pimps in *Casino* and *The Equalizer* both recruited the prostitutes that were working for them. Also discussed above, the pimps in *The Equalizer*, *Miami Vice*, and *Out for Justice* all had multiple prostitutes working for them. Finally, the topic of pimps taking some/all of the money that was earned by their prostitutes was discussed in detail in the aforementioned section on the socioeconomic status of prostitutes.

### **Abuse by Pimps**

Three of the four films with pimps (*The Equalizer*, *Miami Vice*, and *Out for Justice*) display physical abuse by those pimps. Slavi, the pimp in *The Equalizer*, severely beats Alina, leaving her unconscious in the intensive care unit. The pimp beat her to make an example of her in front of his other prostitutes. A prostitute-friend who is visiting Alina in the hospital states that “they do that,” implying that this is not the first time that the pimp had beaten one of his prostitutes (Black & Fuqua, 2014). As previously discussed, in *Miami Vice*, three prostitutes are delivered by their pimp to a john. One of the three does not want to go with the john, and is seen being forcibly escorted away and is subsequently physically assaulted by her pimp.

The opening scene of *Out for Justice* depicts two prostitutes walking down the street. They see a car pull up, and one prostitute tries to hurriedly walk in the other direction. Their pimp gets out of the car and says that the girl owes him money; he then beats her. When the prostitute tells him that she is pregnant, he becomes angry and hits her again. Meanwhile, the police are on a stakeout across the street and the lead character, Gino, an undercover police

detective, intervenes before the prostitute is seriously injured. This scene not only depicts abuse by a pimp, but also that the prostitute was expected to give at least some of her earnings to her pimp. The prostitute's fear and attempt to evade the pimp also suggested he had at least a modest amount of control over the woman.

### **Amount of Control over Prostitutes**

Two of the films displayed pimps as having “a lot” of control over their prostitutes (see Table 11). Slavi had an enormous amount of control of Alina and the other prostitutes in *The Equalizer*. As previously noted, he beat them to make examples of them; the pimp wanted to make sure the girls knew that they belonged to him. Numerous scenes in the film also show Alina as being very fearful of Slavi. When Slavi is speaking of Alina and states, “I can still sell her as virgin [sic]”, it is evident that he has control over the girl.

Neptune, the pimp in *Miami Vice*, had at least five prostitutes under his control. The film shows him negotiating the cost of their services with the johns, and also suggests that he is paid directly by the clients. It is unknown how much, if any, of the money is then given to the girls. In one scene, he also is violent with one of his girls who did not want to service a client.

### **Comparison to the Extant Literature: Pimp-Controlled Prostitution**

The majority of street prostitution is believed to involve pimps and other sex industry entrepreneurs. Research has illustrated that between 80% (Giobbe, 1993) and 100% (Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002) of street prostitutes have a pimp. In contrast, only 4 of the 15 films in the sample included prostitutes with pimps (see Table 10).



Research has also outlined differences between prostitutes with and without pimps. Women with pimps are less likely to have graduated from high school, seldom have had retained conventional employment, reported earlier sexual experiences, and had higher incidence of drug use than street prostitutes without pimps (Williamson & Baker, 2009). Pimp-controlled women also have parents who were heavily involved with drugs and alcohol (Norton-Hawk, 2004). They also began sex work at an earlier age than non-pimp-controlled prostitutes (Williamson & Baker, 2009), making them significantly more likely to first regularly engage in transactional sex by the age of 14 than women without pimps (Norton-Hawk, 2004).

Most of the 15 films in the sample for the present research did not provide information in regard to these women's backgrounds. For example, none of the 15 films provided information on parental substance abuse. *8MM* does suggest that Mary Ann's mother drinks heavily, but it is implied that this is in response to Mary Ann's running away. The only prostitute known to have dropped out of high school is Vivian (*Pretty Woman*), but she is also very vocal about being opposed to having a pimp. None of the four films with pimps provided information about the women's conventional work experience; only two films in the entire sample (*Flight* and *Pretty Woman*) made reference to prostitutes having held conventional employment.

Somewhat consistent with the extant literature, however, is the age of entrance of pimp-controlled prostitutes. As indicated in Table 7, there were only four films that provided insight in regard to the age at which women entered into prostitution. Two of these films (*Casino* and *The Equalizer*) included prostitutes who entered sex work as minors. Ginger, the prostitute in *Casino*, states that she has been with her pimp since they were kids. Most consistent with research is the situation of Alina, the sex trafficking victim in *The Equalizer*; Alina, who was trafficked by her pimp, entered into prostitution as a young child.

There is an abundance of literature that has made known that pimps are frequent perpetrators of violence against prostitutes (Arnold, Steward, & McNeece, 2001; Giobbe, 1993; Kennedy et al., 2007; Norton-Hawk, 2004; Silbert & Pines, 1981, 1982, 1983; Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002), and it is common for the girls/women to be threatened harm if they do not continue to prostitute themselves (Dalla , 2002; Kennedy et al., 2007). For example, Silbert and Pines (1982) reported that one-third of the women in their study recalled being beaten by pimps; another study revealed that half of the women included in the sample had been physically abused and 35% had been sexually abused by their pimps (Raphael and Shapiro, 2004).

None of the films included any indication that prostitutes were sexually abused by their pimps. Three of the four films in the sample that depicted pimp-controlled prostitution included scenes where the pimp physically abused the prostitute. Two of these films (*Miami Vice* and *Out for Justice*) showed prostitutes being beaten because they either owed their pimp money, or they had caused the pimp to lose money. *Miami Vice* included a scene where a prostitute did not want to go with a john that had been scheduled by the pimp; the pimp then says to the girl, “Do you know how much I’m losing tonight?” and hits her. In *Out for Justice*, a prostitute is beaten on the street because she owes her pimp money. The abuse of Alini by Slavi in *The Equalizer* was not related to money, but rather occurred as a display of him exerting power and control over her, as well as sending a message to the other prostitutes that worked for him that he was in charge.

Pimps commonly demand that the women/girls working for them earn a specific amount of money and then control the money that is earned (Dalla, 2002). In fact, prostitutes with pimps generally have to turn most, if not all, of their money over to the pimp (Dalla, 2002; Hood-Brown, 1998; Read, 2014) and are at risk of abuse from pimps if they do not bring in sufficient

income (Arnold, Stewart, & McNeece, 2001). All four of the films that portrayed pimp-controlled prostitution included scenes that demonstrated prostitutes giving money to the pimps: In *Casino*, Ginger is no longer working as a prostitute, but still gives \$25,000 to Lester; *The Equalizer* includes a scene where Slavi states he can still sell Alina as a virgin; Neptune is paid directly by the john in *Miami Vice*; and the unnamed prostitute in *Out for Justice* is beaten by her pimp because she owes him money.

There exists a small body of literature that implies complicated relationship between prostitutes and pimps in which the prostitutes benefit from a collaborative, evenly balanced relationship (Marcus, Horning, Curtis, Sanson, & Thompson, 2014; Marcus et al., 2012; May, Harocopus, & Hough, 2000; Morselli & Savoie-Gargiso, 2014; Shelby, 2002). This research suggests that the relationship between prostitute and pimp can be collaborative, and while the pimp provides a service, he does not manage the worker. None of the films in the sample pointed to such a relationship.

Territo and Glover (2014) explain that pimps often use a “bottom bitch/girl” to manage the details of the other prostitutes’ exploitation, which allows the pimp to remain distant from the crime he is committing (p. 113). In their national juvenile prostitution study, Mitchel, Finkelhor, & Wolak (2010) also reported that older prostitutes help pimps recruit or monitor juveniles. None of the four films that portrayed pimp-controlled prostitution included this dynamic.

### **Drug / Alcohol Use by Prostitutes**

Drug and alcohol use by prostitutes was examined by asking two questions. The first asked: What is the frequency of drug/alcohol use/abuse presented in films? Drug and/or alcohol use by a prostitute was recorded while watching each film. These findings are outlined in Table

12, which indicates that three films (*Casino*, *8MM*, and *Flight*) either show or make reference to the prostitute using the substance. For the three films depicting substance use by prostitutes, a second question in regard to drug/alcohol use was asked: What is the nature of drug/alcohol use/abuse presented in films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which drug/alcohol use/abuse is presented within films? These results are outlined in Table 13 and are discussed below.

Table 12

Prostitutes' Substance Use

	Substance(s)
<i>21 Jump Street</i>	-
<i>Borat</i>	-
<i>Casino</i>	Alcohol, Cocaine, Prescription Drugs
<i>8MM</i>	Prescription Drugs
<i>The Equalizer</i>	-
<i>Eyes Wide Shut</i>	-
<i>Flight</i>	Alcohol, Cocaine, Heroin
<i>Heat</i>	-
<i>Miami Vice</i>	-
<i>The Mirror Has Two Faces</i>	-
<i>Out for Justice</i>	-
<i>Pretty Woman</i>	-
<i>Se7en</i>	-
<i>The Heat</i>	-
<i>Unlawful Entry</i>	-

In *Casino*, Ginger is no longer working as a street-level prostitute, but becomes addicted to alcohol and drugs perceivably because she is unhappy in her marriage. She is shown drinking heavily and is told by her husband to “Take it easy on that stuff.” There is also a scene where Sam, her husband, is asking where his pain pills are; it is implied that she had taken them.

Ginger also becomes addicted to cocaine and is shown snorting the drug with her former

pimp/boyfriend, Lester, in front of her young daughter. In the end, Ginger and Sam divorce, and she returns to life on the street. The film concludes with Sam narrating: “She found some pimps, lowlifes, druggies, and bikers in LA. In a few months, they went through all the money and all the jewels. After they found her body, I had a private doctor do another autopsy. He said they gave her a hot dose...” (De Fina & Scorsese, 1995).

In the film *Flight*, the first scene wherein the audience is introduced to Nicole, a heroin-addicted prostitute, shows her leaving a seedy hotel with track marks on her arms and cash in hand after spending time with a john. She immediately phones her drug connection and goes to a building where he is shooting a pornographic film. After declining a role in the film, Nicole purchases heroin from him; he warns that she should not inject the heroin because it has not been cut properly. He advises her to smoke it, and he also gives her some cocaine to snort in the event that she needs a stimulant. The next scene shows her overdosing by injecting the heroin; she is then seen in the hospital where she admits to being an addict. Her scenes in the remainder of the film track her path to sobriety and finding conventional employment. As her character is further developed, it is implied that Nicole began using drugs to cope with the death of her mother, who died after battling cancer. The film suggests that she is working as a prostitute to support her addiction. Toward the end of the film, she gets into a verbal argument when trying to convince her co-star, Whip Whitaker, who plays a pilot, that he, too, is an addict. She says to him, “We’re the same,” to which he responds, “We’re not the same... I don’t suck cock to get high,” further indicating that Nicole engaged in transactional sex to fund her drug habit (Parkes & Zemeckis, 2012).

*8MM* was the only film that did not depict voluntary use of drugs by prostitutes. In this film, Mary Ann, a teenager who ran away from home in hopes of becoming famous, begins

prostituting. To expedite her dream of fame, she agrees to shoot a pornographic film. Once she arrives on set, she quickly learns that the film was not as she was told. The producers of the film “fed” her a large amount of pills as a means of coercing her into compliance (Schumacher, 1999). While not shown, one of the producers recounts the incident, which suggests that Mary Ann did not know what drugs she was taking. It is unknown if Mary Ann used other drugs on a regular basis.

In *Pretty Woman*, Vivian is never shown using drugs; there is a scene where she sips a glass of champagne, but otherwise does not suggest she drinks in excess. When accused of using drugs, Vivian says, “I don’t do drugs. I stopped doing drugs when I was fourteen” (Milchan & Marshall, 1990). Her roommate and fellow prostitute, Kit, however does use drugs. When Vivian looks for their rent money, she discovers that there is only \$1 left. When confronted about it, Kit says, “Carlos (a pimp; not her pimp) sold me some great shit. We just had this party... I needed a little pick me up.” Kit’s drug use is never shown on screen, but the dialogue implies that it is voluntary.

Table 13

Context of Drug Use

	Voluntary	Sex for Drugs	Prostituting to Support Habit	Coping Mechanism
<i>Casino</i>	Yes	-	-	Yes
<i>8MM</i>	No	-	-	-
<i>Flight</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

## Comparison to the Extant Literature: Drug Use

Drug abuse among street-level prostitutes is undeniably high (Baseman et al., 1999; Dalla, 2002; Hood-Brown, 1998; Nadon et al., 1998; Silbert & Pines, 1981; Sterk & Elifson, 1990). One report concluded that 60-100% of prostitutes have regularly exchanged sex for drugs or money (O’Leary & Howard, 2001, p. 29). Similarly, Muftić and Finn (2013) reported that 75% of non-trafficked sex workers were addicted to drugs and/or alcohol. Of the 15 films included in the present research, only three (*Casino*, *8MM*, and *Flight*) portrayed prostitutes using drugs.

Both *Casino* and *Flight* included prostitutes voluntarily using drugs. The drug use in *Casino*, however, is not consistent with the drug use that is outlined in the literature. Ginger has left prostitution and married a wealthy casino owner; unhappy with her life, she begins abusing drugs and alcohol. She eventually divorces her husband and leaves with over \$2 million in cash and jewels; still unhappy, she dies of a drug overdose. Nicole’s drug use in *Flight* is more consistent with the prostitution-drug use link that is outlined in existing research. Nicole turns to drugs as a means of coping with her mother’s death. It appears that she then turns to prostitution to fund her drug habit. After being hospitalized for an overdose, she enters treatment, succeeds in her sobriety, and obtains conventional employment.

*8MM*, the third film to include drug use by a prostitute, does not include any indication that the prostitute had a substance abuse problem, nor did it suggest that the prostitute voluntarily used any drugs or alcohol. Instead, Mary Ann is given drugs when she arrives on set to film a pornographic film. It is unclear if she was forced to take the pills that were given to her, but it is evident that she did not know the effect that the pills would have. Once under the influence of the drugs, she is tortured and killed.

It has been illustrated that some women, particularly those who are involuntarily working as prostitutes, turn to alcohol and drugs to escape the reality of their life. As noted in Table 7, there are two films that portrayed women as involuntarily working as prostitutes (*The Equalizer* and *Miami Vice*). In contrast with the extant literature, neither of these films depicted the women as using alcohol or drugs.

Pimps have also been shown to play a role in creating and/or maintaining addiction in the women working for them. They often pay their girls with drugs, and there are also reports of pimps intentionally addicting women to drugs and then forcing them to provide sexual services in exchange for drugs (Stark & Hodgson, 2004). *Casino* is the only film depicting pimp-controlled prostitution that also includes a substance-abusing prostitute. However, while the film does show Lester and Ginger using drugs together, there is no indication that he forced her to use them. Additionally, Ginger is no longer working as a prostitute when she develops an addiction.

### **Victimization of Prostitutes**

Victimization of prostitutes was examined by asking two questions. The first asked: What is the frequency of physical, sexual, and/or emotional victimization presented in films? As displayed in Table 14, eight films (*8MM*, *The Equalizer*, *Heat*, *Miami Vice*, *Out for Justice*, *Pretty Woman*, *Se7en*, and *Unlawful Entry*) depicted prostitutes as being victimized. All eight of the films included a prostitute being physically assaulted. Three of the 8 films with physical abuse (*8MM*, *Pretty Woman*, and *Se7en*) also showed or alluded to the prostitute being sexually assaulted, and four of the 8 films (*8MM*, *The Equalizer*, *Heat*, and *Se7en*) included the prostitute character being killed. None of the films in the sample of 15 included any indication that a prostitute was not paid for transactional sex.



Table 14

## Victimization of Prostitutes

	Sexual	Physical	Non-Payment	Homicide
<i>21 Jump Street</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Borat</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Casino</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>8MM</i>	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
<i>The Equalizer</i>	-	Yes	-	Yes
<i>Eyes Wide Shut</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Flight</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Heat</i>	-	Yes	-	Yes
<i>Miami Vice</i>	-	Yes	-	-
<i>The Mirror Has Two Faces</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Out for Justice</i>	-	Yes	-	-
<i>Pretty Woman</i>	Yes	Yes	-	-
<i>Se7en</i>	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
<i>The Heat</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Unlawful Entry</i>	-	Yes	-	-

For the eight films that included victimization of prostitutes, a second research question was asked: What is the nature of physical, sexual, and/or emotional victimization presented in films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse is presented within films? The physical victimization of the prostitutes in *Miami Vice* and *Out for Justice* have been discussed in previous sections. Recall that in *Miami Vice*, a prostitute is beaten by her pimp when she does not want to go on a date with a john. In *Out for Justice*, a prostitute is beaten by her pimp because she owes him money. These findings in regard to the other six films are discussed below.

The victimization of Mary Ann, the young prostitute in *8MM*, did not technically take place when she was engaging in street prostitution. She had dreams of becoming a movie star, and agreed to be in a pornographic film because she believed it would help to launch her career.

When she arrived on set, the producers forced her to take pills. Unbeknownst to Mary Ann, it was actually a snuff film; her co-star in the film beat and tortured her before killing her.

Alina, the young prostitute in *The Equalizer*, was first beaten by a client. An early scene in the film shows her pimp calling to inform her that she has a client; the following scene, which took place the next day, shows her with a large bruise on her face. She was later severely beaten by her pimp, which required her to be treated in the intensive care unit. While Alina was not killed, a friend and fellow sex trafficking victim was killed by a Russian Mafioso when she lied about Alina's whereabouts.

The unnamed prostitute in *Heat* is brutally killed by Waingro, a serial killer who preys on young prostitutes. As the young girl is preparing to leave the hotel room that was used for transactional sex with Waingro, he says to her, "You don't know what this is. Grim Reaper's visiting with you" (Mann, 1995). He then grabs her hair and the camera cuts to a different scene. When her body is discovered, the lead detective asks how she died, to which the crime scene technician responds, "Beat her head in. Same as the others: cerebral hematoma." The technician later states they will test the semen present on the body and guesses that "it will come up the same guy," which leads the viewer to conclude that this is a pattern of behavior and that there have been other victims killed in the same brutal fashion.

In *Pretty Woman*, Edward's lawyer/friend, Phillip, goes to Vivian's hotel suite after Edward informs him that Vivian is a prostitute. When Phillip comes in, he and Vivian have a short conversation, and she is visibly uncomfortable with his presence. He then grabs her and says, "You're a hooker," and she tries to escape his grasp (Milchan & Marshall, 1990). Phillip then slaps her and attempts to sexually assault her. After Edward rushes in, pulls Phillip off of Vivian, punches him, and throws him out of the suite, the scene cuts to Vivian holding an ice

pack on her cheek and Edward with ice on his hand. She then asks, “Why do guys always seem to know how to hit,” which implies that she has been hit by a man before.

The prostitute in *Se7en* is killed by a serial killer who murders his victims to correspond with the seven deadly sins. Police arrive at an underground sex club to find the prostitute dead on the bed. While the film shows neither the murder nor any graphic images of the corpse, the audience is provided a vivid description of what happened. The serial killer had a sexual device specially made for the “lust” victim: a large strap-on dildo that is actually a knife. However, the serial killer did not wear the device himself. When investigators arrive at the crime scene, a visibly shaken man tells the police, “He had a gun and he made it happen. He put that thing on me... then he made me wear it... he told me to fuck her, and I did... He had a gun in my mouth...” (Kopelson & Fincher, 1995). The horror of the incident includes the prostitute being physically and sexually assaulted, and then succumbing to the injuries she sustained.

*Unlawful Entry* contains a scene in which one of the main characters, police officer Pete Davis, has sex with a prostitute in his car. In the scene, Officer Davis is having trouble performing sexually, so he shoves the prostitute out of his car and onto the pavement. Not seriously injured, she yells “I don’t even know where I am!” as he is driving away (Gordon & Kaplan, 1992). He responds by calling her a “sleazy, low-life whore.”

### **Comparison to the Extant Literature: Victimization**

Violent victimization is a common occurrence among street-level prostitutes. As previously outlined, some of this violence is at the hands of pimps as a means of maintaining control over the women. An established body of literature also illustrates the high prevalence of violence initiated by johns, with high rates of date violence consistently reported in a variety of

published reports (Miller & Schwartz, 1995; Williamson & Folaron, 2003; Youngs & Ioannou, 2013). Estimates of sexual assault of prostitutes range from 39% (Raphael & Shapiro, 2002) to 74% (Valera et al., 2000), and estimates of physical assaults on prostitutes ranged from 26% (Kurtz et al., 2004) to 92% (Williamson & Folaron, 2001). However, the majority of studies place physical assaults on prostitutes at 65% or greater (Farley & Barkan, 1998; Muftic & Finn, 2013; Romero-Daza et al., 2003; Silbert & Pines, 1981; Valera et al., 2000).

Eight of the 15 total films in the sample depicted a form of violence directed at a prostitute (see Table 14). All eight of these films contained physical violence; some of the eight also included sexual violence and/or homicide. Among the physical violence scenes, three (*The Equalizer*, *Heat*, and *Unlawful Entry*) included physical assault by dates, two (*Miami Vice* and *Out for Justice*) were the aforementioned physical assaults by pimps, and three (*8MM*, *Pretty Woman*, and *Se7en*) were physical assaults by other males.

In contrast to the extant literature, only three movies (*8MM*, *Pretty Woman*, and *Se7en*) included the sexual assault of a prostitute. Of these three, the only typical portrayal of sexual assault is in *Pretty Woman*, when an attempted sexual assault is shown. The situations in both *8MM* and *Se7en* are somewhat atypical. In *8MM*, the prostitute is both physically and sexually assaulted before being killed whilst filming a snuff film. *Se7en* makes reference to a prostitute being killed as the result of injuries sustained while forced to endure being raped with a strap-on dildo/knife. Williamson & Folaron (2001) reported that among the 92% of prostitutes in their sample who experienced date violence, 8% were tortured with perversion; both *8MM* and *Se7en* could arguably fall into this category. The difference between the victims in *8MM* and *Se7en* and those in Williamson & Folaron's sample is that the characters in the films were killed as part of the planned sexual assaults.

Norton-Hawk's (2004) study examining the differences between pimp-controlled and non-pimp-controlled prostitutes revealed that pimp-controlled prostitutes experience more than twice the amount of physical and sexual violence by their johns/dates, and suggested that the higher level of violence is likely the result of pimps demanding that these women reach a monetary quota. While the present study depicts two films in which a pimp physically assaults his prostitute, there is no evidence that the violence is any more frequent than that experienced by women in the films that did not have pimps. In *The Equalizer*, Alina's physical abuse at the hands of Slavi lands her in the intensive care unit; however, this is not the result of him demanding that she make more money. Rather, he is making an example of her to his other prostitutes that he is in control.

### **Mental / Physical Health of Prostitutes**

Victimization of prostitutes was examined by asking: What is the nature of prostitutes' mental and physical health presented in films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which mental and physical health are presented within films? The mental and physical health of prostitutes were recorded while watching each film. These findings are outlined in Table 15.

### **Trauma Symptoms**

Six of the 15 films in the sample (*Casino*, *The Equalizer*, *Flight*, *Miami Vice*, *Out for Justice*, and *Pretty Woman*) present prostitutes who are conveying symptoms of trauma. The trauma-related symptoms in the films included low self-worth (*Casino*, *The Equalizer*, and *Flight*), drug overdose (*Casino* and *Flight*), helplessness (*The Equalizer* and *Miami Vice*), fear (*The Equalizer*, *Miami Vice*, and *Out for Justice*), depression (*Flight*), and dissociation (*Pretty Woman*).

*Casino* depicts Ginger as having very low self-worth. While she is no longer working as a prostitute, she is very unhappy and feels as if she has no purpose in life. She even has little interest in her young daughter, Amy. As Ginger's drug and alcohol addiction progresses, it becomes evident that she is using these substances as a means of escape. Her addiction becomes so severe that toward the end of the film, she ties Amy to her bed so she can go out to a bar. Ginger eventually divorces her wealthy husband, returns to prostitution, and dies of a drug overdose.

Throughout *The Equalizer*, Alina is shown as possessing low self-worth as well as feeling helpless and constantly in fear. As a sex trafficking victim, Alina eventually learns that her life belongs to her trafficker/pimp. While she had dreams of becoming a singer, she seems to recognize that she is trapped in prostitution. Alina is also incredibly fearful of her pimp, Slavi. For example, one evening, she was walking home from a diner and Slavi pulled up in his vehicle; she was visibly frightened and submissively went with him. The next time the viewer sees Alina, she is in the intensive care unit after being beaten by Slavi.

Nicole, the drug-addicted prostitute in *Flight*, is shown overdosing on heroin. While the overdose was likely accidental, it could perhaps have been a suicide attempt, as she appeared to have low self-worth and depression. She specifically seems to be having difficulty coping after her mom died of cancer. The film presents Nicole as having had a close relationship with her mother and having turned to drugs as a means of coping with her death.

In the previously mentioned scene in *Miami Vice* where a prostitute is forcibly escorted from the club and subsequently hit by her pimp, it is evident that she is fearful of him. The same scene also portrays her as feeling somewhat helpless, as it is apparent that she does not want to go with the john that her pimp had arranged; however, she does not feel comfortable verbalizing

that she does not want to go with him. Instead, she just looks down and then away, with her body language indicating that she knows the repercussions of not servicing the client.

The opening scene of *Out for Justice* shows a pimp drive his car by two of his prostitutes who are on the street. When one of the women sees the car, she becomes very afraid, and tries to quickly walk away. It is evident that she was fearful, and for good reason: the pimp caught up to the woman and beat her because she allegedly owed him money.

*Pretty Woman* is the only film that suggests a prostitute dissociates when engaging in transactional sex. This indication comes in Vivian’s description of her interaction with johns. She states, “Don’t get emotional when you turn tricks... When I’m with a guy, I’m like a robot. I just do it” (Milchan & Marshall, 1990).

Table 15

Mental / Physical Health of Prostitutes

	Trauma Symptoms	Painful Sex	STIs	Condoms
<i>21 Jump Street</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Borat</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Casino</i>	Yes	-	-	-
<i>8MM</i>	-	Yes	-	-
<i>The Equalizer</i>	Yes	-	-	-
<i>Eyes Wide Shut</i>	-	-	Yes	-
<i>Flight</i>	Yes	-	-	-
<i>Heat</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Miami Vice</i>	Yes	-	-	-
<i>The Mirror Has Two Faces</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Out for Justice</i>	Yes	-	-	-
<i>Pretty Woman</i>	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Se7en</i>	-	Yes	-	-
<i>The Heat</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Unlawful Entry</i>	-	-	-	-

### **Painful Sex**

Two films (*8MM* and *Se7en*) convey prostitutes engaged in painful sex. As previously noted, *8MM* depicts a young prostitute being beaten, tortured, and killed whilst shooting a snuff film. The footage of the pornography show the girl as being terrified, and it is implied that the sexual acts, as well as the physical abuse that accompanied them, were brutally painful up until the time she was murdered on film. While not shown, the viewer can conclude the prostitute in *Se7en* also experienced painful sex after the serial killer forced a man to have sex with the prostitute while wearing a strap-on dildo that was actually a knife blade.

### **Sexually Transmitted Infections and Condoms**

Only two films (*Eyes Wide Shut* and *Pretty Woman*) made reference to sexually transmitted infections in regard to prostitution. In *Eyes Wide Shut*, Dr. Harford returns to the apartment of Domino, the prostitute who propositioned him earlier that week. When Domino's roommate answers the door, she tells him that Domino is gone and she does not know if she will return. The roommate, Sally, then proceeds to tell him that Domino just learned that she is HIV positive. In *Pretty Woman*, Vivian makes reference to condoms and protection against sexually transmitted infections: "I use condoms always. I get checked out once a month at the free clinic." In a later scene, she provides Edward with a large selection of condoms and then smiles and says, "I'm a safety girl!"

### **Comparison to the Extant Literature: Health**

Because female street-level prostitutes are frequently survivors of sexual abuse, whether as children, adults, or as prostitutes, they frequently experience trauma-related symptoms. Most



of these women experience some sort of mental health problem (Cimino, 2012; Farley et al., 2003; Leidholdt, 2003; Mitchell et al., 2010; Muftić and Finn, 2013; Ross, Farley, & Schwartz, 2004; Weitzer, 2009; Williamson & Folaron, 2003; Young et al., 2000). Other research has concluded that ninety percent of prostitutes have reported at least one form of negative emotional experience during prostitution (Kramer, 2004). In contrast to the reported 90% of prostitutes with at least one symptom of prostitution-related trauma, only six films in the sample included prostitutes with such symptoms (see Table 15).

Suicide attempts are also common among prostitutes, with research finding that 80% of women in a program designed to help prostitutes leave sex work had attempted suicide (Hood-Brown, 1998). While two prostitutes in the film sample overdosed on drugs (*Casino* and *Flight*), it appears as if the overdoses were accidental. Research has also demonstrated that between 42% (Valera et al., 2000) and 68% (Farley et al., 2003) of prostitutes meet the DSM-IV criteria for PTSD. In stark contrast to the literature on prostitution and PTSD, none of the 15 films in the sample contained prostitutes who exhibited symptoms of PTSD.

Dissociation has repeatedly been illustrated in the extant literature (Du Mont & McGregor, 2004; Farley & Barkan, 1990; Kramer, 2004; Valera et al., 2000; Vanwesenbeeck, 1994). Vanwesenbeeck (1994) and Farley (2004) even suggested that the ability to dissociate may be a requirement for surviving prostitution. While dissociation is prevalent in much of the prostitution literature, it only appears in one film in the sample (*Pretty Woman*). It has also been suggested that adolescent prostitutes may display symptoms of Stockholm syndrome, whereby as a means of survival, these girls identify with the pimps who are prostituting them (Graham & Wish, 1994). None of the films in the sample included obvious depictions of Stockholm syndrome. It is possible that Ginger is displaying some characteristics of Stockholm syndrome

in *Casino*. For example, she believes she loves Lester and continues to visit and provide money to him even after she marries Sam and ceases engagement in transactional sex. She is also very defensive of Lester. However, neither coder found her behavior inherently characteristic of someone displaying symptoms of Stockholm syndrome.

Some evidence has suggested that involvement of a pimp presents a conceivable risk to the well-being of prostitutes; prostitutes who reported having an abusive pimp experienced detrimental subsequent health outcomes, including “physical health problems, mental health problems, co-occurring health issues, and suicidal ideations” (Muftić & Finn, 2013, p. 1879). Consistent with these findings are the psychological symptoms exhibited by prostitutes in all four of the films that depicted pimp-controlled prostitution (*Casino*, *The Equalizer*, *Miami Vice*, and *Out for Justice*), with the most common indicators being low self-worth, helplessness, and fear. However, none of these four films included prostitutes experiencing physical health problems or suicidal ideations.

The gruesome torture and murder of the prostitutes in *8MM* and *Se7en* have been discussed at length. Existing research indicates that 52% of prostitutes have reported that participation in sex acts as a prostitute was physically painful (Kramer, 2004). *8MM* and *Se7en* were the only two films in the sample that suggested sex was painful for the prostitute. Among prostitutes, homicide is the leading cause of death (19%), followed by drug ingestion (18%), accidents (12%), and alcohol-related causes (9%) (Potterat et al., 2004). Of the deaths of prostitutes in the present study, four were homicides (*8MM*, *The Equalizer*, *Heat*, and *Se7en*) and one was a drug overdose (*Casino*).

Prostitutes are at increased risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) (Farley & Kelley, 2000). The only film in the present

research to address HIV directly is *Eyes Wide Shut*, as the audience learns that Domino was HIV positive. The use of condoms can help protect the women, but there is little consensus on their use in transactional sex. Romero-Daza et al (2003) reported that the majority of the women in their sample demand that their dates use condoms. Conversely, Freund et al. (1989) discovered that only 30% of street prostitutes in their sample used condoms at each sexual encounter. *Pretty Woman* was the only film in the sample of 15 to make reference to condom use, and also the only film that depicted a prostitute as regularly being tested for sexually transmitted infections.

### **Glamorization of Prostitution**

While not one of the seven substantive areas that represented facets of street-level prostitution culture, it is necessary to examine the motion picture industry's depiction of prostitution as glamorous. As discussed in the literature, adolescents are often persuaded into prostitution because they imagine it to be glamorous and exciting. Dalla (2006) has explained that the misconception that prostitution is glamorous is pervasive, and argues that films such as *Pretty Woman*, *Leaving Las Vegas*, and *Taxi Driver* have contributed to this stereotype. According to Dalla, society believes prostitution is an "employment choice, with ample rewards from generous and kind clients... and is a temporary phase until the heroine finds love and happiness and she suffers few physical or emotional scars from her brief stint on the streets" (Dalla, 2006, p. xx). This depiction is a common theme among the films in the sample, with five films (*21 Jump Street*, *Casino*, *Miami Vice*, *The Mirror Has Two Faces*, and *Pretty Woman*) all portraying prostitution as glamorous.

The film *21 Jump Street*, an adaptation of the television series by the same name, tells the story of two undercover police officers who infiltrate a high school to contain the distribution of

a new drug. At the end of the movie, the two officers learn that the supplier, whom they have been attempting to identify, will be meeting a local drug dealer at the high school's prom. The two officers arrive at prom and are shown emerging from a limousine with three stereotypically nerdy young males that one of the officers befriended in his AP Chemistry class. Also exiting the limousine are three prostitutes that were briefly seen in an earlier scene in which they had been arrested. As the three prostitutes exit the limousine, they each link arms with a respective nerdy male and doves are released as they follow the officers, dressed in tuxedos to attend the prom undercover, into the venue. The background music as they emerge features the lyrics "Fly like a condor, fly like a [sic] eagle. Fly in an 85' candy painted Regal. Fly like a dove, I come from up above... I'm lookin' fly, ooh I'm 'bout to spread my wings" (Will i Am, Harris, & May, 2008).

One of the storylines in *Casino* involves Ginger, a former prostitute who marries wealthy casino owner Sam. Sam loves Ginger and provides a luxurious lifestyle for her; he surprises her with a new home, buys her jewelry, and allows her access to his seemingly disposable income. There are numerous scenes where they are at formal events and are regularly dining at fine restaurants.

*Miami Vice* portrayed two different images of prostitution. All of the prostitutes were stunningly beautiful; one was even referred to as "Miss Cuba" (Mann, 2006). The women were working in areas of Miami where there were expensive yachts and speedboats, and there were also scenes where they were taken to high-end nightclubs to spend time with wealthy clients. Four of the five prostitutes in the film appeared to be willingly engaging in prostitution; however, one was not. Neptune, their pimp, was delivering three girls to a nightclub. Two of

the prostitutes smiled and seemed to anxiously link arms with their client, but one did not want to, and was forcibly escorted from the club and then physically assaulted by the pimp.

There is only a short scene with a prostitute in *The Mirror Has Two Faces*. The film is about Rose, a plain woman who begins exercising and gets a makeover, subsequently becoming attractive. To illustrate her homeliness early in the film, she is shown attempting to hail a cab on a busy New York street. As a taxi is slowing in front of her, the driver then sees a prostitute across the street who also has her hand in the air; the driver then does a fast U-turn in the middle of the road and rushes to pick up the attractive prostitute, who then looks across the street and gives Rose a bratty smile.

It is curious that the overall plot of *Pretty Woman* glamorizes prostitution, but the film also depicts the reality of street-level prostitution. In the film, Vivian, is picked up by Edward, a wealthy businessman, and asked to spend the entire week with him and escort him to business events. After she agrees, she is provided lodging in a luxury suite at a high-end hotel in Beverly Hills. The next morning, she awakens to a table full of food, and Edward says she ordered everything off of the menu because he did not know what she would like. He then gives her his credit card and instructs her to buy clothes. After initially being turned away by the luxury boutiques on Rodeo Drive because of her stereotypical prostitute-like appearance, the hotel manager arranges for a personal shopper to assist her in selecting an evening gown for a formal dinner she is to attend that evening. The hotel manager also provides her with a one-on-one dining etiquette session so as to help her prepare for the formal meal; the meal is very sophisticated, with numerous courses and exotic dishes.

The following day, Vivian tells Edward how the women working in the boutique on Rodeo Drive. He then accompanies her to a store and tells the manager that he is going to spend

an “obscene” and “really offensive” amount of money on clothes for her. The song *Oh, Pretty Woman* (Orbison & Dees, 1964) begins playing, and numerous associates are shown assisting her on a day-long shopping spree. They also attend a polo match and take a private plane to attend an opera in San Francisco; while attending the opera, Vivian wears a necklace valued at \$250,000. When the week comes to an end and Edward has to return to his home in New York, he says to Vivian, “I’ve arranged for you to have an apartment, to have a car, a wide variety of stores guaranteed to suck up to you anytime you want to go shopping. Everything’s done.” After declining his offer, she returns to the seedy apartment that she shared with Kit; Edward then arrives in his stretch limousine, carrying a bouquet of flowers, and climbs up the fire escape to declare his love for her.

Throughout the film, Edward treats Vivian very kindly, and provides a very glamorous and luxurious week-long experience for her, all of which are uncharacteristic of street-level prostitution. At the same time, the film includes numerous scenes involving supporting and background roles that depict the reality of street-level prostitution. For example, the first scene in which the audience is introduced to Vivian shows her sneaking out of her apartment via the fire escape to avoid her landlord because her roommate and fellow prostitute, Kit, spent their rent money on drugs. After Vivian climbs down the fire escape, she is shown walking down the street and there are police blocking off an area. In the background, police are asking a seedy-looking man on the street about a dead prostitute: “We just pulled her out of a dumpster in the back. Who’s her pimp?” He replies, “She be out on these streets day in, day out, tradin’ her sorry self for some crack” (Milchan & Marshall, 1990). When Vivian later mentions it to her roommate, Kit confirms, “She was a crackhead.” Upset by this, Vivian says to Kit, “Don’t you want to get out of here?” Kit responds, “Get out of where? Where the fuck you wanna go?”

The viewer then learns that Vivian was a teenage runaway who did not complete high school and resorted to prostitution because she was unable to make rent by working menial jobs. Vivian says that she didn't have rent money and was too ashamed to go home, but then met Kit: "She was a hooker and made it sound so great. So one day I did it. I cried the whole time. But then I got some regulars..." Later in the film, Vivian goes looking for Kit and learns that Carlos, a pimp and drug dealer, are also looking for her because Kit owes him money. As previously noted, Vivian is also the victim of an attempted sexual assault, and is physically assaulted in the progress.

In contrast to the 5 films that glamorized prostitution, others use prostitution to set the scene for unsafe environments. *Out for Justice*, for example, used prostitutes to characterize dangerous and seedy areas of town or dangerous people. When Rico, the lead character/police officer, is driving around New York City looking for the men who killed his friend/fellow police officer, he goes to the slums. In nearly every one of these scenes, it is a dirty, low-income, poorly lit area with numerous prostitutes walking in the background, often under overpasses. Numerous prostitutes that belonged to "Willie the Pimp" were also shown at a party being hosted by the man who killed Rico's friend, where copious amounts of alcohol and crack-cocaine were being consumed; none of the prostitutes were shown using cocaine. Among the numerous prostitutes in the film, only two had speaking roles. The first was a prostitute who was beaten by her pimp; in the middle of the assault she told him she was pregnant. The second was when Rico, again driving around New York City, came to a stop in one of the aforementioned dingy areas of town, at which time a prostitute approached his window and said, "Want to fuck?"

The present study sought to answer 18 research questions in seven substantive areas that were identified as facets of street-level prostitute culture. Chapter 5 provided a thorough description of these findings. The succeeding chapter includes a summary of these findings. Additionally, an index is constructed to allow for comparison of the depiction of prostitution in film to the reality of prostitution as evident in the extant victimological, criminological, and health literature.



## **CHAPTER SIX:**

### **DISCUSSION**

What follows is a discussion of the results reported in Chapter 5. Recall the dual objectives of the present study. The first was to examine the nature of the film industry's portrayal of females engaging in street-level prostitution in the United States with respect to the following themes: 1) entry into sex work; 2) the economic need of the women involved; 3) experiences of childhood victimization; 4) presence and role of pimps; 5) drug/alcohol abuse; 6) victimization; and 7) mental/physical health. The second objective was to determine if this media coverage is analogous to extant research on these aspects of the prostitution culture. This chapter begins with a brief review of the key findings, followed by a detailed comparison of media coverage of prostitution to scholarly literature on the topic, including the creation of the Accuracy Index that allows for comparison of films to the extant literature. Attention will then turn to a discussion on the significance and consequences of the motion picture industry's production of prostitution-related iconography.

#### **Summary of Key Findings**

This research is the first known study to employ the Unified Film Population Identification Methodology to compare the depiction of prostitution in films to the information presented in the extant victimological, criminological, and health literatures. The present study utilized this existing literature to select relevant constructs of street-level prostitution, including

entrance, economic need, childhood victimization, pimps, drugs/alcohol, victimization, and mental/physical health.

### **Entrance into Prostitution**

Ten of the 15 films in the sample provided no information in regard to the prostitute's entrance into sex work. As such, it is difficult to make comparisons to the extant literature with respect to the sample as a whole. However, the five films that did include insight into women's entry into sex work are similar to reports within the academic literature. Research has determined that most women enter prostitution before age 18 (Farley & Barkan, 1998; Silbert & Pines, 1981; Valera, Sawyer, & Schiraldi, 2000; Weisberg, 1985), and studies have found that as many as 96% of their sample have previously been juvenile runaways (Silbert & Pines, 1982). In the current study, four of the characters entered prostitution before age 18, and two of the prostitute characters had previously been runaways. One of the characters who began engaging in transactional sex before age 18 was a victim of international sex trafficking. Overall, the films did not necessarily represent the extant literature in regard to entrance into prostitution; two-thirds of the films omitted relevant materials, and the 5 remaining films weakly represented the dimensions measured in this construct.

### **Economic Need of Prostitutes**

Financial need is a primary motivator for entrance into sex work, and research has found that a disproportionate number of women involved in sex work are impoverished (Hood-Brown, 1998; Phoenix, 2000). These women are in urgent need of food, shelter, and money, and often have no other way of surviving. Additionally, over two-thirds of female prostitutes have at least

one child (Weiner, 1996); most of these sex workers are also the primary caretaker of their children. In the present study, six of the 15 films provided no information in regard to the prostitute's economic situation. Two films presented information regarding the woman's socioeconomic status pre-prostitution, and both were similar to the information that is described in the academic literature. Five films offered information in regard to the prostitute's current socioeconomic status; three were consistent with the extant literature that describes the sustained poverty of streetwalkers, but two were in contrast to the literature in that they depicted prostitutes as middle class. Also, in contrast with the findings of academic research, none of the prostitutes in the films were formerly homeless, and only one was currently homeless. Additionally, none of the prostitutes were presented as having children. Thus, from these data, motion picture representation of prostitutes' economic positions appears to be inaccurate.

### **Childhood Victimization**

Research has demonstrated that abuse in childhood significantly predicts involvement in prostitution (Dalla et al., 2003; James & Meyerding, 1977; Nixon et al., 2002; Roe-Sepowitz, 2012; Silbert & Pines, 1981; Simons & Whitbeck, 1991; Valera et al., 2000). The films in the present research vastly underrepresent this victimization. Only three films in the sample include reference to childhood abuse or victimization; two of those instances are interpreted as being relatively minor instances that perhaps are not even characteristic of abuse. The context of the third film refers to the prostitute being a child victim of sex trafficking. The message that is depicted to the audience through the constructed presentation in these films is that these women have had childhoods that are absent of trauma, when in fact most female street-level prostitutes

have been victimized as children. This victimization served as a catalyst to various processes that subsequently ends with the child/woman being involved in prostitution.

### **Pimp-Controlled Prostitution**

The majority of street-level prostitution is believed to involve pimps (Dalla, Xia, & Kennedy, 2003; Giobbe, 1993; Norton-Hawk, 2004; Williamson & Baker, 2009; Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002). However, only 4 of the 15 films in the present research depicted pimp-controlled prostitution. Nonetheless, those four films' portrayals are in accordance with the extant literature. In all four instances, the prostitutes were required to give some or all of their earnings to pimps. Three of the four films had pimps with multiple girls working for them; the same three films also showed the pimp as being abusive to the prostitutes, and two of these pimps were portrayed as having "a lot" of control over the prostitutes. Because only approximately 25% of the films in the sample included depictions of pimp-controlled prostitution, it is difficult to make comparisons to the academic literature with respect to the sample as a whole.

### **Substance Abuse by Prostitutes**

The link between drug use and prostitution is undeniable, with research reporting that 75%-94% of prostitutes are addicted to drugs and/or alcohol (Muftić & Finn, 2013). The present research had disparate findings; only 3 of the 15 films in the sample depicted prostitutes as drug/alcohol users, and only two of those portrayals were of prostitutes with definite substance abuse problems. The lack of drug use in prostitution movies is misleading to the audience. First, it fails to highlight the underlying addiction that accounts for some women entering into sex

work. By not including this dynamic, it may appear as if the women began prostituting simply out of choice or enjoyment. Second, it is well established that prostitutes who are not formerly addicts often turn to alcohol and drugs to escape the harsh reality of their life. Failing to underline this reality can result in the audience perceiving sex work as gratifying, or at a minimum, as tolerable.

### **Victimization of Prostitutes**

Research has pointed to an alarmingly high rate of violent victimization among street prostitutes, typically at the hands of their pimps or clients (Barnard, 1993; Coston & Ross, 1998; Farley & Barkan, 1998; Kurtz et al., 2004; Miller & Schwartz, 1995; Raphael & Shapiro, 2002; Silbert & Pines, 1982; Stark & Hodgson, 2003; Sterk & Elifson, 1990; Valera et al., 2000; Williamson & Folaron, 2003; Youngs & Ioannou, 2013). Seven of the 15 films in the current study did not include situations where a prostitute was victimized. The remaining eight films are similar to the evidence reported in scholarly literature. All 8 of these films portrayed a prostitute being physically assaulted, 3 films also depicted either actual or attempted sexual abuse, and 4 included both the physical abuse and also the killing of a prostitute. In 6 of the 8 films including victimization, the perpetrators were either a pimp or a john; in the other two films, one perpetrator was known to the victim, and the other was a stranger. Among the measures of prostitution used in this study, this dimension is the most accurate with respect to depicting scholarly research, though overall, motion picture depictions of this dimension of prostitution are still far from accurate.

## **Mental / Physical Health of Prostitutes**

The emotional trauma of prostitution is believed to have a greater impact than the physical violence, and most prostitutes experience some form of mental health crisis (Cimino, 2012; Farley et al., 2003; Leidholdt, 2003; Mitchell et al., 2010; Muftić and Finn, 2013; Ross, Farley, & Schwartz, 2004; Weitzer, 2009; Williamson & Folaron, 2003; Young et al., 2000). The most common of these symptoms of trauma include low self-worth, feelings of helplessness, fear, self-destructive behaviors, suicide attempts, dissociation, and PTSD. Only six of the 15 films in the sample suggested that the prostitutes were exhibiting trauma symptoms. Low self-worth and fear were each depicted in three films, followed by drug overdoses and helplessness in two films, and depression and dissociation in one film each. While these six films suggest that prostitutes do suffer from symptoms of trauma, their depictions are not as severe as are illustrated in the extant literature. By neglecting some of the more severe mental health crises, included suicide attempts, self-harm, and PTSD, the gravity of prostitutes' mental health remains unknown to most viewers. This, too, conveys a message that there are not widespread and/or severe psychological consequences that accompany prostitution.

The films in this sample also neglected to address the poor physical health of sex workers. For example, only two films depicted painful sex, which leads viewers to trust that engaging in transactional sex is enjoyable for the women. Similarly, only one film made reference to a prostitute contracting a sexually transmitted infection, which also ignores the serious physical consequences of regularly engaging in (often non-consensual) sexual acts with multiple partners.

In the above, a general description of the accuracy of motion picture depictions of prostitution in comparison to academic depictions was reviewed. That description was based on

summaries of overall concordance between motion picture depictions and scholarly literature. A further assessment of the motion picture depictions of prostitution follows.

### **Accuracy Index Construction**

To determine the accuracy of each film's depiction of street-level prostitution, an index was created to allow for comparison to the extant prostitution literature. The index took into account each of the seven substantive areas that served as facets of street-level prostitution culture (entrance into prostitution, economic need, childhood victimization, pimps, drug/alcohol use, victimization, and health). In addition, the index also included measures of each film's portrayal of prostitution as glamorous and/or humorous, as was determined by each coder on the Film Analysis Coding Form (see Appendix B). An explanation of the index is found below, followed by a discussion of the results.

#### **Entrance into Prostitution**

A film was assigned a score from 0-4 in regard to its accuracy of depicting the prostitute's entrance into prostitution when compared to the extant literature on the topic. A film was assigned one point for each of the following portrayals: juvenile runaway, under the age of 18 at time of entrance into prostitution, involuntarily entering prostitution, and being trafficked. As such, each movie could earn a maximum of four points for this substantive area. Any element that was not included in the film was scored as zero. The total score for the category was then summed.

### **Economic Need**

A film was assigned a score from -2 to 4 in regard to its accuracy of depicting the prostitute's economic need when compared to the extant literature on the topic. A film was assigned one point for each of the following depictions: low socioeconomic status pre-prostitution, low current socioeconomic status, currently or formerly homeless, and having children to financially support. In addition, films had one point *deducted* from this category for inaccurate depictions of prostitutes' economic situations. As such, one point was deducted for each of the following: a prostitute naming or negotiating the cost of sexual acts, and/or a prostitute currently depicted as middle-class or above. Any element that was not included in the film was scored as zero. The total score for the category was then summed.

### **Childhood Victimization**

A film was assigned a score from 0-6 in regard to the accuracy of its depiction of childhood victimization when compared to the extant literature on the topic. Because childhood victimization is nearly universal across female street-level prostitutes, two points were assigned for each of the following depictions of childhood victimization: physical abuse, sexual abuse, and other abuse. Any element that was not included in the film was scored as zero, and the total score for the category was summed.

### **Pimps**

A film was assigned a score of 0-6 in regard to its accuracy in depicting pimp involvement in street-level prostitution as is evident in the extant literature. One point was assigned for each of the following: having a pimp, giving money to a pimp, a pimp having



numerous girls working for him, abuse by a pimp, and a pimp having “some” control over the prostitute. Two points were assigned if pimps had “a lot” of control over the prostitute. Any element that was not depicted in the movie was given zero points. The total score for the category was then summed.

### **Drug / Alcohol Use**

A film was assigned a score of 0-5 regarding its accuracy in portraying prostitutes’ drug and/or alcohol abuse in comparison with the extant literature. One point was assigned for each of the following: substance abuse by a prostitute, involuntary drug use, engaging in sex for drugs, prostituting to support a drug habit, and using drugs/alcohol as a coping mechanism. Any element that was not depicted in the film was given zero points. The total score for the category was then summed.

### **Victimization**

A film was assigned a score of 0-5 in regard to its accuracy in depicting the victimization of prostitutes when compared to the extant literature. One point was assigned for portraying each of the following: physical abuse, sexual abuse, non-payment for sex. A film was also given two points if it depicted a primary prostitute as being killed. Any element that was not depicted in the film was assigned zero points, and the total score for the category was summed.

### **Mental / Physical Health**

A film was assigned a score of 0-5 in response to its accuracy in depicting the physical and mental health of prostitutes when compared to the extant literature. One point was assigned

for each trauma symptom that was exhibited by the prostitute (see Appendix E for a list of the trauma symptoms included). An additional one point was assigned for each of the following: depicting painful sex and a prostitute having a sexually transmitted infection. Any element that was not depicted in the film received zero points. The total score for the category was then summed.

### **Glamorization and Comicality of Prostitution**

A film was *deducted* points if it portrayed prostitution as either glamorous or comical. One point was deducted for each, with a maximum of two points being deducted if a film portrayed prostitution as both glamorous and comical. The total score for the category was then summed.

### **Total Score**

The Accuracy Index score was calculated by adding together the scores from each of the seven substantive areas that encompassed the culture of street-level prostitution, as well as the score for glamorization/comicality. Based on the review of 77 studies that exist in the prostitution literature from the disciplines of victimology, criminology, sociology, and health, it was determined that a score of 35 represents the most accurate depiction of female street-level prostitution. Thus, the accuracy index score can range from -4 to 35, with a high score representing a highly accurate portrayal of street-level prostitution. Conversely, a low score represents an inaccurate or incomplete depiction of street-level prostitution. To consider various ranges of precision, the Index was divided into three equal categories, as represented by the following scale: 22-35 = high accuracy; 10-21 = moderate accuracy; -4-9 = minimal accuracy.

## Accuracy Index Results

To determine how accurately the films in the sample depicted female street-level prostitution, an Accuracy Index score was calculated for each film. The independent coders each calculated Accuracy Index scores for the respective films that they viewed, which allowed for a test of the Index's reliability. The secondary coders' scores were compared to the primary coder's scores for each film using Krippendorff's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), a reliability coefficient that measures the agreement among coders that is appropriate for ratio-level data. The values for Krippendorff's alpha were all satisfactory (see Table 16), as it is customary to require  $\alpha \geq .800$  (De Swert, 2012). These values represent high agreement beyond chance, thus indicating high inter-coder reliability.

Table 16

Accuracy Index: Overview of Krippendorff's alpha

Variable	$\alpha$
Entrance in Prostitution	1.00
Economic Need	.883
Childhood Victimization	1.00
Pimps	1.00
Drug / Alcohol Use	.814
Victimization	.905
Health	.805
Glamorization	1.00
Comicality	1.00

The calculation of each film's score is outlined in Table 17. The final Accuracy Index scores can then be compared in regard to their portrayals of prostitution. None of the 15 films in the sample were determined to be highly accurate in their portrayal of street-level prostitution; likewise, none of the films received scores above zero in all seven substantive areas. It was

established that three films (*8MM*, *Miami Vice*, and *The Equalizer*) contained moderately-accurate depictions of street-level prostitution. *8MM* and *The Equalizer* were the only films in the sample to receive scores above zero in six of the seven substantive areas, and neither depicted prostitution as glamorous or comical. Despite receiving a negative score (-1) in the Economic Need category due to depicting Alina as being middle-class, *The Equalizer* still had the highest Accuracy Index score at 15. To provide a visual comparison of all films in the sample, the Accuracy Index scores are also presented in Figure 1.

*Miami Vice* received a score of 10 on the Accuracy Index, placing it at the lower-end of the moderately-accurate category. In the film, there were multiple prostitutes, each with an equal amount of screen time. One prostitute appears to be involuntarily engaging in prostitution, and is physically abused by her pimp after refusing to go on an arranged date with a john. At the same time, two other prostitutes seem eager to spend time with the client. What makes prostitution glamorized in this film is the locations of the scenes where prostitutes are present. The first scene is on a dock which is not in itself a glamorous location. However, the pimp stands with five beautiful and well-dressed prostitutes, surrounded by very wealthy individuals who are tending to their million dollar yachts and speedboats. Another scene occurs at a high end nightclub. These scenes lead the viewer to believe that prostitution can be very luxurious work in these high-end locations. So, while the film at some points depicted involuntary prostitution and abusive pimps who controlled the women's finances, it also showed prostitutes who seemed eager to go on dates with johns and who were working in glamorous, high-end locales.

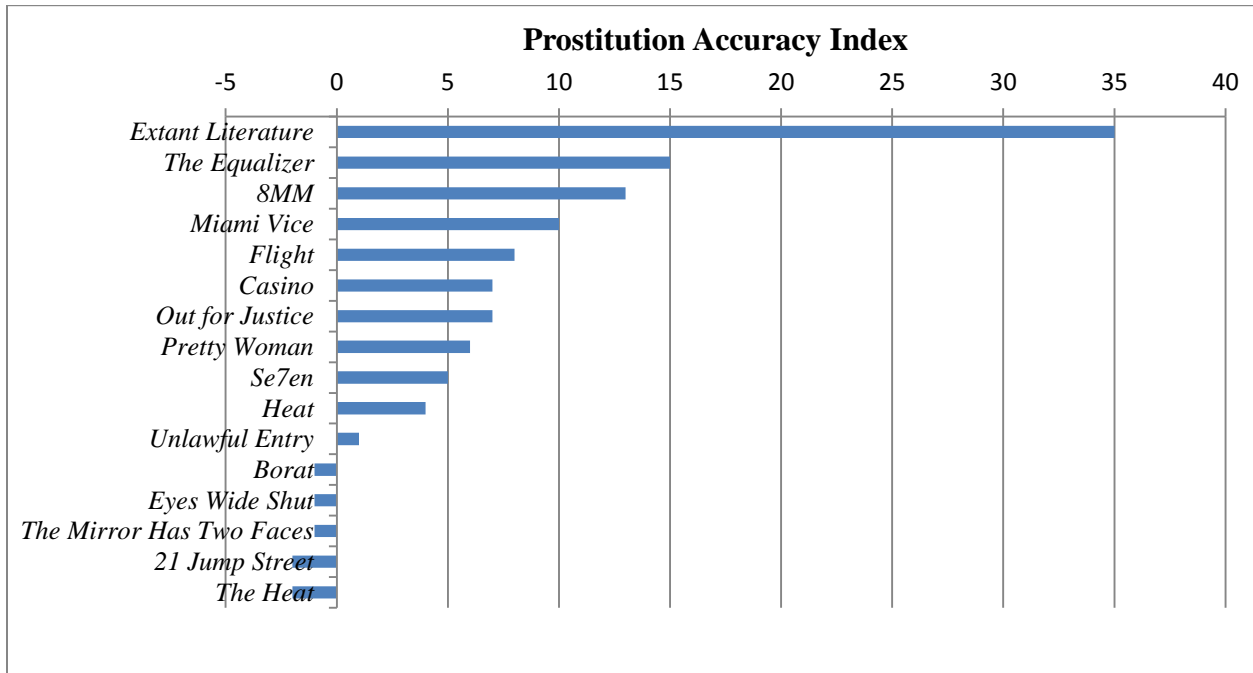
Table 17

## Accuracy Index Score Calculations

	Entrance into Prostitutio n Max: 4	Economic Need Max: 4	Childhood Victimization Max: 6	Pimps Max: 6	Drugs / Alcohol Max: 5	Victimization Max: 5	Poor Health Max: 5	Glamour -1 or 0	Humor -1 or 0	SCORE Max: 35
<i>21 Jump Street</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	-1	<b>-2</b>
<i>Borat</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	<b>-1</b>
<i>Casino</i>	1	0	0	3	2	0	2	-1	0	<b>7</b>
<i>8MM</i>	2	3	2	0	1	4	1	0	0	<b>13</b>
<i>The Equalizer</i>	3	-1	2	6	0	3	2	0	0	<b>15</b>
<i>Eyes Wide Shut</i>	0	-2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	<b>-1</b>
<i>Flight</i>	0	1	0	0	4	0	3	0	0	<b>8</b>
<i>Heat</i>	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	<b>4</b>
<i>Miami Vice</i>	1	1	0	6	0	1	2	-1	0	<b>10</b>
<i>The Mirror has Two Faces</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	<b>-1</b>
<i>Out for Justice</i>	0	0	0	5	0	1	1	0	0	<b>7</b>
<i>Pretty Woman</i>	1	1	2	0	0	2	1	-1	0	<b>6</b>
<i>Se7en</i>	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	<b>5</b>
<i>The Heat</i>	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	<b>-2</b>
<i>Unlawful Entry</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Average Score</b>										<b><math>\bar{x} = 4.6</math></b>

Figure 1

Accuracy Index Results



In contrast to the extant literature, the remaining 12 films all included minimally-accurate depictions of prostitution. Five films (*21 Jump Street*, *Borat*, *Eyes Wide Shut*, *The Mirror Has Two Faces*, and *The Heat*) had negative scores (-1 or -2) due to inaccurately depicting socioeconomic status, and/or portraying prostitution as glamorizing and/or comical. As can be seen in Table 17, six films (*21 Jump Street*, *Borat*, *Casino*, *The Mirror Has Two Faces*, *Pretty Woman*, and *The Heat*) depicted prostitution as glamorous and/or comical. *21 Jump Street*, for example, is an action/comedy film in which two rookie police officers with youthful appearances are working undercover as high-school students. In a scene toward the end of the film, prostitution is presented as both glamorous and comical. The two undercover officers, as well as three stereotypical nerds from AP Physics class, exit a limousine at the prom; it appears that the officers have arranged for the prostitutes to be the nerds' dates, and they exit the limo arm-in-

arm with the nerds. The prostitutes, along with their prom dates, are later shown all locked in a bathroom stall assisting in the police investigation. Before they are shown inside the stall, one of the prostitutes is heard saying, "...you're so good at this" (Moritz & Lord, 2012). The camera then cuts to the nerds hacking in to a phone system. Because of this, *21 Jump Street* received a score of -2 due to it depicting prostitution as both glamorous and comical, while receiving zeroes in all other substantive areas in the Accuracy Index.

There are two other films that merit further discussion in regard to the glamorization of prostitution: *Casino* and *Pretty Woman*. Both films tell stories of prostitutes who meet wealthy men who fall in love with them and treat them well. In *Casino*, Ginger leaves prostitution and marries Sam, a wealthy casino owner. He buys her houses, several hundred thousand dollars' worth of jewelry, and provides for her every need. While Ginger is no longer working as a prostitute, the film depicts prostitution as providing the opportunity for women to meet a good man and live happily ever after. *Pretty Woman* tells a similar story: Edward solicits Vivian on Hollywood Boulevard. He is a wealthy businessman who is seeking a companion to accompany him to work-related functions while he is in town. She is provided lodging in the penthouse of a luxury hotel, goes on several shopping sprees on Rodeo Drive, takes a private jet to San Francisco for an evening at the opera, and is also paid \$3,000 for her time. Vivian and Edward then fall in love and have a fairytale romance.

Curiously, both films also have very realistic components that are in stark contrast to the glamorization that is simultaneously portrayed. In both films, the prostitutes were depicted as entering into prostitution at a very young age. Ginger also had a pimp to whom she still gave money, was addicted to drugs and alcohol, and died of a drug overdose. Another prostitute, Vivian, was a juvenile runaway with no other means of earning income and was the victim of an

attempted sexual assault, during which she was physically assaulted. Accordingly, these two films received points for accurately portraying certain aspects of prostitution, but were also deducted points for their glamorization of sex work.

### **Accuracy Index Limitations**

The Accuracy Index scores should be interpreted with caution. While it allows for comparison of the films in the sample to one another and to the extant literature, it does not present a complete picture of the depictions of prostitution in film. There are a variety of factors that should also be considered when examining the Accuracy Index scores, including incomplete portrayals of prostitution, strength of themes, type of role, and number of scenes. Additionally, as will be discussed in Chapter 7, additional tests of the Index are needed to ensure its validity.

When examining Table 17, it is evident that many films simply did not include depictions of certain elements of prostitution culture. In fact, each film in the sample received at least one score of zero in one of the seven substantive areas, indicating the absence of that element of prostitution culture. Three films received zeroes in all seven of these areas, two received six zeroes, and three received five zeroes. Table 16 presents a collapsed measure of zero (“0”) and negative scores for each film. The last column in that Table (“Potential Accuracy / 9”) represents the number of dimensions that could be accurately predicted in each film once negative scores are removed.

The data summary in Table 18 indicates that once zero and negative scores are removed, eleven of the films have fewer than five dimensions remaining that could be represented accurately. The film with the highest scores was *8MM*, which received a score of 8. These data indicate that *The Equalizer*, *Miami Vice*, and *Pretty Woman* were the only other film with



sufficient remaining non-zero and negative category scores to potentially depict prostitution accurately.

Table 18

Accuracy of Prostitution Depictions: Distribution of Zero and Negative Scores

	Number of Zeroes	Number of Negative Scores	Potential Accuracy / 9
<i>21 Jump Street</i>	7	2	0
<i>Borat</i>	7	1	1
<i>Casino</i>	3	1	5
<i>8MM</i>	1	0	8
<i>The Equalizer</i>	1	1	7
<i>Eyes Wide Shut</i>	5	2	2
<i>Flight</i>	4	0	5
<i>Heat</i>	5	0	4
<i>Miami Vice</i>	2	1	6
<i>The Mirror has Two Faces</i>	7	1	1
<i>Out for Justice</i>	4	0	5
<i>Pretty Woman</i>	2	1	6
<i>Se7en</i>	5	0	4
<i>The Heat</i>	6	2	1
<i>Unlawful Entry</i>	6	0	3
<b>Average Score</b>			$\bar{x} = 3.87$

The data above suggest that one must consider whether the motion picture industry is painting an *inaccurate* picture of prostitution, or if the depiction is simply *incomplete*. In the present study, both are true. Despite an accurate portrayal of prostitution in regard to pimps, victimization, and emotional trauma, some films simply did not include scenes or a storyline that allowed the audience to discern how/why the woman is working as a prostitute, what her economic situation is, whether or not she uses drugs, and if she had a dangerous or chaotic upbringing. For example, with an Accuracy Index score of 7, *Out for Justice* is considered minimum-accuracy, but one must realize that the score is simply one that reflects the incomplete

depiction of all the dimensions of prostitution rendered in that film. What is depicted is accurate, but not all substantive areas of prostitution culture were included in the film.

In contrast, *Eyes Wide Shut* is a largely inaccurate depiction of prostitution. The film received zeroes in 5 of the 7 substantive areas, and its score for Economic Need was a -2 because it depicted Domino as both being able to name/negotiate the cost of sex and also as a middle-class female. The only accuracy in regard to prostitution was the brief scene where the audience learns that Domino is HIV positive; because she is not portrayed as a drug user, the audience concludes that her disease is likely the result of working as a prostitute.

One must also consider the amount of screen time the prostitutes in the film had, which ranged from a few seconds for background/extra characters who played prostitutes (*Borat* and *The Mirror Has Two Faces*) to over an hour for lead/principle roles (*Casino* and *Pretty Woman*). In both *Borat* and *The Mirror Has Two Faces*, the prostitutes have very little screen time. In *Borat*, for example, streetwalkers are merely seen in the background of scenes when the lead character, Borat, is driving down an Atlanta road; this scene lasts less than five seconds. As such, one must consider how much of an influence shorter scenes have on an audience when compared to films where prostitutes occupy more of the time on the screen. It is likely, however, that the intensity of the scene also plays a role. For example, the prostitute in *Se7en* is never seen alive; she is shown deceased for approximately five seconds. However, this scene paints a more vivid picture of prostitution for the audience as the viewer learns she was killed while being raped with a strap-on dildo/knife. Hence, it is likely that while this is also a brief scene, it remains with the viewer more so than the prostitutes with a comparable amount of screen time but a less powerful role in *Borat*.

It is also important to take into account the intensity of other scenes in these films in comparison with the prostitute scenes. In *Heat*, for example, a teenage prostitute is killed when a john beats her head in (offscreen). When her body is found, blood is seen from a distance, but overall it is not a particularly graphic scene. Other scenes in the film show people being shot in the body and head, a man's face is shown badly beaten while he is barely conscious, and an unconscious girl is seen in a bathtub of bloody water. Consequently, while a prostitute is depicted as being brutally killed in the film, this scene is overshadowed by the graphic violence and gore that is shown in other scenes.

A similar situation is found in *Se7en*, a film in which a serial killer chooses seven victims in accordance to the seven deadly sins. In the film, there are gruesome afterviews of horrific killings. Therefore, the aforementioned killing of the prostitute, his lust victim, via a dildo/knife is but one of several bizarre killings that takes place in the film. Additionally, this scene focuses more on the shock value of the instrument used to kill the prostitute than her status as a prostitute. Because of this, one must question how impactful this film is in influencing audiences' perceptions of street-level prostitutes.

*8MM* had the second-highest Accuracy Index score, but that score, too, should be interpreted guardedly. While the film depicted a juvenile runaway who landed in prostitution and was subsequently drugged, beaten, and killed, the fact that she was a prostitute was not central to the plot. The primary focus was on locating the individuals involved in the snuff film in which Mary Ann was killed. While there was dialogue related to her being a runaway, the fact that she had been working as a prostitute was only mentioned in passing. For example, one of the men who directed the pornographic film referred to her as "a little piece of pussy of the street" (Schumacher, 1999); there were no scenes of her actually working as a prostitute.

Because of these shortcomings, it is important to consider not only the Index score, but also the accompanying qualitative findings as presented in Chapter 5. When combined with the Accuracy Index, one is able to discern both how the films compare to the literature, but also the context of these depictions of prostitutes in film. Notwithstanding its limitations, though, the Accuracy Index is useful in allowing for comparisons between films, as well as comparisons of the sample films to the evidence presented in the extant literature. By using a scale that is made up of indicators of whether or not the film is accurate, one may also gain a better understanding of the social construction of prostitution in film.

### **The Motion Picture Industry and Social Constructionism**

The motion picture industry paints an inexplicit picture about life as a street prostitute. After viewing popular films that include female street-level prostitutes, what does the audience know about life as a prostitute? The images that follow denote some of the themes detected in the present research.

For the most part, the public does not know why women enter into sex work (Dalla, 2006). Viewers are not exposed to the reality that most prostitutes have been juvenile runaways and begin selling sex as adolescents either by force or out of necessity for survival (Estes & Weiner, 2001; Hood-Brown, 1998; McClanahan et al., 1999). Society is further insulated from the truth that most of these runaways were escaping home lives marked by unfit and abusive parents (Hyde, 2005; Silbert & Pines, 1982). Through film, the public is led to believe that prostitutes are single, childless women who can sometimes live comfortably on the income made from transactional sex, and that they work independently with no pimp to control their actions or take their earnings. In addition, the film media suggests that while some prostitutes are harmed

by pimps and johns, this is simply a work hazard; those who occasionally suffer severe injuries or death made poor choices or were targeted by someone either psychologically ill or with a sexual fetish. Further, because films suggest that engaging in prostitution is voluntary and with minimal risk, the psychological consequences are minimal, and any substance abuse is the result of factors external to working as a prostitute.

This understanding of prostitution constructed by the motion picture industry gives viewers an incomplete picture of the painful reality of sex work. Given the present research and the few prior studies on this topic (Baker, 2014; Giusta & Scuriatti, 2005; Small, 2012; Szörényi & Eate, 2014), films with prostitute characters do not seem to construct images of prostitution culture that are equivalent to the extant literature. Put differently, these films are incapable of affording a true picture of life as a street prostitute. This constructed view of prostitution, as presented to society by the motion picture industry, is especially significant because it comes into contact with more people than actual sex workers do. Because the public has minimal direct knowledge of life as a prostitute, the iconography illustrated in films is of substantial importance; films function as a platform upon which prostitution culture is displayed for society. After the motion picture industry has presented the definitions of prostitution, the public interprets these designations, which can subsequently impact their beliefs and actions (Fenwick, 2006). Recall that according to the constructionist perspective, social problems are created by individuals when there is a collective definition of a problem based on the extent to which the public is concerned over a condition or issue (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2009). Consequently, because the media has not depicted prostitution as a social problem, an inaccurate symbolic reality has been constructed. These beliefs have translated into actions, which is evident in the American public

that routinely justifies the marginalization of prostitutes and the criminalization of selling sex based largely on how they have been presented in film.

The motion picture industry helps to reinforce the current policies that target the adjudication of females selling sex rather than the men who are paying for their services. By portraying street-level prostitution as voluntary, lucrative, and relatively safe, the film industry allows for the public to maintain that prostitutes are the ones benefitting from their participation in the sex industry. Thus, the contemporary law enforcement response that emphasizes arresting those selling sex is met without opposition. Correspondingly, the lack of programs for women trapped in prostitution, along with the minimal support for the programs that do exist, can be explained by the public being uninformed on the numerous crises inherent in street-level prostitutes. Research has demonstrated that society generally relies on media-generated constructions about crime rather than the evidence presented in the academic literature (Appel, 2008; Fenwick, 2006; Suerette, 2015). When film producers ignore or understate themes such as childhood trauma, poverty, substance abuse, violent victimization, and serious psychological consequences, attention is diverted from these important issues as they relate to women involved in street-level prostitution.

It is worth noting that the films included in the present study did not misrepresent prostitution so much as they provided an incomplete depiction. While there were instances where prostitution was depicted in ways that were in stark contrast with the academic literature, most films simply did not offer extensive insight into prostitution culture (see Table 16). With that said, it is known that the significance of what is *not* presented by the media is as important and as informative as what *is* depicted (Rafter, 2006). Take, for example, the evidence of presenting the films in this sample as humorous or comical. One must consider whether these

depictions distract the viewer from other important topics that are not discussed. Do representations of prostitution as glamorous (or safe, or lucrative, or enjoyable, or without consequence) function as smoke screens for more important matters in regard to prostitution that have been omitted by filmmakers? Another example might include the obscure, brutal killings of the prostitutes in *8MM* and *Se7en*. Do these exceptional situations divert the viewer from the very real violence that regularly occurs in actuality? Though it is recognized that there are time constraints in film that restrict addressing all issues, it should be noted that the films in the present study poorly addressed many aspects of street prostitute culture.

The present research illuminates the role of the motion picture industry in the social construction of street-level prostitution. The films in the sample construct a picture of prostitutes, and because most people will never have interactions with these women, the iconography of prostitute culture is particularly important in regard to society's perception of sex workers. These assessments of sex workers and sex work serve to reinforce current policies that exist in the United States.

## CHAPTER SEVEN:

### CONCLUSION

The extent to which media depictions of prostitution reflect reality has been the subject of few studies (Baker, 2014,; Coy, Wakeling, & Garner, 2011; Farvid & Glass, 2014; Giusta & Scuriatti, 2005; Hallgrímsdóttir et al., 2008; Johnston, Friedman, & Shafer, 2014; Saewyc et al., 2013; Small, 2012; Strega et al., 2014; Szörényi & Eate, 2014; Van Brunshot, Sydie, & Krull, 1999). However, even fewer studies have dealt with American feature films (for exceptions, see Giusta & Scuriatti, 2005 and Szörényi & Eate, 2014). No studies have utilized a representative sample of major motion pictures cinematic depictions of female street-level prostitution, which accounts for 10-20% of all prostitution. The present study contributes to criminological, victimological, and sociological literature by evaluating the degree to which representations of female street-level prostitution correspond to characteristics of prostitution in reality. Additionally, an Assessment Index was created to allow for the comparison of films to characteristics of prostitution in the extant literature. A degree of caution should be exercised when interpreting the results of the Assessment Index, as it does not account for strength of themes and significance of the prostitute character. Thus it is essential that corresponding narratives for each film, as included in Chapter 5, be used in conjunction with a film's Index score when interpreting the results.



## Media Construction

There is evidence of both accuracies and inaccuracies in regard to the motion picture industry's portrayals of prostitution. The present research found that the motion picture industry underrepresents the reality of street-level prostitution; this finding is consistent with previous enquiry on the media. Prior research has found that the media tends to individualize prostitution, which obscures the reality of systemic conditions that drive sex work (Farvid & Glass, 2014; Hallgrímsdóttir et al., 2008). In the current study, some depictions of prostitution were accurate, as was the case with respect to the depiction of pimp-controlled prostitution in all films that included pimp characters (N = 4). Major differences between films and the real world were uncovered for a number of key characteristics, including reasons for entering prostitution, economic need of prostitutes, victimization, and health consequences. Films greatly underestimated the experience of childhood victimization and abuse among prostitutes, as well as the combination of the poverty these women experience and the lack of opportunities to earn a conventional income. Surprisingly, none of the films depicted prostitutes as having children to whom they were financially obligated, in contrast with at least two-thirds of real-world prostitutes. By excluding reality that women often turn to prostitution out of desperation and as a means of survival, the media turns a blind eye to social and economic constraints that serve as a catalyst to entrance into prostitution by creating vulnerable populations. This also serves to convey the message that these women are responsible for their actions. Because the film industry tends to also depict prostitution as glamorous, as was evident in the prostitution scenarios in one-third of the films in this sample, it also suggests that not only are these girls/women responsible for their actions, but also are often rewarded for selling sex.

Also important, films did not convey the true mental and physical consequences of sex work. The psychological consequences of prostitution were greatly diminished; only one prostitute in film indicated evidence of dissociation and there were no evident suicide attempts in the films. In a similar fashion, the number of prostitutes in film suffering PTSD (N = 0) was less than the 42-68% of those found in real life. The media also distorts the true nature of prostitutes' victimization by presenting sensational homicides, such as those in *8MM*, *Heat*, and *Se7en*. The emphasis on particularly brutal homicides obscures the reality of the violence and danger that prostitutes face on a daily basis. The absence of information on victimization, particularly physical and sexual assault by johns, is problematic because it adds to the invisibility of these victims.

### **The Impact on Public Policy**

The discourse in film ignores the lack of agency most prostitutes maintain, as well as structures that limit this agency; this creates difficulties for the criminal justice system to recognize that punitive measures against street-level prostitutes only exacerbates the plight of these women. The current depiction of prostitution in films conceals the empirical veracities of trauma, victimization, structural inequalities, and poor health. To the extent that the public is misinformed about the reality of prostitution, it is not presented as a social problem. Consequently, society is not rallied to "do something" to either prevent desperate girls and women from entering prostitution or to provide assistance to those who wish to exit street work. This misinformation allows the public to be unperturbed by the fact that girls and women in American society continue to be used as a commodity.

Overall, films fail to mobilize moral outrage and do not encourage viewers to care about the issue of prostitution. It is understandable that the audience feels complacent; this is especially reasonable after viewing films like *21 Jump Street*, *Borat*, *The Mirror Has Two Faces*, and *The Heat* that include no realistic elements of prostitution culture, while also presenting prostitution as glamorous and/or humorous. It should also be noted that three of these four films (*21 Jump Street*, *Borat*, and *The Heat*) are in the top-5 grossing films in the sample, meaning that the greatest number of viewers saw these movies. As such, the motivations to alter current law enforcement policies that are aimed at arresting women selling sex are understandably low. The misrepresentation of prostitution can also potentially influence the availability of programs for sex workers, as well as public support for social service programs to assist these women.

The role of the media in society's understanding of prostitution cannot be understated. The media not only reflects social reality, but also serves as a means of negotiating and developing public perceptions of crime and victimization. Films have the potential to alert audiences about important social problems, but at the same time can mislead viewers. What is included in film and, perhaps more significantly, what is excluded, shapes knowledge, understanding, and beliefs about prostitutes and prostitution. Because of this, it is essential that social scientists examine how the media contributes to the public's social knowledge of crime. Social constructions of crime, criminals, and victims have the capacity to generate misinformation and reinforce prevailing beliefs about appropriate responses. Thus, based on the films in the present study, it is fathomable that people are not outraged by the images presented.

## **A Proposal for Action**

Viewers go to the theatre or watch home movies to be entertained. One would be naïve not to recognize that the motion picture industry's need to entertain outshines its need to educate (Cecil, 2010). Because of this, it is imperative that, as researchers and educators, we find ways to accurately project the reality of prostitution so as to inform the public of the true nature of sex work. Additionally, if advocates wish to improve the life chances and conditions of those who are essentially trapped in prostitution, they must also acknowledge their complicity in constructing and reproducing prostitution stigmas. It is important that informed persons recognize their obligation to act as storytellers for these girls and women, thereby making both the media and the public aware of the reality that prostitutes face.

While most academicians acknowledge media construction, too often they fail to ask what can be done to alter media-constructed images to reflect accurate economic, social, and political conditions of crime. Much like Barak (1988) proposed in his conception of newsmaking criminology, it is imperative that we take advantage of opportunities to be involved in the production of crime-related media by sharing our knowledge with the general public. Barak wrote, "...[W]ill academic criminologists and criminal justice educators remain spectators of the mass-mediated construction of crime and crime control or will they engage actively in producing crime themes for public consumption?" (p. 586).

As was discussed in Chapter Three, ownership of major media is massively concentrated, meaning that a smaller number of individuals are speaking, and a greater number are simply listening; this allows for the projection of stereotypes and crime myths. Additionally, certain crimes, including prostitution, are presented as individual phenomena as opposed to social phenomena. By researchers and educators involving themselves in the social construction of

public opinion, knowledge can be presented for widespread consumption, thereby having the capacity to offer alternate themes of crime, criminals, and justice. This will allow for a better-educated public to make a distinction between the veracity of prostitution and what is created by the media. Audiences would likely have a better understanding of the plight of female street prostitutes if they understood the true conditions besieging prostitutes engaging in transactional sex, including: 1) entry into sex work; 2) the economic need of the women involved; 3) experiences of childhood victimization; 4) presence and role of pimps; 5) drug/alcohol abuse; 6) victimization; and 7) mental/physical health.

### **Study Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

No research is without limitations. However, the methodology employed in the present study minimized possible problems. To begin, the Unified Film Population Identification methodology was utilized to identify the sample used in this research. While an improvement over prior research that has used non-probability sampling, it is important to note that this method is not without limitations. The Internet Movie Data Base was used in Phase 2 of the UFPIM method as a pre-existing list of films released in the U.S. during the decades under consideration that included an actor that played some form of prostitute. Although the UFPIM recommends using the Internet Movie Database, it is possible that films were excluded when constructing this list. However, the three lists consisted of a total of 1,460 films, from which the top-grossing from each decade were included in the population of films for the sample. With such a large list of films containing prostitutes, it is unlikely that a substantial number of films were excluded.

As noted, the sample only included the decades 1990-1999, 2000-2009, and 2010-2014. As such, the generalizability of the results is only to this time period. However, this approach is consistent with research on social issues that has identified film as a historical byproduct of the generation in which it was produced (Cheatwood, 1998; Fenwick, 2009). This allows the present research to be confidently interpreted as a reflection of era-specific matters. However, it is recognized that public opinion and discourse on these matters change. It is noted that there would be utility in subsequent research comparing the portrayal of prostitutes in film between various eras. Nonetheless, while generalizability might be somewhat limited by the era, having a representative and sufficiently large sample, along with a thorough methodology, allowed the researcher to report findings with confidence (Macnamara, 2005).

The analysis employed also merits discussion in this section on limitations. Quantitative media content analysis provides investigators with a collection of valuable means for examining messages and images, created by the motion picture industry, and for investigating messages that contain information about prostitution. Nevertheless, rigorous methodological standards have not consistently been employed in media research, particularly in regard to matters involving validity and reliability. To address these concerns, this research was conducted with attention to detail and rigor, and was directed in accordance with the scientific method. As previously mentioned, the Unified Film Population Identification methodology was utilized to identify the sample used in this research. This sampling method allowed for the researcher to readily identify and set replicable parameters for a specific film population. This allowed for far richer analysis of film depictions than has been seen in the past. Utilizing this sampling methodology also helped to maximize objectivity by minimizing any bias of the researcher.

Objectivity was also maximized by utilizing an *a priori* design. The deductive approach to this research involved making decisions about variables, the measurement of those variables, and the coding rules before coding began. Extensive exploratory work was undertaken to identify the issues and variables appropriate for study; this research was subsequently drawn on to develop the coding scheme utilized in this study. The Codebook was available to coders before viewing the films; the comprehensive Codebook provided a consistent framework for conducting the research (Macnamara, 2005).

Measurement in content analysis has also been criticized. To address previous shortcomings of similar research, measures of variables were assessed in a similar fashion as measures in surveys and experiments. Each variable had indicators that were mutually exclusive and exhaustive and were measured at the highest possible level of measurement. However, it is recognized that many of the variables under consideration are impossible to measure above the nominal- or ordinal level. Substantial background research also allowed for considerable codebook definition to aid in the direct measurement of latent constructs in addition to manifest content.

Recent criminological and victimiological research in the realm of media analysis have not used a second coder (see Baker, 2014; Coy, Wakeling, & Garner, 2011; Eigenberg & Baro, 2003; Guista & Scuriatti, 2005; Stack, Bowman, & Lester, 2012; Szörényi & Eate, 2014; Welsh, Fleming, & Dowler, 2011). The present research, however, relied on trained individuals as an integral part of the measurement process. To ensure this process was valid and reliable, coder training involved both discussion of the coding scheme as well as group coding sessions. To assure replicability, the selection of coders was not based on prior expertise; the secondary coders included two individuals with very different education levels and research experience.

Because human coding was utilized, reliability was an essential component of this research. Using Neuendorf's (2011) proposed criteria for maximizing reliability in content analyses, two reliability subsamples were utilized; the first served as a pilot reliability test and the second provided material for the final analyses. The pilot test involved the researcher selecting a film to provide the opportunity to become skilled at identifying the variables of particular interest, including drug use, victimization, and mental health. To assess intercoder reliability, nominal data were analyzed using agreement controlling for chance; ordinal data were analyzed using covariation. A common criticism of content analysis is poor documentation of reliability assessment. Reliability coefficients in this research were reported separately for variables (see Table 5 and Table 6).

Because this research utilized quantitative content analysis, it is important to consider the degree to which quantitative indicators can be interpreted as the social impact they might have. As such, one would be naïve to draw conclusions regarding this impact from the size and frequency of messages and images in film. Quantitative media content analysis is often unable to capture the context within which these messages and images can be meaningful. To address this limitation, the coding sheets included areas for the coder(s) to provide qualitative information regarding relevant scenes. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the message, as well as comparisons between films.

Finally, it has been acknowledged that replicability is a key criterion for all scientific research (Macnamara, 2005). Research using content analysis has been strongly criticized because it is difficult for other researchers to duplicate the research to corroborate or challenge the results. Because this research involved content analysis, it will be important that subsequent



discussion this research include disclosure of the related methodology and procedures, including the Codebook.

This present study provides an empirical foundation for future research surrounding the issue of depictions of prostitution in media. The current research focused only on American films over a 25-year period. While the findings cannot be generalized to other countries or timeframes until further studies are carried out, the results offer insights that merit future attention. Subsequent studies may include engaging with feminist discourse surrounding sex work, considering how audience members receive media portrayals, examining media trends over time, and comparing various venues of the media.

Whereas this research only considered female street-level prostitution, there is value in exploring depictions of other forms of prostitution (brothels, call girls) so as to gain a better understanding of how sex work as a whole is portrayed. Additionally, this research reviewed only major motion pictures. For a thorough understanding of media construction, it is imperative that other mediums, including documentaries, television, and print media also be evaluated.

As has been noted on multiple occasions, movies are historical byproducts of the generations in which they were produced. Thus, there are opportunities to explore how depictions of prostitution have changed over time and how those changes might reflect beliefs and policies in that era. Additionally, these beliefs and policies are reflective of the cultures in which the films were produced. Subsequent research examining differences in foreign films would allow for comparisons across cultures and medias.

One should also consider that the primary goal of films is not necessarily education, but entertainment. Thus, it is likely that motion pictures overlook accuracy in favor of providing what directors and producers consider entertainment. That is to say, it is possible that movies

depicting street-level prostitution are designed to be entertaining rather than accurate. As such, how film-makers decide what real-life dimensions of prostitution are “entertaining” to an audience should also be the subject of further research.

The aforementioned directions for future research also provide the opportunity to further test the Accuracy Index. Whereas it was created for the present study and succeeds in allowing for comparison of aspects of prostitution culture in film to those outlined in the academic literature, it has not been empirically tested. Replicating the current research and also using the Accuracy Index to explore additional films and forms of media will allow for making any modifications that are necessary to ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument.

Finally, because the motion picture industry’s primary goal is to generate revenue by entertaining audiences, it is unrealistic to expect the motion picture industry to definitively portray the complex reality of prostitution. However, there is hope that as society becomes better informed on the true nature of street-level prostitution, the media will afford alternate representations that include the compulsory nature of entrance into sex work, the history of trauma in prostitutes’ childhoods, the economic, physical, and emotional suffering endured whilst involved in sex work, and the lack of agency in these women. This could lead to support for alternative criminal justice policies, as well as the creation of appropriate treatment programs for prostitutes.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Eliminated Films

Table A1. Films Eliminated from Sample

Title	Year	US Box Office	Genre	Reason for Exclusion
<i>Along Came Polly</i>	2004	\$87.9M	Romance Comedy	Reference to “hooker” only
<i>Any Given Sunday</i>	1999	\$75.6M	Drama Sport	Not street prostitution
<i>Bad Boys II</i>	2003	\$138.4M	Action Comedy	Prostitution takes place in Cuba
<i>Blades of Glory</i>	2007	\$118M	Comedy	Only reference to prostitute
<i>The Bucket List</i>	2007	\$93.5M	Comedy	Prostitute scene in Hong Kong
<i>Catch Me If You Can</i>	2002	\$164M	Drama Action	Not street prostitution
<i>The Curious Case of Benjamin Button</i>	2008	\$127M	Drama Romance	Not street prostitution
<i>Date Night</i>	2010	\$98.7M	Comedy	Not street prostitution
<i>The Departed</i>	2006	\$132M	Drama Thriller	Not street prostitution
<i>Evita</i>	1996	\$50 M	Drama Musical	Takes place in Argentina
<i>The Hangover</i>	2009	\$277M	Comedy	Transsexual prostitute
<i>The Hangover Part II</i>	2011	\$254M	Comedy	Transsexual prostitute
<i>The Hangover Part III</i>	2013	\$112M	Comedy	Not street prostitution
<i>Interview with the Vampire</i>	1994	\$105M	Fantasy Drama	Reality (vampire)
<i>Kill Bill: Vol 2</i>	2004	\$66.2M	Thriller Action	Not street prostitution
<i>L.A. Confidential</i>	1997	\$64.6M	Thriller Drama	Not street prostitution
<i>The Last Samurai</i>	2003	\$111M	Drama Action	Takes place in Japan
<i>Mona Lisa Smile</i>	2003	\$63.7M	Drama Romance	Not street prostitution Takes place in 1953
<i>Payback</i>	1999	\$81.5M	Action Drama	Not street prostitution
<i>Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl</i>	2003	\$305M	Fantasy Action	Does not take place in US Reality
<i>Rising Sun</i>	1993	\$63.1M	Thriller Drama	Not street prostitution

**Table A1 (Continued)**

<i>Road to Perdition</i>	2002	\$104M	Thriller Drama	Takes place in 1931
<i>Seabiscuit</i>	2003	\$120M	Drama	Takes place in Depression era
<i>Set it Off</i>	1996	\$36M	Drama Action	Not street prostitution
<i>Sin City</i>	2005	\$74M	Thriller	Not reality-based
<i>Slumdog Millionaire</i>	2008	\$141M	Drama Thriller Romance	Takes place in India
<i>Taken</i>	2008	\$145M	Thriller Action	Takes place in France
<i>Ted</i>	2012	\$219M	Comedy	Not reality-based
<i>Total Recall</i>	1990	\$119M	Thriller Action Science Fiction	Not reality-based
<i>Unforgiven</i>	1992	\$101M	Drama Western	Takes place in 1881
<i>Wedding Crashers</i>	2005	\$209M	Comedy	Reference to “hooker” Not street prostitution
<i>Wild Wild West</i>	1990	\$114M	Adventure Comedy Western	Takes place in 19 <sup>th</sup> century
<i>The Wolf of Wall Street</i>	2013	\$117M	Comedy Biography	Not street prostitution
<i>The Wolverine</i>	2013	\$133M	Action Sci-Fi	Not reality-based
<i>Young Guns II</i>	1990	\$44.1M	Adventure Comedy Western	Takes place in 1950

## Appendix B: Film Analysis Coding Form

1.	Name of Film	
2.	Film ID	
3.	Year of Release	
4.	Running Time	
5.	Box Office Gross	
6.	Director	
7.	Star(s)	
8.	Time Covered in Film	
9.	Time Period of Film	
10.	Flashback time	
11.	Number of Principal Characters	Female: Male:
12.	Number of Supporting Characters	Female: Male:
13.	Country	
14.	Based on True Story	
15.	Humorous	
16.	Glamorous	

Brief description of film:

### Appendix C: Character Analysis Coding Form

1.	Name of Film						
2.	Film ID						
3.	Character Name						
4.	Character ID						
5.	Principal / Supporting						
6.	Gender						
7.	Race						
8.	Age						
9.	SES						
10.	Marital Status						
11.	Education						
12.	Prostitute						
13.	Pimp						
14.	John / Date						

## Appendix D: Prostitute Analysis Coding Form

1.	Name of Film	
2.	Film ID	
3.	Character Name	
4.	Character ID	

### Entrance into Prostitution

5. Did the film depict the woman being recruited into prostitution?

Yes	No	Don't Know

6. If yes, by whom was she recruited?

Pimp	Madam	Parent	Spouse/ Partner	Prostitute	Other (list)	N/A	Don't know

Explain:

7. Was the prostitute trafficked?

Yes, domestically	Yes, internationally	No	Don't Know

Explain:

8. At what age did the woman begin prostituting?

< 13	13-17	18+	Don't know

9. Was the prostitute a juvenile runaway when she entered prostitution?

Yes	No	Don't Know

10. Did the film depict the woman/girl being "turned out"?

Yes	No	Don't Know

11. If yes, which of the following were depicted?

Porn	Forced Sexual Activity	Physical Abuse	Mentoring by Other Prostitutes	Other (list)	N/A	Don't know

Explain:

12. Was the prostitute voluntarily engaging in prostitution?

Yes	No	Don't Know

Explain:

### **Economic Need**

13. Socio-economic status of woman pre-prostitution

Working/lower class	Middle class	Upper/upper-middle	Don't Know

Explain:

14. Economic situation of woman during prostitution (was woman able to live/survive on the money earned working as prostitute?)

Working/lower class	Middle class	Upper/upper-middle	Don't Know

Explain:

15. Did the movie show a prostitute getting paid by a client/date?

Yes	No	Don't Know

Explain:



16. Was the prostitute able to name/negotiate the cost of her services?

Yes	No	Don't Know

Explain:

17. Did the prostitute give some/all of her earnings to a pimp?

Yes	No	Don't Know

Explain:

18. Did the prostitute have to financially support children?

Yes	No	Don't Know

Explain:

19. Did the prostitute have other options as a means of obtaining income?

Yes	No	Don't Know

Explain:

20. Was the prostitute formerly homeless?

Yes	No	Don't Know

21. Was the prostitute currently homeless?

Yes	No	Don't Know

## **Childhood Victimization**

22. Was the prostitute raised in an environment in which her caretakers abused drugs/alcohol?

Yes	No	Don't Know

Explain:

To which type of criminal activity was the prostitute victim as a child? By whom?

	24. Sexual Abuse	25. Physical Abuse	26. Emotional Abuse	27. Neglect / Abandonment	28. Bullying	29. Other (list)
Male parent / guardian						
Female parent / guardian						
Male step – parent						
Female step – parent						
Sibling						
Other relative						
Other (list)						

30. Did the prostitute run away (as a child) due to this victimization?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know

Explain:

31. Was the woman targeted for prostitution due to this victimization?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know

Explain:

32. Does it appear that this victimization played a role in the woman's involvement in prostitution?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know

Explain:

### **Pimps**

33. Does the prostitute have a pimp?

Yes	No	Don't Know

Age/gender/race

34. Did the pimp recruit the woman into prostitution?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know

Explain:

35. Does the pimp have other women/girls working for him?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know

Explain:

36. – 39. Was the prostitute abused by the pimp?

36. Physically	37. Sexually	38. Emotionally	39. Financially

Explain:

40. Did the prostitute turn over some/all of her earnings to her pimp?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know

Explain:

41. Did the pimp provide drugs/alcohol to the prostitute?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know

Explain:

42. How much control did the pimp have over the prostitute?

A lot	Some	None	N/A	Don't Know

Explain:

### **Drugs / Alcohol**

43. What types of substances did the prostitute use?

Alcohol	Marijuana	Ecstasy	Cocaine	Heroin	Meth	RX	Other (list)	N/A	Don't Know

Explain:

44. Was the use voluntary?

Always	Sometimes	Never	Don't Know	N/A

Explain:

45. Did the prostitute engage in sexual acts for drugs/alcohol?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know

Explain:

46. Was the prostitute using drugs/alcohol while performing sexual acts?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know

Explain:

47. Was the woman working as a prostitute to support a drug/alcohol habit?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know

Explain:

48. Did a pimp provide drugs/alcohol to the prostitute?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know

Explain:

49. Are drugs/alcohol being used as a coping mechanism?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know

Explain:

### **Victimization**

50. Was the prostitute the victim of sexual assault whilst working as a prostitute? (indicate all that apply)

Yes, by a date	Yes, by a pimp	Yes, by someone else	No	Don't know

Explain:

51. Were either the perpetrator(s) or the prostitute intoxicated during the sexual assault(s)? (indicate all that apply)

John/date intoxicated	Pimp intoxicated	Other perpetrator intoxicated	Prostitute intoxicated	Neither party intoxicated	N/A	Don't know

Explain:

52. Were the police notified about this sexual assault?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't know

Explain:

53. How serious were the physical injuries sustained by the prostitute during the sexual assault?

No injury	Mild	Moderate	Severe, not life-threatening	Severe, life threatening; survival probable	Critical; survival uncertain	Fatal	Don't know

Explain:

54. Was the prostitute the victim of physical assault whilst working as a prostitute? (indicate all that apply)

Yes, by a date	Yes, by a pimp	Yes, by someone else	No	Don't know

Explain:

55. Were either the perpetrator(s) or the prostitute intoxicated during the physical assault(s)? (indicate all that apply)

John/date intoxicated	Pimp intoxicated	Other perpetrator intoxicated	Prostitute intoxicated	Neither party intoxicated	N/A	Don't know

Explain:

56. Were the police notified about this physical assault?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't know

Explain:

57. How serious were the physical injuries sustained by the prostitute during the physical assault?

No injury	Mild	Moderate	Severe, not life-threatening	Severe, life threatening; survival probable	Critical; survival uncertain	Fatal	Don't know

Explain:

58. Did a john/client ever refuse to pay or take back money that he had given to the prostitute?

Yes	No	Don't know

Explain:

59. Were either the perpetrator(s) or the prostitute intoxicated when the john/client refused to pay the prostitute? (indicate all that apply)

John/date intoxicated	Pimp intoxicated	Other perpetrator intoxicated	Prostitute intoxicated	Neither party intoxicated	N/A	Don't know

Explain:

60. Were the police notified about this non-payment?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't know

Explain:

61. How serious were the physical injuries sustained by the prostitute during the non-payment?

No injury	Mild	Moderate	Severe, not life-threatening	Severe, life threatening; survival probable	Critical; survival uncertain	Fatal	Don't know

Explain:

62. Was the prostitute killed (or an attempt made) while working as a prostitute?

Yes, by a date	Yes, by a pimp	Yes, by someone else	No	Don't know

Explain:

63. Were either the perpetrator(s) or the prostitute intoxicated when the prostitute was killed (or an attempt made)? (indicate all that apply)

John/date intoxicated	Pimp intoxicated	Other perpetrator intoxicated	Prostitute intoxicated	Neither party intoxicated	N/A	Don't know

Explain:

64. Were the police notified/made aware of the prostitute being killed (or an attempt made)?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't know

Explain:



65. How serious were the physical injuries sustained by the prostitute during the homicide/homicide attempt?

No injury	Mild	Moderate	Severe, not life-threatening	Severe, life threatening; survival probable	Critical; survival uncertain	Fatal	Don't know

Explain:

**Mental/Physical Health**

66. Did the prostitute exhibit any trauma-related symptoms?

Low self-worth	Help-less	Fear	Cut.	OD	Suic. Att.	Suic.	Depre ssion	OCD	Psych osis	Dissoc iation	PTSD	Other	N/A	Don't know

Explain:

67. Were sex/sexual acts ever physically painful?

Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know

Explain:

68. Was there discussion of STIs?

Yes	No	Don't Know

Explain:

69. Were condoms regularly used?

Yes	No	Don't Know

Explain:

## Appendix E: Codebook

For the purpose of this research, a prostitute film is a film in that takes place in the U.S. and in which one or more female actors play a female street-level prostitute that appears to be reality based.

Items 1-6 are to be filled out by the principal coder.

1. Name of film:
2. ID# of film: (Two-digit number)
3. Year of film's release:
4. Running time:
5. Box office gross:
6. Director:
7. Star(s):

Items 8-14 are to be filled out by any coder for each prostitute film as defined in Table 1.

8. Time covered in film: Write in the estimated time in months that has passed in the plot of the film

Use 999 for don't know/cannot determine

9. Time period of film: Write in year/decade in which the film takes place (e.g. 1970s, 1980s).

Use 999 for cannot determine

10. Flashback time: Write in estimated time period (year/decade) in which each flashback takes place.

Use 999 for cannot determine

11. Number of principal characters: Write in the number of principal male and female characters

12. Number of supporting characters: Write in the number of supporting male and female characters

13. Country: Write in the country in which the film takes place

14. Based on true story: Write in the corresponding number for if the film is based on a true story

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

15. Humorous: Write in the corresponding number for if the film depicted prostitution as humorous

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Neutral

4 = Disagree

5 = Strongly disagree

999 = Don't know/can't tell

16. Glamorous: Write in the corresponding number for if the film depicted prostitution as glamorous and/or exciting

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Neutral

4 = Disagree

5 = Strongly disagree

999 = Don't know/can't tell

### **Character Analysis Codebook**

1. Name of film: Write in the name of the film
2. Film ID: To be filled in by the principal coder (Two-digit number)
3. Character Name: Write in character's name, or a brief descriptor of the character in the event that his/her name is not given
4. Character ID: To be filled in by the principal coder
5. Principal or supporting character: Write in the corresponding number for each character's role

1 = Principal

2 = Supporting

6. Gender: Write in the corresponding number for the gender of each character

1 = Male

2 = Female

7. Race: Write in the corresponding number for the race of each character

1 = Caucasian

2 = African American

3 = Hispanic

4 = Asian

5 = Native American

6 = Other (write in)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

8. Age: Write in the corresponding number for the apparent age of each character

1 = Infant

2 = Child (3-12 years)

3 = Adolescent (13-18 years)

4 = Young adult (19-24)

5 = Adult (25-39)

6 = Middle-aged adult (40-54)

7 = Mature Adult (55-64)

8 = Senior (65+)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

9. SES: Write in the corresponding number for the apparent socio-economic status for each character

1 = Working/lower class (Does not have all necessities, does not possess luxuries, may be unemployed and/or on public assistance)

2 = Middle class (Works for a living, has all necessities and some luxuries)

3 = Upper/upper-middle class (Well-to-do, high-level job or does not need a job, not dependent on monthly income to live)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

10. Marital status: Write in the corresponding number for the apparent marital status of each character

1 = Single

2 = Married

3 = Dating/serious relationship

4 = Separated

5 = Divorced

6 = Widowed

7 = Other (write in)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

11. Education: Write in the corresponding number for the apparent educational attainment of each character

1 = Less than high school

2 = High school graduate

3 = Some college

4 = College graduate

5 = Graduate education

999 = Don't know/can't tell

12. Prostitute: Write in the corresponding number for the prostitute status of each character

1 = Prostitute

2 = Not a prostitute

999 = Don't know/can't tell

13. Pimp: Write in the corresponding number for the pimp status of each character

1 = Pimp

2 = Not a pimp

999 = Don't know/can't tell

14. John/Date: Write in the corresponding number for the john/date status of each character

1 = John/date

2 = Not a john/date

999 = Don't know/can't tell

**Prostitute Analysis Codebook (to be completed for each street-level prostitute in a principal or supporting role)**

For the purpose of this research a prostitute is a girl/woman who exchanges real or simulated sexual activity for some form of compensation.

1. Name of film: Write in the name of the film
2. Film ID: To be filled in by the principal coder (Two-digit number)
3. Character Name: Write in character's (prostitute's) name, or a brief descriptor of the character in the event that his/her name is not given
4. Character ID: To be filled in by the principal coder

Entrance into Prostitution

5. Recruited into Prostitution: Write in the corresponding number representing if the film depicted the woman being recruited into prostitution

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know

6. Recruited by whom: Write in the corresponding number for who recruited the woman into prostitution:



1 = Pimp

2 = Madam (woman in charge of multiple prostitutes)

3 = Prostitute's parent/guardian

4 = Prostitute's spouse/partner

5 = Another prostitute

6 = Other (write in)

7 = N/A (did not depict prostitute being recruited)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

7. Prostitute trafficked: Write in the corresponding number for if the prostitute was trafficked (recruited, harbored, transported, provided, or obtained for the purpose of a commercial sex act where such an act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion) [Trafficking Victims Protection Act]

1 = Yes, domestically

2 = Yes, internationally

3 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

8. Age of entrance: Write in the corresponding number for the apparent age at which the woman began working as a prostitute

1 = Under 13

2 = 13-17

3 = 18+

999 = Don't know/can't tell

9. Juvenile runaway: Write in the corresponding number for if the prostitute was a juvenile runaway when she entered prostitution

1 = Yes

2 = No

3 = Don't know/can't tell

10. Turned out: Write the corresponding number for if the film depicted the woman/girl being "turned out" (prepared/trained to work as a prostitute; initiated before engaging in transactional sex)

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

11. Preparation: Write the corresponding number for how the prostitute was "turned out"

1 = Pornography (made to watch/recreate pornographic films)

2 = Forced sexual activity (forced to engage in sexual acts)

3 = Physical abuse

4 = Mentoring by other (current/former) prostitutes

5 = Other (write in)

6 = N/A (turning out was not observed or implied)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

12. Voluntary prostitution: Write in the corresponding number for if the woman was voluntarily engaging in prostitution

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

### Economic Need

13. SES pre-prostitution: Write in the corresponding number for the apparent socio-economic status of the woman prior to her entrance into prostitution

1 = Working/lower class (Does not have all necessities, dot not possess luxuries, may be unemployed and/or on public assistance)

2 = Middle class (Works for a living, has all necessities and some luxuries)

3 = Upper/upper-middle class (Well-to-do, high-level job or does not need a job, not dependent on monthly income to live)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

14. SES prostitution: Write in the corresponding number for the apparent socio-economic status of the woman during her tenure as a prostitute

1 = Working/lower class (Does not have all necessities, dot not possess luxuries, may be unemployed and/or on public assistance)

2 = Middle class (Works for a living, has all necessities and some luxuries)

3 = Upper/upper-middle class (Well-to-do, high-level job or does not need a job, not dependent on monthly income to live)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

15. Paid by john/date: Write in the corresponding number for if the movie shows/suggests the woman getting paid by a john/date for sexual services (payment can include money, drugs, necessities, shelter, etc.)

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

16. Negotiate cost of services: Write in the corresponding number for if the prostitute was able to name/negotiate the cost of her services (e.g. tells john/date what the cost is for a specific sexual act, counters an offer from a john/date, etc.)

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

17. Earnings to pimp: Write in the corresponding number for if the film showed a prostitute giving some/all of her earnings to a pimp (or suggested that she does so)

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

18. Financially support children: Write in the corresponding number for if the film showed or suggested that the prostitute had to financially support her children

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

19. Other options: Write in the corresponding number for if it seemed that the prostitute had other options (aside from being a prostitute) for obtaining income (e.g. woman had skills and/or education that qualified her for available employment and such available employment prospects are observed or implied)

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

20. Formerly homeless: Write in the corresponding number for if the film depicted or suggested that the prostitute was formerly homeless (e.g. had no place to sleep, was relying on others for a place to stay, etc.)

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

21. Currently homeless: Write in the corresponding number for if the film depicted or suggested that the prostitute was currently homeless (e.g. had no place to sleep, was relying on others for a place to stay, was exchanging sex for housing, etc.)

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

#### Childhood Victimization

22. Caretakers abused drugs/alcohol: Write in the corresponding number for if the film depicted or suggested that the prostitute was raised in a home/environment in which her parent(s)/guardian(s) abused drugs/alcohol

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

23. Parent involvement: Write in the corresponding number for if it is suggested or apparent that the prostitute's parents/guardians played a role in her involvement in prostitution

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 – Don't know/can't tell

24. Childhood sexual abuse: Write in the corresponding number for if the film depicted or suggested that the prostitute was sexually abused (fondling, making to touch someone else's sexual organs, exhibitionism, masturbating in front of, intercourse, oral sex, anal sex, exposing to pornography, deliberately exposing to sexual acts, using in pornography) as a child (indicate all that apply)

1 = Yes, by a male parent/guardian

2 = Yes, by a female parent/guardian

3 = Yes, by a male step-parent

4 = Yes, by a female step-parent

5 = Yes, by a sibling/step-sibling

6 = Yes, by a other relative

7 = Yes, by someone else (write in)

8 = Yes, perpetrator identity not known

9 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

25. Childhood physical abuse: Write in the corresponding number for if the film depicted or suggested that the prostitute was physically abused (non-accidental trauma or physical injury)

caused by punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, or otherwise harming a child; includes inappropriate/excessive physical discipline) as a child

1 = Yes, by a male parent/guardian

2 = Yes, by a female parent/guardian

3 = Yes, by a male step-parent

4 = Yes, by a female step-parent

5 = Yes, by a sibling/step-sibling

6 = Yes, by a other relative

7 = Yes, by someone else (write in)

8 = Yes, perpetrator identity not known

9 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

26. Childhood emotional abuse: Write in the corresponding number for if the film depicted or suggested that the prostitute was emotionally abused as a child. This includes ignoring (physically or psychologically) the child, rejecting the child (e.g., refusing to touch, denying the needs of, or ridiculing ), isolating (preventing from having normal social interactions with peers, family members, and adults; may also include confining the child or limiting the child's freedom of movement), exploiting/corrupting the child (teaching/encouraging/forcing to develop inappropriate or illegal behaviors, including antisocial acts)

1 = Yes, by a male parent/guardian

2 = Yes, by a female parent/guardian

3 = Yes, by a male step-parent

4 = Yes, by a female step-parent

- 5 = Yes, by a sibling/step-sibling
- 6 = Yes, by a other relative
- 7 = Yes, by someone else (write in)
- 8 = Yes, perpetrator identity not known
- 9 = No
- 999 = Don't know/can't tell

27. Childhood neglect/abandonment: Write in the corresponding number for if the film depicted or suggested that the prostitute was neglected as a child. This includes physical neglect (not providing with basic necessities, such as adequate food, clothing, and shelter), educational neglect (not enrolling a child of mandatory age in school, allowing to engage in chronic truancy), and medical neglect (not providing appropriate health care to a child although financially able to do so)

- 1 = Yes, by a male parent/guardian
- 2 = Yes, by a female parent/guardian
- 3 = Yes, by a male step-parent
- 4 = Yes, by a female step-parent
- 5 = Yes, by a sibling/step-sibling
- 6 = Yes, by a other relative
- 7 = Yes, by someone else (write in)
- 8 = Yes, perpetrator identity not known
- 9 = No
- 999 = Don't know/can't tell



28. Childhood bullying: Write in the corresponding number for if the film depicted or suggested that the prostitute was bullied as a child. This includes any acts of repeated aggressive behavior in order to intentionally hurt another person, physically or mentally (physical violence, intimidation/threats, name calling/belittling, social exclusion, gossiping/spreading rumors about, public humiliation, using words/phrases to suggest unacceptability/worthlessness) as a child

1 = Yes, by a male parent/guardian

2 = Yes, by a female parent/guardian

3 = Yes, by a male step-parent

4 = Yes, by a female step-parent

5 = Yes, by a sibling/step-sibling

6 = Yes, by a other relative

7 = Yes, by someone else (write in)

8 = Yes, perpetrator identity not known

9 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

29. Other childhood victimization: Write in the corresponding number for if the film depicted or suggested that the prostitute was a victim to something other than those listed in 24-28 (write in type of victimization)

1 = Yes, by a male parent/guardian

2 = Yes, by a female parent/guardian

3 = Yes, by a male step-parent

4 = Yes, by a female step-parent

- 5 = Yes, by a sibling/step-sibling
- 6 = Yes, by a other relative
- 7 = Yes, by someone else (write in)
- 8 = Yes, perpetrator identity not known
- 9 = No
- 999 = Don't know/can't tell

30. Runaway due to victimization: Write in the corresponding number for if the prostitute, as a child/adolescent, ran away from home due to any of the victimization experienced in 22-29

- 1 = Yes
- 2 = No
- 3 = N/A (no childhood victimization)
- 999 = Don't know/can't tell

31. Targeted for prostitution: Write in the corresponding number for if the prostitute was targeted for prostitution due to the victimization experienced in 22-29

- 1 = Yes
- 2 = No
- 3 = N/A (no childhood victimization)
- 999 = Don't know/can't tell

32. Victimization played role: Write in the corresponding number for if the victimization experienced in 22-29 seems to have played a role in the woman's subsequent involvement in prostitution

- 1 = Yes
- 2 = No

3 = N/A (no childhood victimization)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

### Pimps

33. Pimp: Write in the corresponding number for if the prostitute had a pimp (an individual who controls the actions and lives off the proceeds of a prostitute)

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

34. Pimp recruiter: Write in the corresponding number for if the pimp recruited the woman into prostitution

1 = Yes

2 = No

3 = N/A (prostitute does not have a pimp)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

35. Other girls: Write in the corresponding number for if the pimp has other women/girls working for him as prostitutes

1 = Yes

2 = No

3 = N/A (prostitute does not have a pimp)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

36. Physical abuse by pimp: Write in the corresponding number for if it was observed or implied that the prostitute was physically abused by her pimp. Physical abuse refers to any

intentional and unwanted contact, including scratching, punching, biting, strangling, kicking, throwing something at, hair-pulling, pushing, pulling, grabbing clothing, using a gun/knife/box cutter/mace/other weapon on, grabbing face to make look at, and grabbing to prevent from leaving

1 = Yes

2 = No

3 = N/A (prostitute does not have a pimp)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

37. Sexual abuse by pimp: Write in the corresponding number for if it was observed or implied that the prostitute was sexually abused by her pimp. Sexual abuse refers to any action that pressures or coerces the woman into doing something sexual she doesn't want to do, including behavior that impacts a person's ability to control their sexual activity or the circumstances in which sexual activity occurs. Sexual abuse includes unwanted kissing or touching, unwanted sexual activity, unwanted rough/violent sexual activity, rape or attempted rape, refusing to use condoms, restricting access to birth control, keeping someone from protecting herself from sexually transmitted infections, sexual contact with someone who is very drunk/drugged/unconscious/unable to consent, threatening someone into unwanted sexual activity, pressuring someone to have sex or perform sexual acts

1 = Yes

2 = No

3 = N/A (prostitute does not have a pimp)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

38. Emotional abuse by pimp: Write in the corresponding number for if it was observed or implied that the prostitute was emotionally abused by her pimp. Emotional abuse refers to non-physical behaviors such as threats, insults, constant monitoring, humiliation, intimidation, and isolation. Emotional abuse includes calling names, putting someone down, yelling/screaming at, intentionally embarrassing in public, preventing from seeing/talking to friends/family, telling someone what to wear, threatening to harm (including family, friends, pets), threatening to expose secrets, threatening to have children taken away

1 = Yes

2 = No

3 = N/A (prostitute does not have a pimp)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

39. Financial abuse by pimp: Write in the corresponding number for if it was observed or implied that the prostitute was financially abused by her pimp. Financial abuse refers to telling someone what she can and cannot buy, or having complete control over her finances. Financial abuse includes giving an allowance and closely watching what one buys, taking any money earned by a person and denying her access to it, preventing someone from seeing bank/financial records, hiding/stealing someone's money, refusing to give money for food/rent/medicine/clothing, spending money on themselves but not allowing her to do the same, using money to overpower someone because he knows she is not in the same financial situation as he is

1 = Yes

2 = No

3 = N/A (prostitute does not have a pimp)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

40. Earnings to pimp: Write in the corresponding number for if it was observed or implied that the prostitute turned over some/all of her money earned from engaging in prostitution to her pimp

1 = Yes

2 = No

3 = N/A (prostitute does not have a pimp)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

41. Drugs/alcohol to prostitute: Write in the corresponding number for if it was observed or implied that the pimp provided drugs or alcohol to the woman

1 = Yes

2 = No

3 = N/A (prostitute does not have a pimp)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

42. Control over prostitute: Write in the corresponding number for the observed or implied amount of control the pimp had over the prostitute

1 = A lot

2 = Some

3 = None

4 = N/A (prostitute does not have a pimp)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

Drugs/Alcohol

43. Prostitute drug use: Write in the corresponding number to the observed or implied type of drug(s) the prostitute used (indicate all that apply)

1 = Alcohol

2 = Marijuana

3 = Ecstasy

4 = Cocaine

5 = Heroin

6 = Methamphetamine

7 = Prescription drugs (non-prescribed/not as prescribed)

8 = Other (write in)

9 = N/A (prostitute did not use any drugs)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

44. Voluntary drug use: Write in the corresponding number for if it was observed or implied that the drug use reported in 43 was voluntary

1 = Always

2 = Sometimes

3 = Never

4 = N/A (prostitute did not use any drugs)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

45. Sex for drugs: Write in the corresponding number for if it was observed or implied that the prostitute engaged in sexual acts for drugs/alcohol

1 = Yes

2 = No

3 = N/A (prostitute did not use any drugs)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

46. Sex on drugs: Write in the corresponding number for if it was observed or implied that the prostitute was under the influence of drugs/alcohol while performing transactional sex acts

1 = Yes

2 = No

3 = N/A (prostitute did not use any drugs)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

47. Supporting addiction: Write in the corresponding number for if it was observed or implied that the woman is depicted as working as a prostitute to support a drug or alcohol habit

1 = Yes

2 = No

3 = N/A (prostitute did not use any drugs)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

48. Pimp provided drugs: Write in corresponding number for if it was observed or implied that the prostitute's pimp provided drugs/alcohol to her

1 = Yes

2 = No

3 = N/A (prostitute did not use any drugs or prostitute did not have pimp)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

49. Coping mechanism: Write in the corresponding number for if the prostitute's use of drugs/alcohol seems to be a coping mechanism

1 = Yes



2 = No

3 = N/A (prostitute did not use any drugs)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

### Victimization

50. Sexual assault victim: Write in the corresponding number for if the film depicted or implied that the prostitute was sexually assaulted (fondling, unwanted touching, making to touch someone else's sexual organs, intercourse, oral sex, anal sex, using in pornography, sexual contact while she was very drunk/drugged/unconscious/unable to consent) while working as a prostitute (indicate all that apply). Includes attempted sexual assault

1 = Yes, by a date

2 = Yes, by a pimp

3 = Yes, by someone else (write in)

4 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

51. Sexual assault situation: Write in the corresponding number if it was depicted or implied that the perpetrator and/or prostitute were intoxicated during the victimization in 50 (indicate all that apply)

1 = John/date intoxicated

2 = Pimp intoxicated

3 = Other perpetrator intoxicated

4 = Prostitute intoxicated

5 = Neither party intoxicated

6 = N/A (no sexual assault)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

52. Sexual assault notification: Write in the corresponding number if it was depicted or implied that the police were informed of the victimization in 50

1 = Police notified

2 = Police not notified

3 = N/A (no sexual assault)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

53. Physical severity of injuries: Write in the corresponding number for the severity of physical injury suffered by the prostitute in 50 [AMA Abbreviated Injury Scale]

1 = No injury

2 = Mild

3 = Moderate

4 = Severe, not life-threatening

5 = Severe, life threatening, survival probable

6 = Critical, survival uncertain

7 = Fatal

8 = N/A (no sexual assault)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

54. Physical assault victim: Write in the corresponding number for if the film depicted or implied that the prostitute was physically assaulted (scratching, punching, biting, strangling, kicking, throwing something at, hair-pulling, pushing, pulling, grabbing clothing, using or threatening gun/knife/box cutter/bat/mace/other weapon, grabbing face to make look at, grabbing to

prevent leaving) while working as a prostitute (indicate all that apply). Includes attempted physical assault

1 = Yes, by a date

2 = Yes, by a pimp

3 = Yes, by someone else (write in)

4 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

55. Physical assault situation: Write in the corresponding number if it was depicted or implied that the perpetrator and/or prostitute were intoxicated during the victimization in 54 (indicate all that apply)

1 = John/date intoxicated

2 = Pimp intoxicated

3 = Other perpetrator intoxicated

4 = Prostitute intoxicated

5 = Neither party intoxicated

6 = N/A (no sexual assault)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

56. Physical assault notification: Write in the corresponding number if it was depicted or implied that the police were informed of the victimization in 54

1 = Police notified

2 = Police not notified

3 = N/A (no sexual assault)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

57. Physical severity of injuries: Write in the corresponding number for the severity of physical injury suffered by the prostitute in 54

1 = No injury

2 = Mild

3 = Moderate

4 = Severe, not life-threatening

5 = Severe, life threatening, survival probable

6 = Critical, survival uncertain

7 = Fatal

8 = N/A

999 = Don't know/can't tell

58. Non-payment victimization: Write in the corresponding number for if the film depicted or implied that the prostitute was not compensated (money, drugs, other goods/necessities) after providing a sexual act to a john/client while working as a prostitute (indicate all that apply). Includes john/client taking back money that he had already given to prostitute.

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

59. Non-payment situation: Write in the corresponding number if it was depicted or implied that the john/date and/or prostitute were intoxicated during the victimization in 58 (indicate all that apply)

1 = John/date intoxicated

2 = Pimp intoxicated

3 = Other perpetrator intoxicated

4 = Prostitute intoxicated

5 = Neither party intoxicated

6 = N/A (no non-payment)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

60. Non-payment notification: Write in the corresponding number if it was depicted or implied that the police were informed of the victimization in 58

1 = Police notified

2 = Police not notified

3 = N/A (no non-payment)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

61. Physical severity of injuries: Write in the corresponding number for the severity of physical injury suffered by the prostitute in 58

1 = No injury

2 = Mild

3 = Moderate

4 = Severe, not life-threatening

5 = Severe, life threatening, survival probable

6 = Critical, survival uncertain

7 = Fatal

8 = N/A (no non-payment)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

62. Write in the corresponding number for if the film depicted or implied that the prostitute was killed while working as a prostitute. Includes attempted homicide

1 = Yes, by a date

2 = Yes, by a pimp

3 = Yes, by someone else (write in)

4 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

63. Write in the corresponding number if it was depicted or implied that the perpetrator and/or prostitute were intoxicated during the victimization in 62

1 = John/date intoxicated

2 = Pimp intoxicated

3 = Other perpetrator intoxicated

4 = Prostitute intoxicated

5 = Neither party intoxicated

6 = N/A (no non-payment)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

64. Homicide notification: Write in the corresponding number if it was depicted or implied that the police were informed or became aware of the victimization in 62

1 = Police notified/aware

2 = Police not notified/aware

3 = N/A (no homicide)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

65. Physical severity of injuries: Write in the corresponding number for the severity of physical injury suffered by the prostitute in 62

1 = No injury

2 = Mild

3 = Moderate

4 = Severe, not life-threatening

5 = Severe, life threatening, survival probable

6 = Critical, survival uncertain

7 = Fatal

8 = N/A (no non-payment)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

#### Mental/Physical Health

66. Trauma-related symptoms: Write in the corresponding number of the trauma-related symptom(s) that the prostitute was depicted as having (indicate all that apply)

1 = Low self-worth (having an unfavorable opinion of herself)

2 = Helplessness (the feeling of having little power over her own life/situation)

3 = Fear (having feelings of dread, apprehension, or anticipation of the possibility that something unpleasant will occur)

4 = Cutting (self-injury in which a person makes small cuts on her body; not a suicide attempt)

5 = Drug/alcohol overdose (ingestion, injection, or application of a substance in quantities greater than generally practiced or recommended; intentional or unintentional)

6 = Suicide attempt (unsuccessful intentional attempt to kill oneself)

7 = Suicide (intentionally causing one's own death)

8 = Depression (persistent feelings of sadness; feelings of hopelessness or pessimism; feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness; loss of interest in activities once pleasurable)

9 = Obsessive compulsive disorder (unreasonable thoughts and fears that lead one to do repetitive behaviors)

10 = Psychosis (having false beliefs about what is taking place, having false beliefs about who one is, seeing or hearing things that are not there)

11 = Dissociation (detachment of the mind from the emotional state or from the body; being in a dreamlike or unreal place)

12 = Post-traumatic stress disorder (recurrent, unwanted distressing memories of the traumatic event; reliving the traumatic event; upsetting dreams about a traumatic event; severe emotional distress or physical reactions to something that reminds someone of a traumatic event; avoiding places, activities, or people that remind someone of a traumatic event) [mayo clinic]

13 = Other (write in)

14 = N/A (no trauma-related symptoms)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

67. Write in the corresponding number for if it was ever depicted or implied that sex/sexual acts engaged in whilst prostituting were ever physically painful for the prostitute

1 = Yes

2 = No



3 = N/A (no sex/sexual acts)

999 = Don't know/can't tell

68. Write in the corresponding number for if the prostitute ever depicted or implied concern about sexually transmitted infections

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell

69. Write in the corresponding number for if the prostitute depicted or implied that condoms needed to be regularly used when engaging in transactional sex

1 = Yes

2 = No

999 = Don't know/can't tell