

Comparative Canadian Online News Coverage Analysis of Sex Trafficking Reported Cases in Ontario and Nova Scotia

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Abstract—Sex trafficking is a worldwide crisis that requires trauma-informed and survivor-centered media attention to accurately disseminate information. Much of the previous literature of sex trafficking tends to focus on frequency of incidents, intervention, and support strategies for survivors, with few of them looking to how the media is conducting their reporting on sex trafficking cases to the public. Utilizing data of reports from the media of cases of sex trafficking in the two Canadian provinces with the highest cases of sex trafficking, Ontario and Nova Scotia, we sought to analyze the similarities and differences of how sex trafficking cases were being reported. A total of 20 articles were examined, with 10 based within the province of Ontario and the remaining 10 from the province of Nova Scotia. We coded in two processes, first, who the article was about, and second, the framing and content inclusion. The results suggest that there is high usage, and reliance of voices and images of authority, with male people of color being shown as the perpetrators, and white women being shown as the survivors. These findings can aid in the expansion of trauma-informed, survivor-centered media literacy of reports of sex trafficking to provide accurate insights, and further developing robust methods to intersectional approaches to reporting cases of sex trafficking.

Keywords—Sex Trafficking, media coverage, Canada sex trafficking, content analysis.

I. INTRODUCTION

HUMAN trafficking has received a huge amount of media attention in the course of the last twenty years. As a horrific crime, human trafficking has been deemed a worldwide crisis that explicitly targets and exploits millions of people [1]. Specifically in Canada there has been an influx of educational programming and funding being granted to prevent human trafficking, protect victims, prosecute offenders, and to continue working in partnership with domestic and international organizations to stop human trafficking. In 2019, the Government of Canada granted \$75 million worth of funding towards its national strategy to combat human trafficking, which included a Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline and a multilingual 24/7 service that connects victims and their supporters to various agencies of support throughout the country [2]. In July of 2020, the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity Canada announced another \$19 million in funds to support agencies across Canada who are directly working with victims of trafficking [2]. There are various forms of trafficking of humans, such as labor, domestic servitude, and

sex trafficking, the latter receiving greater government, media, and organizational attention. Even with this increased attention, sex trafficking remains to be a crime with very few convictions and seems to be understood by many misconceptions and myths [3]. In fact, research from [4] found that 73% of Canadians believe that sex traffickers will abduct their victims off the streets, yet the reality is that victims are often groomed, lured, and recruited, likely by someone they know.

As much as we loathe to admit it, media tends to be a medium in which many folks, both young and old, receive their education about a certain news-worthy topic. With that, it is important that we analyze how sex trafficking is being depicted and reported. The paper will define the Canadian the statistical reports of domestic sex trafficking, the need for media analysis within the provinces of Ontario and Nova Scotia, a literature review of the current problems and treatments for victims of sex trafficking and will conclude with an investigation of how sex trafficking is depicted in media case reports. The aim of this paper is to analyze the representations of sex trafficking cases being reported in the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Nova Scotia, with a focus on the characteristics of who the article is being written about, how the article is framed, whose voices are within the article, and if the article discusses the power and control layers of trauma and manipulation inflicted on victims of sex trafficking.

As a form of human trafficking, sex trafficking involves recruiting, transferring, or restricting victim movement for sexual exploitation through various forms of manipulation and coercion [2]. While other forms of human trafficking, such as labor exploitation, does occur in Canada, sexual exploitation is more prevalent, particularly in urban areas [4]. Statistics Canada [4] found that 93% of victims of sex trafficking are Canadian citizens or permanent residents, women and girls make up 97% of all reported cases of sex trafficking, and despite being only 4% of the population, Indigenous women, and girls account for over 50% of victims in Canada. Those last statistics are extremely important to identify due to many misconceptions about sex trafficking tend to involve abduction and strangers. It is not to say that abduction and trafficking committed by strangers does not exist, although many forms of media would suggest otherwise, it is just extremely rare in Canada. The two provinces that have the highest rates of sex trafficking are Ontario (0.9 incidents per 100,000 population), which is in

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central Canada as the country's most populous province, and Nova Scotia, a maritime densely populated province (1.0 incidents per 100,000 population) [4]. Ontario is considered "the Hub" of human trafficking in Canada, with 2/3 of cases reported from Ontario, and [5] asserts to ongoing research that Nova Scotia is utilized as a corridor to transport Atlantic victims to central urban areas, which explains the high rates of trafficking in a smaller, less urban province.

To many, it may come as a surprise that the small maritime, fishing province of Nova Scotia has one of the highest rates of trafficking in Canada, which only reinforces the sentiment of how entrenched the misconceptions about trafficking only happening in certain urban locations. One could suggest that the misconceptions and myths surrounding sex trafficking could be used by media, and communities deflect any sort of discomfort that could arise with knowing that the trafficking of young women and girls is happening in our backyards. It is crucial that not only the government continues to fund multiple areas of support and education, but also that the media depictions of trafficking also provide accurate insights as to what the true prevalence of sex trafficking looks like in Canada. Mainstream media can shape the ways communities, societies and cultures understand and shape conversations about sexual violence, such that, the way in which sexual assault cases are portrayed in news media has been shown to contribute to victim blaming [6]. Therefore, this provincial media content analysis will provide a greater understanding of the reporting differences on cases of sex trafficking in varying provinces. It is predicted that there will be a prominent presence of authoritative voices throughout the article, and that information about sex trafficking comes from police forces, and government reported statistics. It is also predicted that many of the articles will reinforce generalizations of victims being white women, and perpetrators being males, and fail to engage into critical insight about the vulnerabilities, and stigma connected to this exploitative, criminal activity.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Victims of sex trafficking experience grooming and luring tactics at the hands of their trafficker, who is often someone that has gained their trust. Sex traffickers employ various manipulative methods to control and coerce their victim, which creates a distrust of external supports, such as family, friends, service providers, and law enforcement. In a literature review of *Entry, Progression, Exit, and Service Provision for Survivors of Sex Trafficking: Implications for Effective Interventions*, [7] examines how victims become involved in sex trafficking, dynamics of being trafficked, the procedure for leaving sex trafficking, and supports and services for victims/survivors. Within the various reports, and empirical studies, Hammond and McGlone [7] conclude that effective prevention education, and harm reduction strategies need to be applied as a multisystem approach to support victims of sex trafficking. These approaches need to not only be informed by research, and expert service provider advice, but also, to be centered on the experience of the sex trafficking victims. Hearing from victims is imperative to creating a successful program of support, as well as an effective educational campaign that brings the real-

lived experiences to the forefront.

A news reporter's goal is to compose a compelling story that brings to light raw emotions, that builds a sense of connection that the viewer/reader can relate to on a deeper level. In a systemic review, [8] investigates various peer-reviewed articles, and expert recommendations on how often risk of violence occurs to victims of sex trafficking, and the impacts that it has on victims' physical, mental, or sexual health. The systemic review concludes that women and girls as victims of sex trafficking experience high levels of physical and sexual violence, and these experiences of physical and sexual trauma result in higher levels of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Victims of sex trafficking who were involved with sex trafficking for longer periods of time not only have higher levels of mental health distress, but also increased risk of HIV infection [8]. These findings, as a result of an analysis of numerous reports, assert that the impacts of being a victim of sex trafficking is tremendously difficult both psychologically and sexually, and can lead to lifelong efforts to cope. This study did not investigate the external, social impacts of stigma and shame, but with high rates of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder, ranging from 19.5-100% of victims, it is fundamental that we bring these actual mental and sexual health impacts of victims into the discussions and media representations of sex trafficking.

Reporting of the news needs not to only reside within the emotional connecting of what is being reported on, but also, the framing context of reporting can guide the direction of how the problem of trafficking should be approached. In *The Social Construction of Sex Trafficking: Ideology and Institutionalization of a Moral Crusade*, [9] evaluates the core claims of dominant forces in the anti-trafficking campaign, and how these claims then shape and enforce state policies within the United States of America. While analyzing various campaigns, activist statements, and relevant legislation, [9] found that much of the discourse about sex trafficking is largely based on the innocent, white, child being torn away from their family and forced into exploitation, which is not to say that this act does not happen, but it is statistically rare. The author also states that many reports and examples within the analyzed media failed to account for the root causes of trafficking occurring, which attend to larger systems of oppression, and rather exploited the discourse of individual immediate situations [9]. This research is important for the analysis and comparison of contemporary reports of human trafficking because of the many systems of oppression that exist. Even within Canada the ignorance of oppressive systems, such as economic disparity, genocide of Indigenous peoples, racism, and ethnocentrism, which further isolate, and derail from the true root causes of human trafficking. This ignorance allows the problem of trafficking to continue.

At the center of many comments on reports of sex trafficking is the need to know who the perpetrator is, and that they are facing legal repercussions for their crimes. Yet, the survivor's experience and the support they need to heal tends to be disregarded. Within the research, [10] investigates what the key aftercare services were for domestic minor sex

trafficking (DMST) survivors. The staff from the survivor's aftercare services identified that aftercare needs to focus on immediate necessities, such as health care, safety, mental health, and shelter, as well as long-term and on-going supports, such as substance abuse services, family reunification and crisis management [10]. The extensive amount of psychological, emotional, and physiological damage that sex trafficking survivors experience is highlighted from the variety of needs identified from the providers who work with these survivors. Discussions about sex trafficking should not start and end when an alleged perpetrator is caught. The media reports should reflect on the ongoing need to engage in discussions about the impacts of sex trafficking on survivors and highlight service care providers experiences and demands for where further supports, and funding is needed.

Many of the above studies were looking into sex trafficking in various countries worldwide, such as the United States of America, Nepal, India, Thailand, Cambodia, and general global statements connected to the United Nations. With the aim of this paper analyzing Canadian media of sex trafficking, it is imperative to highlight the Canadian survivor's perspectives of trafficking. Since children and youth represent the largest population of domestic sex trafficking survivors, and these survivors are greatly overrepresented in the child welfare system, The study by [11], *Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in a Southern Ontario Region: Police File Review Exploring Victim Characteristics, Trafficking Experiences, and the Intersection With Child Welfare*, wanted to examine the intersectional identities of populations of who is being trafficked for sex in southern Ontario, Canada. Through their data analysis of 223 survivors, they confirmed that, "victims of sex trafficking are most commonly domestic and living in Canada at the time of their recruitment, rather than international. Consistent with region demographics, victims were ethnically diverse, with nearly half identifying as being 'non-white'" [11]. Many media images have imprinted many misconceptions about sex trafficking in Canada, i.e., the white girl being stolen from strangers, or international girls being brought into Canada. This research highlights and debunks two prevalent misconceptions about sex trafficking: The Canadian survivors are racially diverse and domestic. These conclusions will provide insight to our analysis methods as a representational base line of what the reality is, versus what Canadian media depicts and reports on.

III. METHODS

Website selection for this analysis was completed through two Google internet searches on such terms as, "sex trafficking reports cases Ontario" and "sex trafficking reports cases Nova Scotia". Sites were screened and selected based on the reported cases being about sex trafficking specifically, reporting location (Ontario or Nova Scotia), the media coverage being about a specific case(s) of sex trafficking, and that the media report occurred during the time frame of 2016- February 2021. Omitted websites were coverage about funding, general human and sex trafficking information, educational events, legislation and program announcements, government human trafficking

strategies, services and supports for survivors of trafficking, and reports about cases of sex trafficking that were completed outside of Ontario or Nova Scotia. Ten articles for each province, Ontario and Nova Scotia, were selected to be analyzed based on the described parameters.

A. Analytic Framework and Process

Content analysis employs an observational, non-interactive data collecting approach to the naturalistic, and authentic representation of communicative language (media, books, interviews, articles, historical documents, etc.) [12]. This framework allows researchers to analyze the existence, and relationships within the discourse of the communicative medium to discover themes and underlying concepts within the selected materials [13]. In analyzing the reported provincial cases of sex trafficking, key content analysis was conducted with two processes, first, who the article was about, and second, the framing and content inclusion. The first analysis approach examines who the report was about, such as, if the article were about the survivor/victim, or the alleged perpetrator, and the descriptive aspects of the individual(s) mentioned, such as their gender/sex, race/ethnicity, previous interactions with the criminal justice system, origin location and age. The second analysis approach will address the article framing and content, such as what, if any, pictures were used, if was the article using negative (victim blaming or shaming) framing, or positive (humanizing the survivor) framing of survivors trauma, whose voices were heard in the article (authority or social service/agency), and finally, how was sex trafficking being described in the article (gendered, societal problem, and/or addressing systems of power, and control, i.e., the grooming process).

IV. RESULTS

A. Authoritative Images and Voices Spotlighted

Each of the 20 articles were analyzed for the visual imagery that was placed on the report page. Visual imagery was coded based on six categories, those being, police/police affiliated (officers themselves, police vehicle, police insignia, police equipment), object/environment (buildings, roadways), victim/survivor, stock photos of victims, agency (members of that agency, agency promotional material), or alleged perpetrator. Out of the 10 articles analyzed in Ontario, Table I, there were 21 images.

TABLE I
ONTARIO IMAGERY

Category	Number of Images	% of Total
Police/Police Affiliated	6	28.5%
Object/Environment	2	9.5%
Victim/Survivor	4	19.0%
Stock Photos of Victims	2	9.5%
Agency	3	6.7%
Perpetrator	4	19.0%

Six of the images were police/police affiliated (28.5%), four were of the victim/survivor (19%), four were that of the alleged perpetrator (19%), there were three images of an agency (14.2%), stock photos of victims, and object/environment had

two images each (9.5%). This reveals that within Ontario there is a moderate level of police visual representation used in the images four articles written about sex trafficking. The 10 articles analyzed in Nova Scotia, Table II, revealed 15 images, all coded on the same scales.

TABLE II
NOVA SCOTIA IMAGERY

Category	Number of Images	% of Total
Police/Police Affiliated	6	40.0%
Object/Environment	1	6.7%
Victim/Survivor	5	33.3%
Stock Photos of Victims	2	13.3%
Agency	1	6.7%
Perpetrator	0	0%

The analysis found six police/police affiliated images (40.0%), five images containing the victim/survivor (33.3%), two images containing stock photos of victims (13.3%), in fact, the same stock photo was used in each article, object/environment as well as agency each had one image (6.7%), and in all the Nova Scotia articles there were no images of the alleged perpetrator (0%). The presence of police in the Nova Scotia articles was quite a staggering statistic and was significantly higher than the Ontario amount, 40.0% and 28.5%, respectively. Each of the 20 articles was also coded for whose voice is being acknowledged or quoted in the articles. The two sets of voices that were coded in this analysis were that of authoritative voices (police, government), and service agency voices (agencies, and researchers). Within the Ontario articles (see Table III, there were 20 instances of voices being acknowledged or quoted, which resulted in 14 voices of authority (70.0%), and six voices of service agencies (30.0%). This reveals that the police and government are given much greater platform to speak about sex trafficking compared to those who work with victims and survivors on an ongoing basis.

TABLE III
ONTARIO VOICE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Category of Voice	Number of Voices	% of Total
Voice of Authority	14	70.0%
Voice of Service Agency and/or Researchers	6	30.0%

TABLE IV
NOVA SCOTIA VOICE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Category of Voice	Number of Voices	% of Total
Voice of Authority	14	66.6%
Voice of Service Agency and/or Researcher	7	33.3%

Within Nova Scotia articles (see Table IV), there were 21 instances where voices were being brought into the articles, which resulted in 14 voices of authority (66.6%), and seven service agency voices (33.3%). Within both Ontario and Nova Scotia voices of authority dominate the discussions of sex trafficking.

The final aspect that was assessed within the context of authority was that of how the writers described sex trafficking within their articles. Two description patterns were coded for

all 20 articles The first is if the article acknowledged that sex trafficking as a gendered societal problem, which was coded by if there was mention about general statistics about the gendered identity of the victims and alleged perpetrators and if there were certain aspects of people's identity that increased their vulnerability to either being trafficked or engage in trafficking others. The second line of description that was being coded for in these articles was if there was any addressing of systems of power and control that occur within sex trafficking, this includes descriptions of manipulation, grooming and luring, relationship connections, discussions of barriers such as stigma, threats, and judgment that victims face towards coming forward, and how victims are exploited by their traffickers. In Ontario (see Table V), there were 25 instances where descriptions of sex trafficking occurred. Of those 25 instances, nine were about sex trafficking as a gendered societal problem (36.0%), and 16 were instances of addressing systems of power and control (64.0%). Within Nova Scotia (see Table VI), there were 13 instances of sex trafficking descriptions, which resulted in four of them acknowledging sex trafficking as a gendered societal problem (30.7%), and nine were instances addressing systems of power and control within sex trafficking (69.2%). Within both provinces there were greater discussions about how power and control play into the victimization of the folks who are involved in sex trafficking. What this shows us is that there are more discussions about power and control rather than acknowledging the realities of who is involved as an alleged perpetrator in sex trafficking, and who experiences more vulnerabilities to being trafficked themselves.

TABLE V
ONTARIO SEX TRAFFICKING DESCRIPTIONS

Category	Number of Occurrences	% of Total
Gendered Societal Problems	9	36.0%
Addressing Systems of Power and Control	16	64.0%

Both provinces exemplified a noticeable presence of authority and power for how sex trafficking was described, and who it was described by. Whether that be the images, the voices that were heard, or how sex trafficking is defined, the underlying message is that this is a problem that is predominantly dealt with and discussed by authoritative peoples who oversee the land that they serve.

B. Viewing Race Imagery

In addition to the analysis of the authoritative voices being used and visualized throughout the majority of the sex trafficking articles, another analysis was observed based on race/ethnicity acknowledgement. Throughout both the sex trafficking report cases from Ontario and Nova Scotia, there were zero mentions of identity factors connecting to race/ethnicity for either the alleged perpetrators or victims of sex trafficking. Another factor to note was that race/ethnicity was not explicitly discussed in any of the articles from Nova Scotia or Ontario.

The only relative acknowledgment of race that occurred was through the images that were provided in the articles. In fact,

only alleged perpetrator photos that were provided in the articles were that of people of color, there were no white alleged perpetrator photos included in any of the articles. Due to the research acknowledged in the previous section [11], one would infer that within Ontario there would be more people of color being represented as survivors of sexual violence. But, when it came to photos that were included of the victims, they were all white presenting women and girls, which leads us to our next arising theme, of sex/gender identity.

TABLE VI
NOVA SCOTIA SEX TRAFFICKING DESCRIPTIONS

Category	Number of Occurrences	% of Total
Gendered Societal Problems	4	30.7%
Addressing Systems of Power and Control	9	69.3%

C. Gender Characterization

A final aspect of analysis was that of the gendered representations of alleged perpetrators and victims of sex trafficking in Nova Scotia and Ontario. Within the Ontario articles identified characteristics, gender/sex was a recognized characteristic 35.7% of the time, and of that, the victims' sex/gender identity being indicated nine times (45.0%) all of those being female, and the alleged perpetrators sex/gender identity was indicated 11 times (55.0%) all, but one was indicated as male. These Ontario sex/gender identities were relatively close in score, but the reports in Nova Scotia tell a very different story. Within the Nova Scotia articles identified characteristics, gender/sex was a recognized characteristic 30.6% of the time, with victim's sex/gender identity being indicated six times (28.5%) all of those being female, and the alleged perpetrators sex/gender identity was indicated 15 times (71.4%), all of those being male. An explanation to this vast discrepancy could be due to a major case of sex trafficking in Nova Scotia that involved three male alleged perpetrators, but no victim identification was indicated because of a publication ban to protect the victims. Since there is no way of knowing at this time how many victims were involved in those cases, we cannot accurately hypothesize how that victim identity number and percentage could grow.

In the previous theme about race identity, there were intersections noted about the alleged perpetrators and victim's identity regarding how race and gender were depicted as an alleged perpetrator or victim. All the identified victims in both Nova Scotia and Ontario, were female. All the alleged perpetrators in Nova Scotia were male, and all but one alleged perpetrator identified in Ontario were males (75.0%). According to the research conducted throughout these provincial articles on sex trafficking, it would seem as if there was a gendered trend to who typically is a victim of sex trafficking, and who typically is perpetrator of sex trafficking. Unfortunately, these kinds of gendered analysis did not occur as frequently as the discussion on the manipulative and exploitive forces within sex trafficking.

According to Table V, the discussions about the gendered societal problems of Ontario sex trafficking only occurred roughly 36.0% of the time, compared to the discussions about

systems of power and control happening 64.0%. The statistical numbers are quite similar within Table VI, the Nova Scotia sex trafficking gendered societal problem descriptions, only occurring 30.7% of the time, in comparison to the addressing systems of power and control discussions happening 69.2% of the time. The observation surrounding what these gender discussions are delving into, is more so that of the female identified victim and less so of male identified alleged perpetrators. Many of the articles within both provinces, painted this picture of a vulnerable young girls needing protection because they are being manipulated and taken away from their families. The identification of male indicated perpetrators as a gendered societal problem is nonexistent in any of the articles analyzed.

V. DISCUSSION

Throughout the analysis of the 20 sex trafficking case report articles from Ontario and Nova Scotia, it became apparent that the primary voices worthy of a platform were that from an authoritative position, and with very little Canadian discourse on the discussions of intersections of race and gender when it comes to who is being victimized, engaging in, and who is being reported on. Our findings found that 40% of sex trafficking article imagery from Nova Scotia, and 28.5% of Ontario articles, the majority in both cases contained images of police and police affiliated objects, and that the writers of these reports utilized voices of authority 66.6% of the time in Nova Scotia and 70% of the time in Ontario. Even when we have research that indicates the importance of hearing from researchers and service providers [7], most writers still use the police as a source of information. As much of the information comes from the police and governing bodies, there is a depth of information that service providers and researchers can speak to that is not represented by the reported cases of sex trafficking. It should not come as a surprise that there is a plethora of barriers that victims experience if they are thinking about leaving their trafficker, let alone reporting their trafficker to police.

As Canada's largest agency serving youth who are homeless, trafficked or at risk, Covenant House conducted a survivor centered analysis that highlighted the multi-level barriers that impact one's ability to report. Some of these barriers include structural factors (discrimination, colonization, gender, race, poverty, public awareness, and stigma), psychological factors (limited social support network, isolation, difficulties adapting to life outside of the sex industry, trust, past and current trauma, fear, substance use, complicity or guilt, low levels of value and self-esteem) [14]. The intersections of authority, race and gender were key concerns from [14] when they noted the gendered patterns of violence and inadequate response by police brought forward the feeling from one participant that, "We're failing women...Society tells me white young girls are valuable way above me as a visible minority and till this day, my minority status is valued less than whites" [14]. These participants reflections on the supports aligns with much of the key identified problems of this study. Since survivors of sex trafficking are noting that there are and has been discrimination

occurring at the hands of the police, criminal justice system, and limitations in service provider scope of practice, then we must change the ways in which society is educated about sex trafficking, but also how we provide support that is actually improving survivors' lives.

The fact that race/ethnicity was not discussed in any context throughout all 20 articles, and only used as medium to which we observe, solidifies the need to engage in deeper, intersectional discussions about the lack of representation in media, and within those who are able to access supports. There certainly is a fine line when it comes to discussing the portrayal in media of race/ethnicity in an ethnocentric Western culture, but we cannot simply ignore the systemic intersections of oppression. Sex trafficking is not going to be solved by ignoring the fact that white presenting women were solely described in this research, or that the only images of perpetrators viewed were that of people of color in Ontario. Acknowledgements of these intersections, and systemic oppressions will only enrich the conversations about sex trafficking and highlight the blind spots for not only the media, but also for researchers, criminal justice systems, and the supports and services.

VI. LIMITATIONS

Four potential limitations to this research include the limitations to reported statistics, publication bans, media reporting bias, and the editing capabilities within online media reporting. The process of gathering statistics about sex trafficking is extremely difficult, especially in a country where trafficking was not part of legislation till 2005 [4]. Many victims choose not to report to police due to a variety of barriers as highlighted in the discussions. The ability to understand the full scope of who is impacted by sex trafficking may never be fully known due to the underground and hidden nature of this criminal activity. There are also potential limitations to researching media reports of the victims of sex trafficking due to publication bans, one of which we noted within some of the Nova Scotia reports. While publication bans are completed with the fullest intent to protect the victim, it creates a difficulty of understanding, and possibly skewing data for content researchers. The media's main job is to create enticing articles with click-bait titles using the captivation of raw human emotion to do so. Unfortunately, this "raw" human emotion is shaped by our patriarchal standards, and only those *deemed* worthy of a great story, have their story told. The experiences of innocent young, white girls being victimized by the hands of a "monster" can be slapped onto the front page while thousands of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls receive the silent treatment. Finally, within online reporting spaces, articles can be altered, edited, as more details of the story become known, or the writer makes an error. It was noted in a couple articles that errors were made and corrected, which could have impacted the data collection.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, sex trafficking is a systemic problem impacting the lives of thousands of Canadians [4]. Multiple

levels of content analysis highlight that Ontario and Nova Scotia prioritize authoritative imagery, voices and discussion framing to be connected to power. Race and gender intersections of sex trafficking need to not only be recognized, but also investigated on much deeper levels if we are ever going to support those who are exploited by this organized crime. In order to truly support survivors and possibly put an end to sex trafficking in Canada, it is crucial that not only the government continues to fund multiple areas of support and education, but also that the media depictions of trafficking cases need to provide accurate insights as to what the true prevalence of sex trafficking looks like in Canada. Survivors of this horrific form of trauma suffer immediate, on-going, and potentially long-term consequences from the trauma itself. If the media fails to investigate, and do their due diligence, of a deep, investigative report of the intersectional dimensions of trauma from multiple voices, then survivors will continue to fall through the gaps.

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