

Police perceptions, attitudes and interactions: The Case of Racialized Indoor Sex workers in Canada

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Abstract

A number of high-profile events in recent years have focused attention on the issues surrounding the police and marginalized women in Canada. More specifically, while the number of missing and murdered Indigenous sex workers has not been established, there are concerns and accusations that police services have not acted to protect for example, the vulnerabilities of Indigenous and racialized sex workers. In this presentation I will draw upon in-depth interviews conducted with 40 racialized female sex workers who are involved in various indoor sectors of Canadian sex industry to discuss these women's experience with the police. The focus of this presentation will be on retelling the stories of racialized sex workers and how they think the police perceive women of colour who are engaged in sex work. My main observation, based on these interviews, is that police perceptions, attitudes and interactions towards racialized sex workers falls within a spectrum - with the ideology of a "victim" on one end and the classification of a "criminal" on the other end. I will also highlight the impact this has on the everyday lives of racialized female sex workers and the strategies that these women use to navigate their precarious position as marginalized individuals.