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University of the Witwatersrand

"At Your Own Risk": Narratives of Zimbabwean Migrant Sex Workers in Hillbrow and Discourses of Vulnerability, Agency, and Power

This business is trick sometimes. It is dangerous and nice at the same time. – Skara

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DECLARATION

I, Greta Schuler, am submitting this work to fulfill the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at any other university.

15 February 2013

Greta Schuler

ABSTRACT

This study explores the self-representations of cross-border migrant, female sex workers in Johannesburg and compares these representations to those created by public discourses around cross-border migration, sex work, and gender. With a focus on issues of agency, vulnerability, and power, the study questions the impact of prevalent representations of these women by others on their individual self-representations. The participatory approach of this study builds on previous participatory research projects with migrant sex workers in Johannesburg and employs creative writing as a methodology to generate narratives and thus adds to literature about alternative methodologies for reaching currently marginalised and under-researched groups. Organisations such as Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) and Sisonke Sex Worker Movement have worked with sex workers to generate digital stories for advocacy; however, academic research employing storytelling as a methodology has not been done with migrant sex workers in South Africa. While existing evidence indicates that cross-border migrant, female sex workers are often marginalised by state and non-state actors professing to assist them, this study emphasizes the voices of the women themselves. Over the course of three months, I conducted creative writing workshops with five female Zimbabwean sex workers in Hillbrow, Johannesburg; the women generated stories in these workshops that became the basis for one-on-one unstructured interviews. I compared the self-representations that emerged from this process with the representations of migrant sex workers that I determined from a desk review of the websites of organisations that contribute to trafficking and sex work discourses in South Africa.

With the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill close to becoming law in South Africa and the prevalent assumption that systemic trafficking problems are related to the sex industry and irregular migration, developing a better understanding of migrants involved in sex work in South Africa is particularly important. Furthermore, a national focus on reducing and even preventing immigration—and the stigma attached to migrants—adds urgency to the elucidation of the lives of migrants. This study investigates how female Zimbabwean sex workers in Johannesburg—often positioned as vulnerable and sometimes misidentified as trafficked—see themselves in a country increasingly concerned with issues of (anti-)immigration and (anti-)trafficking. Furthermore, sex work is criminalized in South Africa and social mores attach stigma to prostitution. Contrary to assumptions that all sex workers are forced into the

industry or foreign sex workers trafficked into the country, the participants in this study spoke of active choices in their lives—including choices about their livelihood and their movement—and describe their vulnerabilities and strengths. Perhaps the most striking similarity between participants was the women's acknowledgement of the dangers they face and the decisions they make, weighing risks and gains. This recognition of agency ran through the six key themes that I generated through thematic analysis: Conflicting Representations of Sex Work, Stigma and Double Existence, Health and Safety, Importance of Independence, Morality of Remittances, and Mobility. Throughout the analysis, I argue that the participants in the study present themselves as aware of the dangers they face and calculating the risks. The participants responded enthusiastically to the creative writing methodology—through their stories, discussions, and interviews, they portrayed a complex, at times ambiguous, portrait of migrant sex workers in South Africa. While recognizing their double vulnerability—as illegally engaging in sex work and, often, illegally residing in South Africa, they also emphasized their strength and agency.

Table of Contents

DECLARATION **2**

ABSTRACT **3**

LIST OF FIGURES **8**

LIST OF TABLES **8**

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION **9**

1.1 Key Contexts 10

1.2 Research Question and Objectives 13

1.3 Introduction to the Study 13

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW **18**

2.1 Migration 19

2.2 Johannesburg: Urban and South African Contexts 23

2.3 Migration and Sex Work 27

2.4 Health, Migration, and Sex Work 31

2.5 Trafficking 34

2.6 Narrative and Representation 38

2.7 Conclusion 42

2.8 Justification 44

2.9 Research Question 45

2.10 Research Objectives 45

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN **46**

3.1 Overview 46

3.2 Review of Discourses 48

3.3 Workshops and Interviews 49

3.3.1 Participants *49*

3.3.2 Workshop Design *51*

3.3.3 Unstructured Interviews *56*

3.4 REFLEXIVITY: THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER 57

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS 58

3.6 ANALYSIS 60

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION 62

4.1 INTRODUCTION 62

4.2 DESK REVIEW 66

4.2.1 Introduction *66*

4.2.2 The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women *67*

4.2.3 Embrace Dignity *68*

4.2.4 Not For Sale *70*

4.2.5 Salvation Army South Africa *71*

4.2.6 New Life Centre *72*

4.2.7 International Organization for Migration *74*

4.2.8 Conclusion *76*

4.3 WORKSHOP AND INTERVIEW RESULTS 77

4.3.1 Conflicting Representations of Sex Work *77*

4.3.2 Stigma and Doubled Existence *98*

4.3.3 Health and Safety *113*

4.3.4 Importance of Independence *123*

4.3.5 Morality of Remittances *131*

4.3.6 Mobility *133*

4.4 COMPARISON OF REPRESENTATIONS 136

4.4.1 Overview *136*

4.4.2 The Self-Sufficient Victim *138*

4.4.3 Corrupt Provider *140*

4.4.4 Need *141*

4.4.5 Danger *141*

4.4.6 Conclusion *142*

CHAPTER 5: LIMITATIONS **144**

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION **147**

6.1 KEY FINDINGS 147

6.1.1 Migrant Sex Worker Self-Representations *147*

6.1.2 Discrepancies in Language *148*

6.1.3 Methodology *148*

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS 149

REFERENCES **151**

APPENDIX A **163**

APPENDIX B **164**

APPENDIX C **166**

APPENDIX D **167**

APPENDIX E **168**

APPENDIX F **169**

List of Figures

Figure 1: Chidhavazo, "Writing a Letter to Young Women" 17

Figure 2: Clara, "To Young Girls" 90

Figure 3: Skara, "How I faced My Fear" 111

Figure 4: Lungile, "The Greatest Threat to my Health in South Africa" 117

Figure 5: Skara, "The Big Knife" 123

Figure 6: Lungile, "The Time I Surprised Myself" 130

List of Tables

Table 1: Main Themes from Stories, Discussions, and Interviews 63

Table 2: Participants' Backgrounds 65

Table 3: Main Themes of Desk Review 66

Table 4: Comparisons 137

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

For trusteth wel, it is an impossible
That any clerk wol speke good of wyves,
But if it be of holy seintes lyves,
Ne of noon other woman never the mo.

(Chaucer, lines 688-691)

With these words Geoffrey Chaucer's medieval Wife of Bath reminds a room full of men that it is men who write history, acting as authorities on life, and men who place women into the categories of virginal saint or wicked woman. However, the Wife of Bath declares that the "authority" of the clerks does not reflect her lived experience: "Experience, though noon auctoritee / Were in this world, were right ynogh to me / To speke of wo that is in mariage" (Chaucer, lines 1-3). In her prologue, the Wife of Bath speaks to representation, story telling, migration, and sexual relations—all issues at the heart of this study in Johannesburg, South Africa.

In medieval Britain, at the dawn of the modern English language, Geoffrey Chaucer played with various representations of a group of pilgrims on a journey in the *Canterbury Tales*. He revealed various aspects about each character—and the society in which they lived—by deftly observing their interactions, the stories they share, how they respond to one another's stories, and what they explicitly say about themselves. Few of the characters have mystified scholars as much as the Wife of Bath. Throughout hundreds of years of criticism of the famous poem, the Wife of Bath has faced sundry characterizations as an unhappy widow, an independent businesswoman, a promiscuous sybarite, and a cunning prostitute. Chaucer himself contrasts the Wife of Bath, who has been married five times and welcomes the sixth, with the Prioress, supposedly a chaste, religious lady. This fifteenth-century dichotomy of the virtuous woman and the prostitute—the virgin Prioress traveling with nuns versus the woman who has known five men and is traveling alone—has survived hundreds of years. Today women still face certain stigmas because of their movement and sexual choices. But as Chaucer revealed in the *Canterbury Tales* by playing with forms of representation, dichotomies in popular discourses offer representations that are often vastly different from an individual self-representation.

Individual narratives, especially when paired with other forms of representation, produce complex portraits. The Wife of Bath highlights how representations of women by others obscure the complexities of their lives; she retorts with a complex picture of herself as a mobile and independent woman. This study, too, provides a nuanced look at a group of women often stigmatized for their sexual choices and their position away from "home." This study looks at how migrant sex workers in Johannesburg represent themselves as opposed to popular representations of them by others.

This section discusses key contexts to the study—sex work, migration, and trafficking in South Africa—which will continue in the Literature Review, states the research question and primary research objectives, and introduces the study.

1.1 Key Contexts

Representing a person silences her in a way (Webb 2009, 104). Self-representation is therefore a way of breaking this silence, as the Wife of Bath does in her prologue. This study presents a similarly complex portrait of five cross-border migrant female sex workers living and working in Johannesburg. Centuries after the Wife of Bath, these women still face stigmas as women traveling alone, choosing to use sex as a way to become financially independent. A dichotomy not too different than the one Chaucer set up between the Prioress and the Wife of Bath also influences discourses about them—the dichotomy of the "whore and the matron" (Millett 1970, 38). Representations of cross-border migrant women, whether in fiction or aid campaigns or academic writing, often depict vulnerable creatures in need of assistance or even rescue (Pamary 2010, Gould 2008). This ascribed vulnerability is partially derived from the migrant woman's distance from the home, the traditionally normative place of the woman (Palmary 2010). This non-normative behaviour of traveling alone also pathologises the migrant woman; thus, these discourses taint her as somewhat deviant. For cross-border migrant women who enter sex work, the aforementioned attributes seem emphasized—the victim to be rescued and the criminal to be deported. But how do migrant sex workers see themselves? This question is particularly important in the South African context today. Violent outbreaks of xenophobia in recent years added urgency to research on migration in South Africa. More research on this marginalised group—whose risk for HIV is heightened because they are sex workers and

because they are migrants—is also important in a region like southern Africa, with a tradition of high levels of migration and a high prevalence of HIV. Furthermore, the growing concern about human trafficking for sexual exploitation and the lack of data on human trafficking for sexual exploitation, which increases the conflation of migrant sex workers and trafficking victims, requires a closer look at the "hidden" lives of migrant sex workers.

Migrant sex workers' agency is important to examine since it is key to differentiating between people who are smuggled from people who are trafficked. People who are smuggled choose to leave their homes while people who are trafficked are forced or coerced to leave—or leave their homes under false pretenses only to be forced or coerced into exploitative labour conditions. The internationally accepted definition of trafficking comes from the United Nation's 2001 *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (also known as the Palermo Protocol). The Palermo Protocol defines trafficking as:

> *The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation*.
>
> (United Nations 2001)

Smuggling, on the other hand, involves the transportation of persons who are willingly transported without the means of threat, force, or coercion mentioned in the above definition of trafficking. The line between the two can become blurry when people who are smuggled—choosing, even paying, to be transported—are then forced into an exploitative situation. However, the main distinguishing factor is whether the person *chose* to travel irregularly, thus being smuggled, or was *forced* or *coerced* or even mislead to travel, thus being trafficked.

In response to both U.S. pressure and its obligations as a signatory of the Palermo Protocol, South Africa has developed legislation against trafficking. The Parliamentary Select Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development is still debating the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill, which was first published in 2010. The Committee

raised concerns in November 2012 on the bill's prescribed assessment of those claiming to be victims, among other disputed clauses in the bill (Parliamentary Monitoring Group 2012). The bill provides that "foreign victims of trafficking" will be allowed "regardless of his or her status, to remain in the Republic for a non-renewable recovery and reflection period not exceeding 90 days."[1] If the foreign victim both cooperates with the investigation and prosecution of the case of trafficking and the foreign victim would be in danger of being trafficked again if sent back to his or her home, then he or she may apply for temporary residence. One of the issues about which the Committee raised concerns was the potential for migrants to abuse the system, claiming victimhood to gain access to services or a legal stay in the country. The Committee's questions point to both the potential to conflate migrant sex workers with trafficking victims and the government's resistance to allowing more foreigners to legalise their stay in South Africa. The last ten years, South African migration policy has moved toward a skills-based labour migration approach and has "clapped down" on irregular migration (Crush 2001, 11). The 2011 Amendment to South Africa's Immigration Act increased restrictions on non-South Africans seeking work permits. [2]

For many migrants seeking work in South Africa, Hillbrow—a high-density suburb near the city centre—is a key entry point into Johannesburg and South Africa. Not only does Hillbrow have a large migrant population but it is also home to a number of brothels and areas where street-based sex workers are known to work. Richter et al. found that 51.9% of sex workers surveyed in Hillbrow were cross-border migrants (Richter et al. 2012). While Richter et al.'s survey was rigorous, the exact size of the sex worker population in Hillbrow—and in all of South Africa—remains unknown; there are no official records since the work is illegal. Furthermore, the diversity and fluidity of the business—sex workers based indoors and outdoors and moving between the two—make the population hard for researchers to quantify. The criminalisation of sex work requires those who engage in the industry to remain hidden to elude prosecution. Migrants who do not have legal documentation to be in South Africa must also become "invisible" to the authorities to avoid deportation.

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[1] Republic of South Africa, 2010, Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill, 13.

[2] Republic of South Africa, 2011, Immigration Amendment Act.

1.2 Research Question and Objectives

This study explores female cross-border migrant[3] sex workers' self-representations compared to popular discourses around immigration, sex work, and trafficking, propelled by the research question: **How do cross-border migrant female sex workers in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, represent themselves in the shadow of popular discourses about women sex workers and migrants?** The primary research objectives of this study are:

- to analyze how a group of women, who are so often labeled "vulnerable" because they are women, migrants, and sex workers, represent themselves in creative writing and accompanying narratives and how they understand issues of vulnerability and power;
- to identify the discrepancies between the language often used to describe and label migrant women sex workers and the language they use to describe themselves;
- to gain insight into the effects of particular representations of migrant women sex workers by prevalent human trafficking discourses on migrant sex workers' representations of themselves;
- and to explore participatory research methodology, using creative writing, to encourage female migrant sex workers to write their own stories to add to and/or challenge the literature about them.

1.3 Introduction to the Study

This research builds on a growing body of work that gives voice to lower-income migrant women—including sex workers—in inner-city Johannesburg (Kihato 2009; Flak 2010; Nyangairi 2010; Oliveira 2010; Vearey 2010a). Issues of power, vulnerability, and agency will be key to this study because of the dichotomy of migrant stereotypes—diseased illegals versus trafficked victims—and sex worker stereotypes—deviant criminal versus innocent sex slave.

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[3] In this study, I focus on only Zimbabwean cross-border migrants in Johannesburg.

These stereotypes tie this study to issues of both prevalent trafficking discourses and South Africa's restrictive immigration policies and laws against the selling and buying of sex.

This study focuses on adult, female cross-border migrants who self-identify as sex workers in Johannesburg and who, while adults, are often denied agency through prevalent "womenandchildren" discourses surrounding migration, sex work, and trafficking (Palmary 2010, 2009; Bhabha 2004). Many studies suggest that most migrant sex workers knew what kind of work they would be doing when they entered sex work and chose sex work over other kinds of employment (Richter 2012; Oliveira 2010; Gould 2008; Agustin 2007; Thorbek 2002). Yet, stereotypes cast female migrant sex workers as vulnerable, as without agency, and often as trafficking victims. Confusion over trafficking and smuggling can affect research, policy, and aid assistance. Research on trafficking is scarce and the data that does exist is often acquired through methodologically unsound ways—at times not differentiating between people who have been smuggled and people who have been trafficked (Gould, Richter, and Palmary 2010; Gould and Fick 2008; Agustin 2007). Similarly, moralistic and certain feminist discourses sometimes portray all sex work as slavery and conflate sexual exploitation of children with the commercial sex industry.

This study focuses on adults above the age of eighteen years and uses the definition of "sex work" developed during a UNAIDS workshop in 2000: "Sex work is any agreement between two or more persons in which the objective is exclusively limited to the sexual act and ends with that, and which involves preliminary negotiations for a price" (UNAIDS 2000 in Richter and Delva 2011, 10). For this research, I consider a migrant anyone who has left his or her place of origin (place of birth) with the intent to stay somewhere else for an extended period of time. Palmary asserts that a migrant woman's distance from home has been considered "the source of women's vulnerability" (Palmary 2010, 51). Ideas about a woman's place in the home not only relate to migrant women as being "othered" but also to moralistic ideas about sex work, which are especially prevalent in South Africa and can shape non-governmental, international, and state organisations' responses to migrant sex workers—including how policies are developed and implemented—and influence and create discourses around sex work, immigration, and trafficking.

While many stereotypes remain prevalent in discourses around migrant sex workers, recent research offers new perspectives: "Migrant women who work as prostitutes can in many

cases also be seen as entrepreneurs in an economic sense: they take risks and invest in order to earn good money" (Thorbek 2002, 3). Women who sell sex come from diverse backgrounds and have various motivations and distinct feelings toward the sex work industry (Oliveira 2011; Agustin 2007). However, non-state actors operating in South Africa present vastly different portraits of migrant sex workers, from the sinner to the victim to the labourer. While the descriptions of migrant sex workers presented by Christian groups such as the New Life Centre in Johannesburg and the national sex worker led movement Sisonke are very different, the discourses around migrant sex work seem to portray this heterogeneous mix of people as a homogeneous one. The qualitative methods of this study, while limiting the generalisability of the data, will explore and challenge the perceptions that all migrant sex workers are victims of trafficking or are sex slaves or are empowered labourers.

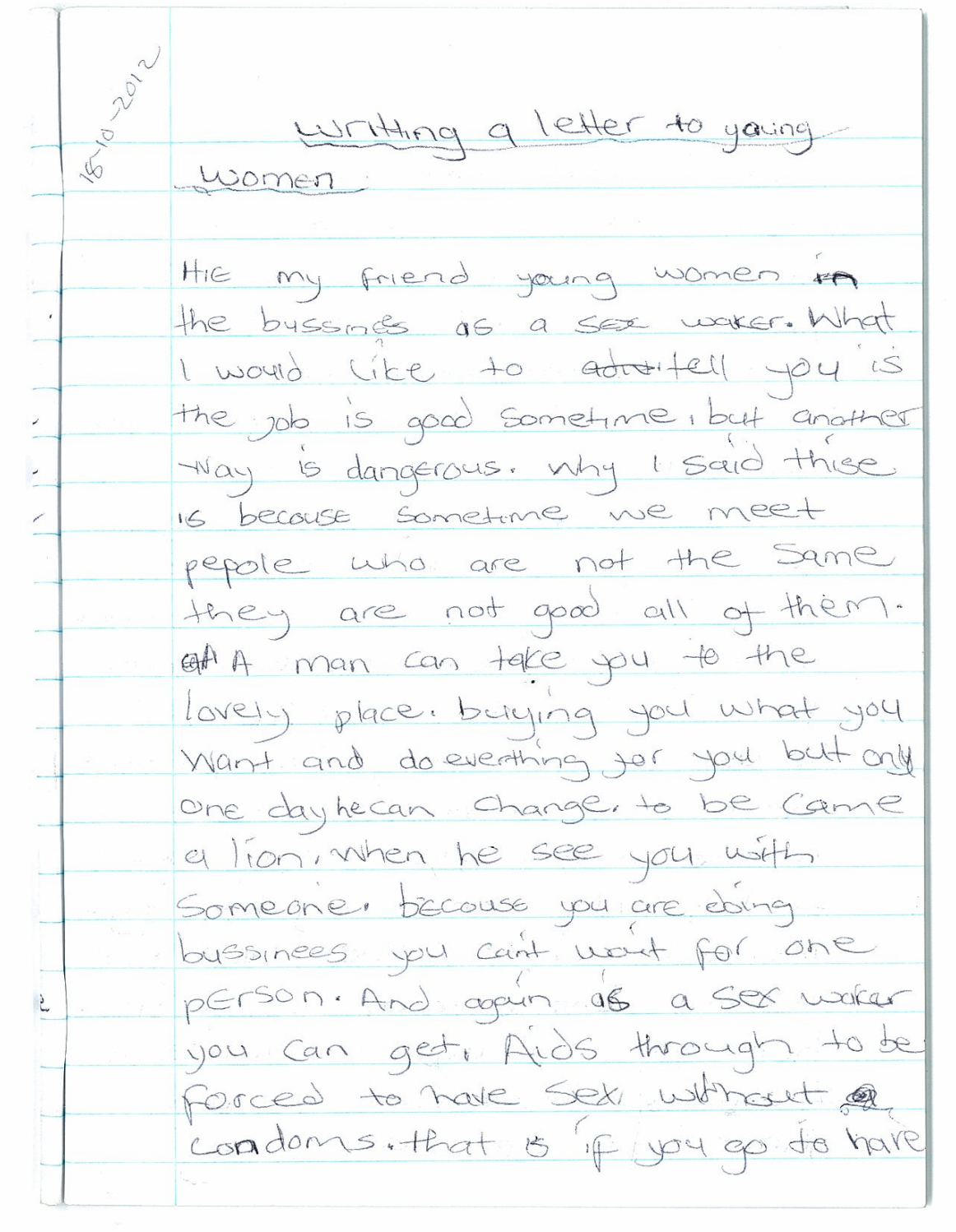
This study employed innovative methodology centered on creative writing workshops that provided a space for migrant women sex workers to voice their stories in their words. This method was participatory in the sense that participants helped shape the structure of the workshops and created writing prompts as well as critiqued one another's work and often led discussions. The participants' writing from the workshops also steered the unstructured interviews, which followed the workshops. Since migrant sex workers in Johannesburg often live in what Vearey calls "hidden spaces"—their livelihoods and often their immigration status being illegal—they are not easily accessible as research participants (Vearey 2010a, 2010b). Fearing stigma and deportation, many do not want their identities known. New and innovative methodologies are therefore needed to access this "invisible" group. Since much is written about migrant sex workers and little is heard directly from them, approaches that highlight their voices are important to explore and cultivate.

Despite scholarly controversy about the Wife of Bath, most would agree that she is a woman who lived in a patriarchal society and used the options available to her to gain enough independence to travel alone to Canterbury. Although I only worked with five women in my study, making generalisation impossible, I was amazed at how vastly different the women's trajectories into South Africa, Hillbrow, and sex work and their representations of themselves in the sex industry were. However, like the Wife of Bath, all these women had undeniably taken advantage of the opportunities available to them and were proud of the independence they had gained. While their feelings about sex work—and their participation in the industry—varied

greatly, they were all acutely aware of the gray area of experience that always eludes binaries. "What I would like to tell you," wrote Chidhavazo,[4] one of the participants, "this job is good sometime. but other way it is dangerous." The first page of the story in which the line appears is presented as Figure 1. The sentiment Chidhavazvo related in this story is expressed again and again. Being a migrant sex worker in urban Johannesburg can be, as Skara, another participant, wrote, "nice and dangerous."

This report is divided into six chapters. A review of literature around migration and sex work follows this introduction. The report then provides details on the methodology of the study, the research design, and the analysis. Following this section comes the data and a discussion of results. Finally, the report discusses limitations of the study and concludes with a summary of key findings and recommendations for the future. This report also includes copies of the women's stories in their own words and their own handwriting, so that their words about themselves stand side-by-side with my words about them.

[4] The names used in this study are pseudonyms that the participants chose for themselves at the first workshop and used throughout the research.



15-10-2012

Writting a letter to young women

Hie my friend young women ~~in~~ the bussines as a sex waker. What I would like to ~~advi~~ tell you is the job is good sometime, but another way is dangerous. why I said thise is because sometime we meet pepole who are not the same they are not good all of them. A man can take you to the lovely place. buying you what you want and do everthing for you but only one day he can change. to be came a lion, when he see you with someone. because you are doing bussinees you cant wait for one person. And again as a sex waker you can get, Aids through to be forced to have sex without condoms. that is if you go to hare

FIGURE 1: CHIDHAVAZO, "WRITING A LETTER TO YOUNG WOMEN"

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is divided into six thematic sections: 1) Migration; 2) Johannesburg; 3) Migration and Work; 4) Health, Migration, and Sex Work; 5) Trafficking and Securitization; and 6) Representation and Narrative. Following these sections, the research question and objectives are restated and justification is given for the study. While much research has focused on migration, sex work, and representation, little has been written on how migrant sex workers represent themselves (Oliveira 2010; Palmary 2010, Flak 2011). Female migrant sex workers are a group often written and talked about but rarely heard. Work done by researchers such as Oliveira, Kihato, and Vearey employs participatory photography to help show the world through the eyes of migrants in Johannesburg (Oliveira 2010, Vearey 2010a, Kihato 2009). This research is important to show the diversity and complexity in the lives of a group often "hidden" from or invisible to state and non-state actors (Vearey 2010a). Migrant sex workers in Johannesburg make themselves even more elusive because sex work is illegal in South Africa; cross-border migrations who do not have legal documentation to be in South Africa also face deportation if discovered by the government authorities. While migrant sex workers have many representations in popular discourses, few representations capture what Agustin notes after her research interviewing sex workers around the world: "[P]eople who desire to travel, see the world, make money and accept whatever jobs are available along the way do not fall into neat categories" (Agustin 2007, 2). However, many migrant sex workers find themselves not only categorized but indiscriminately categorized as trafficking victims. Sex work discourses are often tied to trafficking discourses (Gould 2010).

This study attempts to go beyond labels and categories to amplify the voices of the women labeled in so many ways by different groups and probe whether or not prevalent labels affect how the women represent themselves. There has been little academic research outside of extensive interviews and advocacy work that gives female migrant sex workers the opportunity to write their own stories; a notable exception is that of Oliveira, whose research presents both photographs taken by female migrant sex workers and written captions for the photographs along with journals of the process (Oliveira 2010). This study not only begins to address this gap but also looks at the discrepancies between the ways in which non-state actors present sex workers compared to how sex workers present themselves. Thus the research addresses a gap in the

literature, accessing information about the lived experiences of female migrant sex workers and the language they use to describe themselves.

2.1 MIGRATION

People all over the world move across countries and across borders for a vast variety of reasons, from seeking refuge from persecution to looking for a more profitable livelihood. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that there were 214 million migrants in the world in 2010, 64 million more people than they had estimated in 2000 (2012b). The percentage of migrants in the world, the IOM reports, is 3.1%; as will be discussed later, South Africa reflects this global trend (IOM 2012b). While the percentage of the world's population that are migrants has stayed fairly consistent over the past decade, the cash amount of remittances sent from migrants to their homes have vastly increased from 132 billion U.S. dollars in 2000 to 440 billion U.S. dollars in 2010, estimates the World Bank (IOM 2012b; World Bank 2011). These numbers highlight migration as a critical livelihood strategy.

In her 2009 review of *Migration in southern Africa: Dynamics and Determinants*, Palmary broadly reflects on migration studies. She points out that the field is preoccupied with quantifying numbers of migrants, especially the quantifiably elusive undocumented migrants, and how this preoccupation fuels the discourses of "floods" of migrants (2009). Palmary also notes how the meaning of the high numbers of migrants changes depending on the classification of the migrant: high numbers of refugees can be used to prompt humanitarian responses while high numbers of undocumented migrants can be used to scare citizens and justify securitization (2009). This classification can be a source of control, an attempt to manage migration (Palmary 2009). Palmary discusses how "notions of trauma and their associations with lack of agency form an implicit core in how we study and respond to migrants," which in turn leads to "uncritically adopted" legal and academic classification systems for migrants "that reproduce a range of migration hierarchies" (2009, 59). Refugees occupy a "privileged category" that "is rooted in a lack of agency and an associated assumption of victimization" as opposed to economic migrants—that is those who migrate for improved livelihood opportunities—who are "conflated with illegal migrants who are criminalized" (Palmary 2009, 59-60). The same dynamic exists in classifications of migrant sex workers between those who are trafficked (or

seen as trafficked) and those who are not. The divide is similar to that between refugees and migrants: "refugeeness is associated with a sense of being wronged while undocumented migration positions the migrant as the wrongdoer" (Palmary 2009, 60). This perception can influence researchers and potentially "create the phenomena that we then pretend to discover" (Palmary 2009, 61). Palmary's point is particularly important for me to consider while working with a population that is often written about but rarely heard. Similarly, Bhana observes that when working with marginalised groups, particularly those construed as "victims," researchers must beware of "unconsciously" siding "with the powerful against the powerless" (1999, 233). Moreover, researchers can also perpetuate assumptions, especially when researching marginalised groups who are also hidden. Gould, Richter, and Palmary, in their critique on trafficking research in South Africa, affirm that:

> *The danger of uncritical repetition and circulation of anecdotes is that similar assumptions about who is vulnerable to being trafficked are circulated around the world without being interrogated by rigorous research. This often gives rise to the perpetuation of stereotypes and fears in public consciousness.*
>
> (Gould et. al 2010)

While Gould, Richter, and Palmary are addressing concerns about trafficking, similar criticism can be made of discourses on irregular migration.

Palmary also critiques the "feminisation" of migration. Researchers' new interest in female migration is sometimes mistaken with the notion that female migration is new. Kihato points out that information on migrants' sex was not available until 1998 in South Africa, since women's movement was considered unimportant (2009). With the label of "vulnerable," which many researchers give to migrant women, comes the question of their agency. Palmary argues that "agency is so thoroughly conflated with race, gender and class that it is impossible for some groups to ever achieve agency, and the implicit assumption is that those who are marked as being without race, gender or class will make choices on their behalf" (2010, 63). Cross-border migration heightens the vulnerablisation of these groups by researchers—female migrants, poor migrants, black migrants, undocumented migrants. Collins argues for the intersectionality of the construction of race, gender, and class, and considers that the family structure is where the

hierarchies of these constructions are learned and considered natural (Collins 1998). Nationality also creates boundaries between people and a similar set of hierarchies (Jackson and Penrose 1993 in Collins 1998). "In this logic that everything has its place, maintaining borders of all sorts becomes vitally important," Collins argues, which requires "strict rules that distinguish insiders from outsiders." (1998, 69). Collins's study of American society is pertinent to migrants in South Africa because not only are cross-border migrants "outsiders," they are also politically denied agency under restrictive immigration laws. Migrants are often denied rights they legally have because of prejudice and xenophobia. Despite protection in the South African Constitution for anyone in need of emergency medical treatment, migrants in Johannesburg are often denied access to basic health services (Pursell 2004, 94). Furthermore, Vearey points out that cross-border migrants often have difficulties communicating with local healthcare providers, that "some public health facilities generate their own guidelines and policies that run counter to national legislation," and that "frontline healthcare providers" often develop "their own access systems for migrants" (2011, 125). I will discuss the literature on migration and health further in a subsequent section of the literature review.

It has also been argued that migrant women can use the label of vulnerability to their advantage, using vulnerability "as a marker of credibility in order to persuade, for example, border agencies that their experiences in countries of origin are 'real'" (Burman 2012, 10). Burman explains that "a gendered performance is often vital, as to appear strong and resilient may well cast one's testimony in doubt" (2012, 10). This concept will be important to keep in mind as I collect and analyze my data, especially comparing the women's written narratives to the information collected during one-on-one unstructured interviews.

Migration in the South African context, specifically, is also important to this study. As one of the more economically stable countries on the continent, South Africa is a draw for migrants seeking better livelihood opportunities—including the participants in this study. However, violent outbreaks of xenophobia and increasingly tighter restrictions on immigration complicate migrants' experience in South Africa. Political rhetoric in South Africa often calls for stricter immigration policy. In July 2012, the shadow Deputy Minister of Home Affairs at the time, Manny De Freitas, said in an interview:

> *South Africa… is a big magnet in Africa, attracting people from all over, and you've got to be selective. You've got to be a sieve. You can't accept every Tom, Dick and Harry – which frankly, is what South Africa has been doing. You need to put in certain measures to say, we need to sift you out. South Africa has been accepting everybody and that's part of the problem*.
>
> (Boffard 2012)

The language echoes former Home Affairs Ministers' comments, such as former Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma's address ahead of voting on the Immigration Amendment Bill in 2011: "we have to put some checks and balances in place to stop the spread of organised crime, trafficking in persons and also corruption. We must discourage the abuses of our open immigration policy" (South African Government Information 2011). This rhetoric suggests an insidious tie between crime and migration.

Despite discourses about "floods of migrants" into South Africa, the IOM states that the country has a low percentage of migrants (IOM 2012b). South Africa's 2011 census estimates the number of residents who were born outside of the country to be 1.5 million of the total population of approximately 51.8 million (Stats SA 2012). Since 1990, South Africa's percentage of migrants has remained between 2.3 and 3.7 percent; the most recent South African census data would put the percentage of migrants at around 3 percent (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2009; Stats SA 2012). Due to political and economic chaos in Zimbabwe over the last decade, many Zimbabweans have sought refuge and better livelihoods abroad; while the Zimbabwean diaspora stretches across the world, South Africa, Zimbabwean's neighbor to the south, attracted many Zimbabweans, especially those with limited means and limited skills. The African Centre for Migration and Society estimate that 1 to 1.5 million Zimbabwean migrants were living in South Africa as of 2010 (Polzer 2010). Partly to address the large number of Zimbabweans applying for asylum in recent years, South Africa's Department of Home Affairs launched the Zimbabwean Documentation Process (ZDP) in September 2010 in order to regularize the status of undocumented Zimbabweans living in South Africa. However, the ZDP only lasted until the end of December 2010 and was poorly organized and executed (Amit 2011). The ZDP saw the documentation of fewer than 300,000 Zimbabweans, and since the end of the ZDP the moratorium on deporting

Zimbabweans has been lifted. Thus, Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg are a particularly interesting group to interview on issues of vulnerability.

2.2 Johannesburg: Urban and South African Contexts

As the economic powerhouse of the continent, South Africa is an attractive destination for African migrants. Johannesburg, in Gauteng Province, is the heart of South Africa's economic activity and thus a destination of cross-border and internal migrants. South Africa's 2011 census found that nearly half of Gauteng's population was born outside of the province and that approximately 1.1 million of Gauteng's 5.8 residents were born in other African countries (Stats SA 2012). Landau argues that Johannesburg, like other African cities, has a shifting "host" population, often made up of internal migrants, challenging the traditional idea of a stable host population; thus, migrants to Johannesburg find what Landau calls a "new (and ever-changing) social landscape" (Landau 2010, 319). Landau also notes that migrants once in African cities tend to move within the city: "[in] Johannesburg, non-nationals have moved an average of 3.1 times and citizens 2.0 times" (Landau 2010, 319). Describing this fluidity, Landau alludes to Castells concept of cities as "places of flows" (Castells 2004 in Landau 2010, 320).

Paradoxically, Johannesburg is not only a place of flow but also a fractured city. For many years the apartheid regime denied blacks access to the inner-city; thus, many residents of inner-city Johannesburg are relatively new internal migrants (Landau 2006). Landau's survey found South Africans considered to be part of the "host" population had only lived in Johannesburg for an average of ten years (Landau 2010). The same diversity that Landau points to creating a shifting "social landscape" also includes a lack of commonality; in a survey of inner-city South African citizens, Landau found that "29.9% of citizenry mentioned Zulu as their mother tongue, 19.9% Xhosa, 11.5% Sotho, 7.9% Tswana, 6.8% English, and 2.6% Afrikaans" (Landau 2010, 319). Moreover, Murray notes:

> *[N]ew patterns of differentiation, fragmentation, and separation have not only reinforced the structural inequalities already deeply ingrained in the cityscape, but they also reflect the inchoate symptoms of an emergent spatial logic governing the organization, uses, and meanings of urban spaces in Johannesburg after apartheid*.

(Murray 2008, 146)

The Johannesburg Murray describes is as segregated along economic lines—and the marginalised compete for limited resources in these "interstitial spaces of confinement" (Murray 2008, 145). Kihato also speaks of Johannesburg as a divided space and one of transition in her research on migrant women in the city: "Johannesburg is a border zone. To be in the city is to encounter multiple legal, socially constructed and imagined frontiers" (Kihato 2009, 18). Newly arrived migrants do not have a place in this system. Instead of identifying with cross-border migrants, South Africans, also often newly arrived to the city, heighten nativist idioms, claiming Johannesburg for citizens and othering non-nationals (Landau 2006). In turn, migrants to Johannesburg, Landau found, adopt a language of transience and seem to be "hovering above the soil," most claiming that they do not plan to stay in South Africa (Landau 2006, 127). Landau notes that this "self-exclusion" is partly in response to the "violence, abuse, and discrimination many foreigners experience in Johannesburg" (Landau 2010, 322).

Migrants to Johannesburg exist in a "denationalized 'nowhereville'," placing them beyond Vertovec's ideas of "transnationalism" in which transnationals have a divided consciousness, living in two or more places at once (Landau 2006, 125; Vertovec 1999). Migrants' lack of grounding in Johannesburg suggests that they are not divided but placeless. Their transnationalism is closer to what Gupta and Ferguson describe, where a "transnational public sphere" has "enabled the creation of forms of solidarity and identity that do not rest on an appropriation of space where contiguity and face-to-face contact are paramount" (Gupta and Ferguson in Vertovec 1999, 449). The emphasis on identity unrelated to space seems a more pertinent aspect of transnationalism for migrants in Johannesburg than that of a divided consciousness or connections across borders. Landau observes that "only 40% of the non-South Africans in the Wits-Tufts survey predicted that they would even be in the country after two years" (Landau 2006, 137). But only 20% of those planning on leaving wanted to return to their countries of origin (Landau 2006). This attitude suggests not only a lack of loyalty to Johannesburg but also less of a connection to countries of origin; the focus is on the future place. This space "above the soil" occupied by migrants in Johannesburg seems created by discourses surrounding migration—both international and local (Landau 2006, 127). Malkki notes that arborescent notions of nation connecting identity to one's "homeland" and the soil pathologizes

those displaced from their countries of origin (Malkki 1992). However, Malkki observes in her study of Burundi refugees in Tanzania that these displaced people "suggest that identity is always mobile and processual, partly self-construction, partly categorization by others, partly a condition, a status, a label, a weapon, a shield, a fund of memories, et cetera" (Malkki 1992, 37). Landau also uses the notion of identity as a shield since migrants' language of transience responds to South African residents' intense nativistic rhetoric. Issues of identity and connection to place may emerge during my research. Consideration of a migrant's complex relationship to place, especially a fragmented place like Johannesburg, is essential to my analysis.

The inner-city high-density suburb of Hillbrow is an entry point into Johannesburg for many migrants. Despite the large cross-border migrant population in Hillbrow, foreign residents still face xenophobia; Leggett found that of the cross-border migrants living in Hillbrow he interviewed for a study on crime, 62 percent responded that "they had been assaulted by local residents merely for being foreign" (Leggett 2002, 20). Foreign residents of Hillbrow were more likely to be victims of every kind of crime included in the ISS Inner Johannesburg victim survey than local residents (Leggett 2002). In a study of migrant sex workers in four sites in South Africa—Cape Town, Sandton, Hillbrow, and Rustenburg—Hillbrow and Sandton had the highest percentage of cross-border migrants sex workers; 51.9 percent of sex workers surveyed in Hillbrow were cross-border migrants (Richter et al. 2012). Furthermore, two thirds of the cross-border migrant sex workers in Hillbrow were from Zimbabwe (Richter et al. 2012).

Describing the area of Hillbrow, Johannesburg, Murray writes that mid-1900s corporate builders "constructed large, high-rise apartment buildings that multiplied dozens of times over, producing tightly packed, overcrowded residential neighborhoods largely lacking in open, social spaces of meaningful public congregation" (Murray 2008, 161). Now Hillbrow is arguably one of the most densely populated urban spaces in the southern hemisphere; the one square kilometer space is home to approximately 100,000 people (Murray 2008, Venables 2011).

In her participatory photography study, Venables notes that several Hillbrow resident participants referred to Hillbrow as "two-sided" (Venables 2011, 141). Participants in her study were conflicted, wanting to present both the hard realities of Hillbrow as well as the positive aspects of the space where they live. In this study, the Telkom Tower—decorated with a soccer ball for the 2010 World Cup—became a symbol of hope for and pride in Hillbrow. Residents'

descriptions of Hillbrow give a much more complex—"two sided"—view of the area, compared to the desolate wasteland that Murray describes (Venables 2011, 141; Murray 2008).

Vearey has argued for innovative methodologies to approach the complexities of the urban environment (Vearey 2010b). One of the complexities that she identifies is that of "hidden spaces" in urban areas. While Vearey's research with participatory photography and cinematography projects took place in other parts of Johannesburg, her findings are applicable to migrants—especially sex worker migrants—in Hillbrow. Vearey defines the term "hidden spaces" as "spaces occupied by two closely connected yet opposing groups of residents: (1) those who employ a range of tactics in order to deliberately evade state intervention through ensuring invisibility and (2) those who desire state intervention yet are bypassed by local authorities as a result of marginalisation (a form of bureaucratic invisibility)" (Vearey 2010a, 39). Considering Vearey's work on "hidden spaces" is important to this study not only because it offers a better understanding of lived experiences in Johannesburg, but also because her research employed participatory creative projects to help provide a view of what Lefebvre called representational space. This study is interested in Hillbrow as representational space—the "space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'" as it is lived (Lefebvre 1984, 39). Lefebvre's perceived-conceived-lived triad approach to spatial theory is significant for thinking about "hidden spaces," especially how they could relate to the conflation of trafficking and sex work. Discourses that conflate sex work and trafficking portray brothels as prisons—or inescapable places. The lived experiences of people who inhabit and shape these spaces will offer insight about them as representational space not only as representations of space.

The idea of "hidden spaces" also relates to informal livelihood and de Certeauean tactics, "hidden spaces" themselves being "informal" spaces "hidden from the functioning of the rest of the (formal) city" (Vearey 2010a, 40). While the bars and the hotels where sex workers work in Johannesburg are often not hidden, the space is hidden in the sense that the legal or formal purpose of the establishment—its place in the "concept city"—is not that of a brothel; however, in the sense of Lefebvre's lived space, it is where sex workers work (Certeau 1984 in Tonkiss 2005, 114). Abandoned buildings are spaces that may be fixed on a map and formally owned but are appropriated by street-based sex workers and those who charge an entry or security fee in the city, becoming "hidden" spaces. Vearey points out the potential for resistance to formalised power structures in hidden space, and how this threat leads formal city authorities to consider

such spaces "undesirable" (Vearey 2010a, 42). This idea also connects to some of the abolition of sex work discourses, under the assumption that sex work, as part of the criminal underworld, fosters more criminal activity, such as trafficking.

Looking to the future more than the present, the City of Johannesburg's 2040 Growth and Development Strategy (GDS) sets out lofty goals to be reached by 2040. GDS lists its first planned outcome as "Improved quality of life and development-driven resilience for all" (GDS 2011, 9). The fourth outcome speaks of the metropolitan space as "integrated and vibrant" and "socially inclusive" (GDS 2011, 9). While the city's goals sound admirable, Murray points to how parts of the city have been ignored in past projects: "In contrast to the proactive stance toward the hoped-for revival of the central city, urban planners have practiced a strategy of containment in high-density residential neighborhoods of the inner city" (Murray 2008, 164). Since the city asks for all stakeholders, "be they temporary or permanent visitors or citizens of this city" to join together to strive towards these goals, this study's results may be particularly useful for helping the city understand an often unrepresented contingent of its inhabitants (GDS 2011, 11). As this section mentioned above, Landau proposes the specific challenges the city faces on working toward social inclusion and integration. The GDS must therefore take into account the migratory nature of both citizens and non-citizens in Johannesburg. To improve the quality of life of all residents of the city, the GDS must account for those who are "invisible" to the formal structures of the city and, as Vearey points out, consider whether they are hidden because they choose to be or because the city chooses not to see them (Vearey 2010a). Marginalised groups—such as migrant sex workers—should be considered to be among those "temporary or permanent visitors" to Johannesburg and therefore part of the project of integration and inclusion and improvement of quality of life processes. Any plan that does not include the people who reside in these "hidden spaces" will not be inclusive and not reach the goals of improved lives "for all" in Johannesburg.

2.3 Migration and Sex Work

Migrant sex workers in Johannesburg face numerous challenges. Not only do they have to worry about the criminalization of sex work in South Africa, some also worry about

deportation. Migrant sex workers' "legal status has far-reaching consequences, especially when it comes to violence, for it has a bearing on whether or not women are willing to call the police" (Thorbek 2002, 4). Legal status also affects a migrant's options for employment. Undocumented migrants often seek employment in the informal sector. Richter and Delva note in their report on sex work during the 2010 World Cup that limited research exists on sex workers in South Africa, particularly where they come from and how many there are (2010). Richter and Chakuvinga point out that sex workers are a group even marginalised by researchers (2012).

In her study *Migrant Women in Sex Work*, Oliveira uses participatory action research to explore how migrant sex workers in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, represent themselves and how the urban space influences these representations (2010). Oliveira found that far from a homogenous group, migrant women sex workers represented themselves in a variety of ways and responded to stereotypes of sex workers differently. Some women seemed to internalize prevalent stereotypes, causing great inner turmoil. Other women took pride in their work and wanted to advocate for better working conditions. Most of Oliveira's participants seemed to struggle with a combination of feelings. Oliveira's study also presents a complicated picture of safety in Hillbrow for migrant sex workers, with police and brothel security often being perpetrators of violence.

Adding to the stigma of sex workers and migrants are the assumptions that sex work is associated with other crimes (trafficking, drug dealing, etc.) and that migrants are criminals; therefore, some argue that criminalizing sex work is part of a fight against other kinds of crime and a deterrent for those seeking to buy sex. However, the UNAIDS Advisory Group on HIV and Sex Work asserted in 2011 that "[t]here is very little evidence to suggest that any criminal laws related to sex work stop demand for sex or the number of sex workers. Rather, all of them create an environment of fear and marginalization for sex workers, who often have to work in remote and unsafe locations to avoid arrest of themselves or their clients" (UNAIDS 2011 in Meerkotter 2012). In fact, Richter and Delva found that even during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa—a time during which great media hype warned of a massive demand for paid sex and an influx of sex workers and trafficking victims to meet it—there was not a significant increase in the demand or supply (2011). Moreover, their study emphasized the human rights abuses that sex workers in South Africa face, especially at the hands of the South African Police Services. Sex workers who took part in the survey reported having high and regular contact with police; "a quarter of all respondents in Rustenburg, Cape Town and Hillbrow had a negative

experience with the police in the preceding month" (Richter and Delva 2011, 24). The qualitative aspect of the study drew out horrible rights abuses experienced by sex workers in South Africa, from being beaten and insulted by police to being pepper-sprayed in the genitals and raped by police (Richter and Delva 2011). Only 1.2% of the respondents reported positive encounters with police in the past month (Richter and Delva 2011).

Hillbrow, Johannesburg, was one of four areas studied in Richter and Delva's research (2011). Their surveys give a snapshot of the average female sex worker in Hillbrow (conducted in three waves: June, July, and August 2010). She is around 29 years old, started working in the sex industry when she was around 25 years old, and has about two dependents (Richter and Delva 2011). From the surveys they conducted, Richter and Delva found that the median amount of money that sex workers charged for their last transaction was 50 rand and that the sex workers surveyed saw around 20 clients in the seven days before the survey. The 2012 study of Richter et al. provides more information on the differences between cross-border migrant, internal migrant, and local sex workers in three South African cities—including Hillbrow, Johannesburg (2012). The study found that cross-border migrant sex workers in South Africa charged more than internal migrant and local sex workers and cross-border migrant sex workers also had a higher weekly income. Richter et al. also found that cross-border migrant sex workers faced more police bribes, with Hillbrow being a particularly contentious area; "[i]n Hillbrow 9.8% of cross-border sex workers had interacted with police on immigration as opposed to 4.9% in Sandton, 0.6% in Rustenburg and 0% in Cape Town" (Richter et al. 2012, 5). Zimbabwean women sex workers had a median 18 clients per week whereas local sex workers had 11; Zimbabweans in the study also had a higher number of dependents than other migrants and locals (Richter et al. 2012).

Richter et al. note that "[t]wo-thirds of the cross-border sex workers in Hillbrow migrated from neighbouring Zimbabwe, mirroring the escalation in Zimbabwean migration to South Africa in search of improved livelihood opportunities following political and economic instability in Zimbabwe since the early 2000s" (2012, 6-7). The search for improved livelihood opportunities brings many migrants to Hillbrow, South Africa, and, like Zimbabwean sex workers, many find employment in the informal sector. The informal sector is an important source of livelihood for many South Africans and especially for migrants in South Africa. An estimated 3.65 million people were engaged in non-agricultural informal employment in 2007 in South Africa (Wills 2009 in Vearey et al. 2011). Informal livelihoods are particularly important

for semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Crush notes a growth in irregular migration to South Africa that, he argues, leads to increasing informalization of migrant labour employment (Crush 2011). Landau and Monson note: "to survive and thrive, refugees, migrants and long-term residents not only move through space ostensibly regulated by the state, but they also transform it through strategies of accumulation, coupled with tactics to elude danger and regulation" (Landau and Monson 2008, 319). Gould and Fick's study on sex workers in Cape Town found that many sex workers were drawn to the work because of the lack of formal requirements and the relatively high pay for their qualifications; the study determined that sex workers could earn three to five times more in sex work than they could in the other jobs that they could hold (Gould and Fick 2008). The relationship between migrants—especially those without legal documentation—in the informal sector and the South African police is extremely complex (Madsen 2004). Madsen points out that "[i]rregular police practices are experienced as normal and systematic. Most undocumented migrants know the acceptable bribe rates at the various stages of the deportation process" (2004,180). Migrants in the informal sector may not face "taxes" but they still must make payments to the police; an Eritrean living in Johannesburg explained to Landau and Monson: "As foreign students we are not required to pay taxes to the government. But when we walk down the streets, we pay" (2008, 330-231). Migrant sex workers face this discrimination, which is aggravated by the stigma social mores place on sex work. Richter et al. found that cross-border migrant sex workers were more likely to have contact with the police (mostly negative) than internal migrant and non-migrant sex workers (2012).

While sex work is illegal in South Africa, an ongoing debate over decriminalisation exists. Part of the debate is over whether or not sex work is work. Sex worker advocacy groups such as SWEAT emphasize that a job is a job (SWEAT 2012). Religious and more conservative groups often take the stance that sex work is immoral and the industry should be entirely illegal. But debate rages between different groups of feminists over sex work. MacKinnon frames the academic polarization over the issues as "the sex work model and the sexual exploitation approach" (2011, 272). MacKinnon questions the use of "agency" by the sex work model supporters: "No one chooses to be born into poverty or to stay in prostitution in order to stay poor" (2011, 278). The supporters of the sexual exploitation approach, she explains, believe that "[p]rostituted people pay for paid sex. The buyers do not pay for what they take or get. It is this, not its illegality, that largely accounts for prostitution's stigma. People in

prostitution, in this view, are wrongly saddled with a stigma that properly belongs to their exploiters" (2011, 274). However, Richter argues for a "sex-positive feminist approach" that respects women's sexual autonomy and choice (2012). This camp regards sex work as work when it is between consensual adults. Richter points out that by setting up sex workers as "victims" and not workers, organisations professing to "rescue" the victims set themselves up as "heroes" (2012). Moreover, equating sex work with slavery—or deeming it immoral—these organisations present such activities as beading and sewing as more worthy livelihood pursuits (Richter 2012).

2.4 Health, Migration, and Sex Work

The intersection of migration and health is particularly important in the southern African context, since southern Africa has both a traditionally high amount of internal and cross-border migration as well as the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the world (Vearey 2011). While some popular discourses present the migrant to South Africa as sick and in need of health care, migrants—especially rural-urban migrants—often face the greatest health risks as a result of migration (Vearey 2008). Partly because of the physical demands of travel, migrants "are healthy and of a productive age at the time they migrate"; they are "positively selected" (Vearey 2011, 122). Despite this fact, cross-border migrants are still stigmatized as carriers of disease. Migrants in South Africa face numerous challenges accessing healthcare, such as barriers in communication between them and "frontline healthcare providers," since interpreters are not always available, and discrimination from these frontline healthcare providers sometimes blocks access to services (Vearey 2011, 125). Furthermore, Vearey points out that while South African law makes provisions for certain health services for migrants—such as HIV treatment regardless of immigration status—"some public health facilities generate their own guidelines and policies that run counter to national legislation" (2011, 125). The lack of legal documentation to be in South Africa, which is particularly hard to get for unskilled and semi-skilled cross-border migrants, adds to the challenges cross-border migrants face in accessing health care (Vearey 2011). While some South Africans not only stereotype cross-border migrants as bringing diseases to the country but also as coming to South Africa to take advantage of the health care system, studies show that migrants move more as a livelihood strategy and prefer to go back to

their countries of origin if they become sick (Vearey 2011). Furthermore, cross-border migrants often receive treatment from the non-governmental organisation sector instead of the public sector (Vearey 2011).

Despite South African government policies to provide HIV treatment for everyone in South Africa regardless of migration status, migrants face the same challenges accessing this treatment as they do other health services, as mentioned above (Vearey et al. 2011). Migration may increase one's chance of acquiring HIV, making HIV prevention and treatment particularly important to migrants (Vearey et al. 2011). UNAIDS estimates that in 2011 the prevalence rate of HIV and AIDS in adults between fifteen and forty-nine years of age was 17.30 percent in South Africa (UNAIDS 2011). Furthermore, those who are HIV positive can face stigma; UNAIDS refers to studies by People Living with HIV Stigma Index that found more than half of people living with HIV in various sub-Saharan African countries reported suffering verbal abuse because of their status (UNAIDS 2012). Thus migrants, stereotyped as carriers of disease, may face greater discrimination if found to be HIV positive. Engaging in sex work brings additional stigma. Wojicicki and Malala point out that HIV is linked to sex work in the public mind (2001). Furthermore, the language used in health discourses adds to the stigma of sex work: a sex worker is often called a "'resevoir' of infection or a potential 'bridge of infection'" (2001, 101). Wojcicki and Malala found that among sex workers in South Africa, these stigmas as well as the great stress of knowing oneself to be HIV positive are given as reasons some sex workers may choose not to be tested or not to return to get their results (Wojcicki and Malala 2001). Such stigmas are a part of other structural factors—such as social exclusion and the criminalisation of sex work—that put sex workers at higher risk for HIV infection (Baral et al. 2012). Baral et al. found that female sex workers are much more likely to be HIV positive than other women of child-bearing age in lower and middle income countries throughout the world (2012). According to Baral et al.'s study, HIV prevalence among sex workers in South Africa and sex workers in Zimbabwe were among the highest in the world.

Vearey et al. point out that South Africa's HIV-prevention programmes have neglected workplaces in the informal sector as well as migrants living in the country (2011). A particularly important informal work setting for HIV prevention and treatment are the hidden spaces of the sex industry. In addition to discrimination against foreigners by healthcare workers and frontline care providers, cross-border migrant sex workers in South Africa face further discrimination

because of their occupation. Cross-border migrant sex workers seem to have "considerably less contact with health services" than non-cross-border migrant sex workers in South Africa (Richter et al. 2012). Richter calls the law in South Africa "the biggest oppressor of sex workers at present," noting that the criminalisation of sex work increases the stigma around sex work, makes it harder for sex workers to access services, and creates an environment in which clients and even police can mistreat and abuse sex workers without fear of repercussions (Richter 2012, 63). Reinforcing this point, the World Health Organization's December 2012 recommendations for a public health approach to the prevention of HIV includes a call for the decriminalisation of sex work: "All countries should work toward decriminalisation of sex work and elimination of the unjust application of non-criminal laws and regulations against sex workers" (WHO 2012, 8). If sex work were to be decriminalized, then sex workers would not fear legal retribution for revealing their occupation and the stigma around sex work may be mitigated.

Scholars argue that decriminalisation of sex work in South Africa would not only help fight HIV/AIDS by better facilitating sex workers' access to health care, but it would also help protect sex workers' health by protecting them from human rights abuses by the South African police (Wojcicki and Malala 2001). I have mentioned in the above section how studies have shown that sex workers face human rights abuses from police and clients, and they are often afraid to report such abuses for fear of further abuse or arrest (and deportation if they are cross-border migrants without legal immigration documentation).

While sex workers are often stigmatized as disease ridden and part of the spread of HIV/AIDS, research by scholars such as Sanders suggests that they can actually be helpful sexual health educators (Sanders 2005). While the "mundane and ordinary features of commercial sex remain ignored," popular discourses emphasize the risky elements of the work (Sanders 2005, 2435). Furthermore, Sanders highlights that men who buy sex are also a group that is hidden and at high risk for STIs and HIV/AIDS (Sanders 2005). In her research with female sex workers in Britain, Sanders found that many saw their role as sex workers as akin to nurses and often found themselves teaching their clients about sexual health. Building on the existence of informal worker-client information flows, Sanders argues that this relationship be used to provide better sexual health education for the hidden population of men who buy sex and that sex work be recognized and legalized to promote safer and regulated sexual services (Sanders 2005).

2.5 TRAFFICKING

As mentioned in the Introduction, the widely accepted definition of trafficking is that given by the United Nation's 2001 *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (also known as the Palermo Protocol). According to the Palermo Protocol, trafficking is:

> *The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.*
>
> (United Nations 2001)

While trafficking can result in numerous kinds of forced labour, sexual exploitation is often focused on and sensationalized. Trafficking discourses reinforce the stereotype of migrant sex workers as victims without agency and are always entwined with issues of sex work (Gould 2010). The IOM asserts that "[t]he proper identification of migrants as victims of trafficking remains the most enduring challenge to their effective protection, both for the IOM and its government and civil society partners" (IOM 2011, 13). The IOM's very wording suggests a conflation of migrants with trafficking victims while pointing to the problem of identification—the same problem the IOM and others identify as the reason that more cases of human trafficking are not discovered. In most public discourses, Busza points out, "all migration for sex work gets conflated with 'trafficking,' regardless of whether it meets the definition's emphasis on force and coercion" (2004, 232). Palmary quotes Gorham, noting that in nineteenth century England, "contrary to the claims of the social purity movement, there did not appear to be much evidence that the young prostitutes [social purity reformers] sought to rescue were being held in sex work against their will" (2010, 56-57). Palmary connects this social purity movement of the nineteenth century to current discussions about trafficking in South Africa (2010). In a piece about the panic over the supposed link between trafficking for prostitution and major sporting events, Ham points to some of the reasons why popular discourses sensationalize trafficking for prostitution

despite the lack of evidence: "its usefulness as a fundraising strategy; as a way to grab the media or the public's attention; being a quick, easy way to 'do something' about trafficking; and its usefulness in justifying social control measures (e.g. anti-migration measures, crackdowns on sex workers) and cultivating 'moral panics'" (Ham 2011, 30). This "moral panic" relates to abolitionist discourses on sex work, which argue that all sex work is slavery—thus should be abolished. Conflating sex work with slavery reinforces the conflation of migrant sex workers with trafficking victims.

South Africa is a signatory to the Palermo Protocol, having ratified it in 2004. The country's attention turned toward trafficking in 2007 when the United States named South Africa as a country with a trafficking problem in the U.S. Department of State's Trafficking in Persons report. Part of the reason that the 2012 State Department report leaves South Africa at its tier-two status is the lack of anti-trafficking legislation. South Africa's response to its placement on the U.S. tier-two watch list was a proposed bill on trafficking that made "astonishingly fast" progress through Parliament—"astonishingly" because of the slow speed of most bills (Palmary 2010, 52). While the National Assembly passed the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill in June 2012, it has not yet been enacted because the Parliamentary Select Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development is still debating certain issues, some of which likely connect to anti-immigration rhetoric (Parliamentary Monitoring Group 2012). The bill currently includes provisions for services to foreign victims of trafficking, but that is one of the issues being debated in the Committee, which expressed fear that cross-border migrants without legal documentation to be in the country might claim to be trafficked to formalize their stay or access certain services. Chapter 5 of the Bill includes clauses for potential temporary and permanent residence visas to be granted to victims who cooperate with government officials in prosecuting cases of human trafficking. The 2011 U.S. Department of State's Trafficking in Persons report identifies South Africa's emphasis on prostitution over other kinds of forced labour in its anti-trafficking efforts: "The government investigated and prosecuted additional trafficking cases, all but one of which involved sex trafficking. This reveals the imbalance in the government's anti-trafficking efforts, which largely ignored forced labor" (U.S. State Dept. 2011, 328). The U.S. State Department's criticism that South Africa's focus is too concentrated on sex trafficking is significant since the Department has come under similar criticism.

Considering South African Department of Home Affairs rhetoric around migration, as mentioned above, one might argue that the emphasis on trafficking has more political motivation than merely South Africa's removal from the U.S. list of countries with a trafficking problem. Rhetoric against trafficking speaks to voters with a strong moral agenda. Furthermore, discourses around trafficking have roots in protectionism: "the international focus on human trafficking (particularly for the purposes of sexual exploitation) emerged in both eras in response to increased migration of poor working-class women" (Gould 2010, 45). Gould argues that an emphasis on fighting trafficking, especially that which results in sexual exploitation, can lead to a "moral panic" and, when policy makers or anti-trafficking advocates present "the issue as one that seeks to help the most vulnerable, who are apparently unable to assist themselves [trafficked women], the discourse is presented as morally unchallengeable" (2010, 41). Therefore it is important to investigate how migrant women sex workers, often regarded as vulnerable and sometimes misidentified as trafficked, see themselves in a country increasingly concerned with issues of immigration and trafficking.

Looking at the securitization of countering trafficking in Central Asia, Jackson argues that "recently there has been a significant increase in the rhetoric on the "securitization of the trafficking of narcotics and persons" (2006, 301). The particularly pertinent aspect of securitization in my study is that of language. Jackson explains that "states, international organizations, NGOs etc.," according to the theory of securitization, "use the language of security to convince an audience of the existential nature of a threat" (2007, 301). What is important to this theory is "what is presented and successfully recognized as a threat" not the security risk in reality (2007, 301). Jackson argues that international institutions, particularly the UN, have turned to securitization in an attempt to redefine their roles after the Cold War and that "International organizations working in Central Asia, including the IOM and the OSCE, clearly separate trafficking for sex from other types of trafficking of persons" (2006, 303). Jackson notes that Central Asian states are relatively young and thus still nation building, which, she argues, includes defining and defending borders. South Africa is also a young state and the rhetoric of the Department of Home Affairs pertaining to migrants can be compared to the securitization of immigration that Jackson points to in Central Asia.

Despite the heightened discourse around trafficking, many researchers argue that statistics used in the rhetoric are grossly exaggerated (Gould 2010; Palmary 2010). Smuggled persons and trafficked persons are often counted together (Gould 2010). "All attempts to quantify cases of 'trafficking' are questionable," Agustin asserts (Agustin 2007). The IOM's most recent figures report thirteen "[IOM] assisted cases" of human trafficking in South Africa in 2011; however, the document offers a page of caveats about the data collections, including that the IOM could not confirm cases had not been counted twice and that the focus on international trafficking could have "caused confusion as to the role of cross-border movements in trafficking" (IOM 2012, 9). In the U.S. State Department's 2007 Report on Trafficking, one of the few cases identified in South Africa described a raid of a Durban night club from which twenty-six Thai women were "successfully" withdrawn (U.S. State Dept. 2007, 185). Only four of the women agreed "to assist with the prosecution of the club's owner" for trafficking, while the rest "repeatedly denied being trafficked" and were to be tried for prostitution and illegal immigration (U.S. State Dept. 2007, 185).

Lack of information on trafficking and particularly profiles of migrant sex workers, often inaccurately labeled as trafficking victims by researchers and the media, can add to confusion over how many people are trafficked each year (Palmary 2010). A 2010 report by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), undertaken to help fulfill South Africa's obligations to the Palermo Protocol, declares that South Africa is a source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking. The report also asserts that women make up the majority of victims and sexual exploitation is the main reason people are trafficked, particularly "young girls": "[t]he demand for under-age girls for purposes of sexual exploitation is a disturbing feature of the South African trafficking landscape" (HSRC 2010, vi). However, the report notes that information is scarce on the "invisible challenge" of human trafficking, and there is an "urgent need for nation-level data" (HSRC 2010, x). Gould, Richter, and Palmary critique the 2010 HSRC report on trafficking in South Africa, highlighting many of the problems with existing research on trafficking. While they acknowledge that "[r]esearching human trafficking is a notoriously difficult undertaking, not least because those involved in trafficking have a strong incentive to keep their activities hidden," they also point out that HSRC did not accurately present the empirical data they collected, relying heavily instead on previous research and assumptions from border officials (Gould et al. 2010, 38).

Gould and Fick explain in *Selling Sex in Cape Town* how their study, set out to research human trafficking; however, they soon realized how little evidence there actually was for human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in Cape Town (2008). At the end of the study, they could only identify two people who "may have been trafficking in the past" (2008, 144). However, what they did find was that most of the sex workers they surveyed, interviewed, and had in focus groups had entered the sex industry for reasons of financial opportunity or financial need and that most knew the work that they would be doing.

Palmary examines the preoccupation with sex work in trafficking discourses, looking particularly at normative ideas of women's role in the home and sexual relations as well as the infantalization of women (2010). Palmary points out that one of the reasons that migrant women are labeled vulnerable is their location away from the home, considered the appropriate or safe place for them. Assumptions of the woman's place in the home influence trafficking policy: "In the proposed South African Bill as well as in many of the current activities of the IOM and other organizations intervening with trafficking victims, the recommended solution (after the prosecution of the trafficker) is voluntary repatriation" (Palmary 2010, 60). However, agency (required for "voluntary repatriation") is often denied these victims. Palmary's discussion also relates to the securitization of trafficking when she points to the "solutions" of South African trafficking as "creating an extensive system of surveillance of migrants" (2010, 61). She recalls recommendations of the South African Law Commission discussion document that are "policing-focused," such as a database of victims, tightened border control, greater police powers of search and arrest (2010, 61). Furthermore, the focus on sex work over other potentially exploitative jobs shows a class bias since forms of forced labour such as domestic work benefits middle and upper class families (Palmary 2010).

2.6 Narrative and Representation

Representation is an everyday activity, which we are all constantly practicing (Webb 2009). Webb describes how it is fundamental to our understanding of ourselves and our world: "It is also how we both *are*, and how we understand ourselves; representation is implicated in the process of *me* becoming *me*" (2009, 2). Since representation filters the world we see, "[w]hat we see is not what is there, but what our social and cultural traditions and their contexts give us"

(Webb 2009, 2). By providing one thing to present—to represent—another, language itself "is a representational system" (Webb 2009, 40). Thus written narratives can be a form of representation while also providing layers of representation. More specifically, narratives can be representations of our internal representations: "What is shared across both event and experience-centred narrative research, is that there are assumed to be individual, internal representations of phenomena—events, thoughts and feelings—to which narrative gives external *expression*)" (Andrews et al. 2008, 10). Representation is not only, as Webb stated, how we understand ourselves but also how we express our understanding to each other (2009).

Migrant sex worker narratives and self-representations are under-explored in the academic literature about them. Scholars such as Flak and Oliveria have conducted research specifically on migrant sex workers' self-representations in Johannesburg, employing photography and drama (Oliveria 2010, Flack 2011). Building on the work of other scholars such as Vearey and Palmary, Flak argues that "migration, gender, sex work and urban space"—the characteristics that define migrant female sex workers in Johannesburg—help form identity and the representation of identity (Flak 2011, 5). Other projects, such as Susan Valentine's storytelling training workshops, run through Open Society, draw out narratives from sex workers (some of them migrants) in South Africa; however these training seminars have an advocacy focus and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. Behind this training seminar, though, is the Narativ, Inc., Listening & Storytelling Method. The founders of Narativ, Deroy and Nossel present their methodology in six courses available on their website. In the course, Nossel argues that "our brains are hardwired for storytelling" (Narativ 2011). The organisation has taught the course all over the world, and Nossel explains that participants from marginalised groups often think that they do not have a story or one worthy of sharing. Moreover, the Narativ model professes that the way people share their stories can change them. Andrews et al. state that "[t]ransformation – meaning, not always, but frequently, improvement - is also assumed to be integral to narrative: in the story itself; in the lives of those telling it; even in researchers' own understandings of it" (Andrews et al. 2008, 20). Thus this idea of transformation is key to the analysis of stories.

Narrative is a way to organize, to give meaning to, and to mediate between self and the world (Hinchman and Hinchman 1997). This is why narrative can be a powerful tool for research. Hinchman and Hinchman give this definition: "narratives (stories) in the human

sciences should be defined provisionally as discourses with a clear sequential order that connects events in a meaningful way for a definite audience, and thus offer insights about the world and/or people's experiences of it" (Hinchman and Hinchman 1997, xvi). This definition highlights several important aspects of narratives for analysis, including the meaningful connection of events and the audience implicit in any story. Moreover, narrative research in humanist and postructuralist traditions "treat narratives as modes of resistance to existing structures of power" (Andrews et al. 2008, 8). This idea invests groups that may be marginalised by existing power structures with a sort of "everyday form of resistance," whether or not they realize that they are practicing it (Scott 1986).

Hirsch and Smith point out that examining written narratives can be a particularly powerful tool to uncover "the testimonies of the disenfranchised" (Hirsch and Smith 2002, 12). Furthermore, personal narratives—even of quotidian experiences—can be "as politically revealing in their own way" (Hirsch and Smith 2002, 12). The tie between narrative as a means to elucidate the personal experiences of the "disenfranchised" and to show their everyday experience in a political light is a particularly important concept for this study. Furthermore, Mishler reminds researchers that while they may put together a narrative of a participant's life, participants are "the historians of their own lives" (Mishler 2004, 101). However, the participant's narrative is still only a representation. The act of telling a story can never exactly "mirror" reality for it is a manipulation that requires simplifying, selecting, and ordering (Hinchman and Hinchman 1997, xvi). A story can be thought of as a meaningful representation of events. Tamboukou describes narrative research as using the triangular conceptual framework of sequence, meaning, representation (2012, 1). However, she insists that research employing narratives cannot use a static framework since narratives are "becomings" and their study must take the process into account (2012, 2). This process of becoming can also be tied to the process of representation.

In Kantian ideas of representationalism, representation is an "*essential* condition" of knowledge and judgment (Colebrook 2000, 52). This Kantian concept connects to the idea that "[o]ur way of knowing the world is temporal, causal and finite" (Colebrook 2000, 52). In this vein, the individual subject becomes no more than the process of representing: "Representation is a process of self-formation through political expression, and not the expression *of* some already

given self. Autonomy is the predicament of the recognition of the representational condition" (Colebrook 2000, 52). The philosophical idea that only that which can be represented can be known takes on a very everyday meaning in the context of this research. Since migrant sex workers are a hidden population, the general public does not know them and can only know them through popular representations.

Representationalism that assumes that "representation is the real 'nature' of our being" is important to many different schools of feminism, including that of Judith Butler (Colebrook 2000, 54). Butler's ideas suggest that "[r]epresentations should be assessed not according to their accuracy but according to their effects" (Colebrook 2000, 54). Also important to feminist theories is the fact that representation has political and linguistic meanings, both of which, feminists such as Millett argue, can be used to oppress women (Millett 1980). These arguments suggest that stereotypes present "alien representations" of women and are a form of "representational violence" and call for a more accurate representation (Colebrook 2000, 62). Colebrook critiques this idea, denying the existence of a "representation that would *not* be alien to my being" (Colebrook 2000, 62). Furthermore, Colebrook goes on to assert that when one represents oneself, one submits to "a trans-individual system of language, signification or representation" (Colebrook 2000, 63). Whether one ascribes to Colebrook's criticism of trying to "overcome the scar of representation" or to a more feminist notion of combating alienating representations with women's own self-representations, this research will provide valuable information comparing the self representations of migrant women to representations of them in popular discourses.

Looking at migrant representations specifically—those of migrants in Senegal—Riccio argues that the "the representation of migrants is often shifting and connected to broader social and political changes" (Riccio 2005). Riccio points to the various representations of migrants by themselves and by others in Senegal, showing how diverse they can be, from trickster to hero (Riccio 2005). These representations in turn influence how migrants and their communities act, such as the representation of the migrant men as wealthy heroes made them desirable husbands at home in Senegal (Riccio 2005).

As I mentioned above, migrant sex workers often live in the hidden spaces of a city, choosing to be invisible as a strategy to escape prosecution or deportation. This life "underground" adds to stereotypes repeatedly used as representations in popular discourses.

Vearey notes, drawing from Keith, that the researcher, who makes such hidden spaces visible through research focused on them, is then tasked with considering "how—and why—they are being represented" (Vearey 2010a, 51). Since representation has certain power, as seen in Millett and Riccio above, representation also comes with responsibility—or at least consequences. As I have noted before, representing someone silences her (Webb 2006). Self-representation can be a response—in a way a Foucauldian resistance to the existing power of representation of that self by others. However, as Palmary points out, even research that tries to document the experiences of the marginalised faces criticism since, again, the researcher still represents the participants (Palmary 2005).

2.7 Conclusion

Even academic literature about the lack of representation of the voices of sex workers and trafficked women seems to not use very many direct quotations from them, only excerpts despite direct quotations being vital to "revealing respondents' depth of emotion, the ways they have organized their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions" (Patton 1990, 24). Agustin offers many useful quotations from her extensive interviews with migrant sex workers, but I am curious what kinds of self-representations emerge when a woman is writing instead of being interviewed, when she has time to gather her thoughts and reflect and revise. Oliveira's research presents insightful excerpts from the diaries of migrant sex workers and interview questions; however, Oliveira, as do many other researchers, recognizes the need for more research on the self-representation of this underrepresented group. In many ways, this project is an extension of Oliveira's work—going deeper into the stories behind the photographs.

Webb points out that representing a person is a way of silencing that person (2009, 104). With sex work known as the oldest "oppression" or the oldest "profession"—depending on one's approach—sex workers are constantly represented by others and, thus, constantly silenced. Representations of migrants are also pervasive, especially in the xenophobic fervor that has plagued South Africa in recent years. The trafficking discourses in South Africa—whether in Parliament over the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill or non-governmental organisations over funding allocation—often represent migrant sex workers as

trafficking victims. This conflation of sex work with trafficking and child prostitution denies adult sex workers choice and agency (Richter 2012). The debate over the abolition of sex work versus its decriminalisation often highlights the words "choice" and "agency." The trafficking section of the Literature Review also shows how even those who emphasize the huge number of women affected by sex trafficking find that "victims" often deny being victims. Sex work abolitionists argue that trafficking victims who refuse to be considered trafficking victims are afraid to give information or are psychologically scarred by captors or do not understand what trafficking is.

Both sides of the debate over the conflation of trafficking victims and migrant sex workers recognize that migrant sex workers in South Africa face great challenges and that some are institutionalised—though they may disagree on how. Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, former politician and executive director of Embrace Dignity, a non-governmental organisation that opposes sex work, says in an "Introduction to Embrace Dignity": "the women we work with have no… very few choices and a lot of it has to do with the institutions that make it difficult for women to break through" (Embrace Dignity 2012). Again "choice" is the key word and its weight is the cause of verbal stumble. Others, like Richter, would point to the law and the criminalisation of sex work as the cause of great challenges to migrant sex workers (Richter 2012). The Literature Review has shown that the criminalization of sex work and the stigmas surrounding migrants and sex workers contribute to barriers for migrant sex workers trying to access legal and health services and allow clients and police to abuse them without fear of reprisal.

Research such as that of Oliveira's, which provided migrant sex workers in Johannesburg with the opportunity to express themselves through photographic images, and Flak's, which involved migrant sex workers in a theatrical production, provide insight into how migrant sex workers represent themselves (Oliveira 2010, Flak 2011). Organisations such as the African Sex Worker Alliance (ASWA), SWEAT, and Sisonke have used digital storytelling in their advocacy work with sex workers—including cross-border migrant sex workers—and increasingly make such stories available on their websites (SWEAT 2012, ASWA 2010). Through Open Society, Valentine has taught storytelling training seminars to sex workers, but these too were for purposes of empowering individuals and advocating for sex worker rights.

While the analysis of this study will of course add to the creation of new representations of the participants, I hope that by incorporating much of their own work and their own words, the participants will have a space in this study—as they do on the pages of this report. By encouraging participants to use extended narratives and offering the opportunity to revise their writing, my study ushers cross-border migrant female sex workers into the discourses about them. After restating my research question and objectives in light of my justification, I will discuss the methodology and research design of the study in Chapter 3.

2.8 JUSTIFICATION

In these debates about their agency and the decriminalisation of their work and the trafficking legislation that supposedly made them victims, the voices of migrant sex workers need to be heard. In arguments over the conflation of migrant sex workers and trafficking victims, agency is key to differentiating the two. Despite the complications involved in determining the extent to which anyone has a choice about anything, I believe the only way to determine agency is by asking the person concerned. Since firsthand accounts of migrants' trajectories into sex work are scarce, many researchers rely on assumptions to support their research on human trafficking for sexual exploitation. Work such as that of Gould and Fick confronts assumptions about migrant sex workers in South Africa, however there is little work on how migrant sex workers see themselves in light of these stereotypes (2008). A better understanding of cross-border migrant, female sex workers' lives will help inform the growing literature about trafficking, the debate over decriminalisation versus abolition, and the work of organisations that profess to help them.

While there remains a lack of academic engagement with storytelling methodology and analysis of the resulting narratives, this innovative kind of research could potentially help to access hidden and marginalised populations and amplify their voices. This study builds on work such as that of Oliveira's and Flak's and brings knowledge of Valentine's methodology to begin to address the lack of academic engagement in storytelling with the hidden population of cross-border migrant, female sex workers in Hillbrow.

2.9 Research Question

How do cross-border migrant, female sex workers in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, represent themselves in the shadow of popular discourses about women sex workers and migrants?

- Are there discrepancies between these representations pertaining to issues of agency, vulnerability, and power?
- Do the representations of this group by others affect their representations of themselves?

2.10 Research Objectives

- To analyze how a group of women, who are so often labeled "vulnerable" because they are women, migrants, and sex workers, represent themselves in creative writing and accompanying narratives and how they understand issues of vulnerability and power
- To identify the discrepancies between the language often used to describe and label migrant women sex workers and the language they use to describe themselves
- To gain insight into the effects of particular representations of migrant women sex workers by prevalent trafficking discourses on migrant sex workers' representations of themselves
- To explore participatory research methodology, using creative writing, to encourage female migrant sex workers to write their own stories to add to and/or challenge the literature about them

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 OVERVIEW

I spent the summer of 2002 volunteering at a public psychiatric center in St. Louis, Missouri. Though patients at first were hesitant to speak to me, as soon as I became a fixture in the wards, they poured out their stories and I listened, sharing meals in the cafeteria and sitting in the tiny courtyard on smoke breaks. I continued to volunteer at the center and won a grant to teach a series of creative writing workshops in 2004. Despite the wide variety of literacy levels—and varying doses of medication—everyone wrote and shared their work. However, one woman, frustrated with her poor spelling, flew into a rage and stormed out of a workshop. She was not well enough to come back; however, before I left, she approached me. "Here's my book," she said and presented a piece of construction paper, folded in half, with glued-on snippets of old newspaper. She was as proud of what she had created as the participants who had written impressive poetry. Her pride made me think about the power of creating something and presenting it and how people who are marginalised, like the mentally ill, are not often given that chance or recognized for doing it. Perhaps this anecdote better endorses creative writing workshops as empowerment exercises than an academic research methodology; however, this potential sense of empowerment and pride could be an interesting part of the research. I want to explore what participants' investment in the research—or the research process more specifically—may mean for the outcome. Considering that this study means to look at self-representations of migrant sex workers in the shadow of prevalent discourses conflating migrant sex workers with victims of trafficking and that one of the defining determinants between migrant sex workers and trafficking victims is whether or not force and coercion was/is involved, a methodology that has the potential to mitigate a participant's sense that there is a right answer for the researcher and enhance her feeling that what she thinks and feels has importance is necessary to explore.

Several of the participants in my workshop arrived on the first day with stories entitled, "My Life as a Sex Worker." Since I said that I wanted to speak with Zimbabwean sex workers, they assumed that I wanted to hear certain things about sex work. But I encouraged them to write about anything that they wanted. Stories of childhood scars and soccer injuries arose and helped create a much more complex picture of the lives of these five migrant sex workers. I wanted this

research methodology to be a response to Vearey's call for more innovative approaches to research in complex urban environments, especially "hidden spaces" (Vearey 2010a).

Undertaking research with migrant sex workers presents many challenges. As described in the literature review, migrant sex workers in South Africa face stigmas around migration and sex work that can lead them to be hesitant to reveal that they are migrants or sex workers or to talk about their job or country of origin. Vearey describes two groups of people as hidden, those who actively use invisibility as a tactic and those who are unseen by the state because they are marginalised. Since sex work is illegal in South Africa, sex workers must remain "invisible" in this sense; moreover, since some migrant sex workers do not have up-to-date legal documentation to be in the country, this population has even more reason to try to remain invisible. These challenges are why I needed the help of the sex worker advocacy organization, Sisonke Sex Worker Movement,[5] to gain access to and the trust of migrant sex workers in Johannesburg.

The data collection for this project was a qualitative, multi-methods approach; I collected data through a desk review, interviews, observations, and a participatory creative writing workshop that stood at the heart of the study and drove the other aspects of the research. Qualitative research was particularly appropriate for a question about how migrant women represent themselves; "In order to capture participants 'in their own terms' one must learn their categories for rendering explicable and coherent the flux of raw reality. That, indeed is the first principle of qualitative analysis" (Lofland 1971 in Patton 1990, 24). I designed the study as a multi-methods approach to see if different self-representations emerged. While I am not sure if it is possible to reach what Lofland termed "raw reality," let alone a make it "explicable and coherent," I did want the different methods—writing, presenting, group discussions, and one-on-one interviews—to encourage the participants to find the medium through which they felt the most comfortable sharing stories about their lives.

In partnership with Sisonke, I identified ten potential participants who were all cross-border migrant, female sex workers from Zimbabwe for the introductory meeting. Though seven came to the introduction meeting and two came to one workshop, only five participants

[5] The Sisonke Se Worker Movement is a sex worker advocacy organisation that is run by sex workers for sex workers; based in South Africa, the organization has an office in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, and is funded by the Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT).

completed the planned workshops and agreed to attend additional workshops and three one-hour interviews each. I had originally envisioned two groups of five participants each for workshops and divided the participants into Group A and Group B for the first three workshops. However, the time demands were great and proved too much for some participants. Since the numbers varied for the first three workshops with each group, I combined the two groups into one group for the last three workshops. Since there were fewer people in the study, I asked and they all agreed to three one-on-one interviews each; I had originally proposed to interview two participants out of ten. The change allowed me to get to know the participants better, and the multiple interviews shed more light on the narratives produced in workshops. Appendix E includes information on which participant attended which workshops.

While my methodology cannot be considered participatory action research because the participants were not involved in all stages—particularly the analysis and potential follow-up—I wanted the research to be as participatory as possible for the same reasons that I wanted to emphasize the participants' voices (Bhana 1999). Not only did I hope for the representations of migrant sex workers in this final report to better reflect their self-representations if they were more involved in the research process, but I also hoped that the involvement would give the participants greater confidence in speaking openly about themselves. I had planned for the participants to direct group discussion and choose writing prompts, but I was surprised in the other ways they logistically shaped the study. While my research may be limited in generalisability, the findings do challenge generalisations about migrant sex workers and offer better insight into the lives of an underrepresented group.

This chapter will present the three main components of my data collection: the desk review of the discourses surrounding trafficking in South Africa, the creative writing workshops with migrant sex worker participants, and the one-on-one interviews with participants. Following these sections, I present ethical considerations, the importance of reflexivity to the study, and then I address my approach to analysis.

3.2 Review of Discourses

Another aspect of the study draws from various written representations of migrant sex workers by non-governmental organisations working on trafficking issues. For the collection of

this data, I undertook a desk review of documents and websites of organisations working on issues of human trafficking. I chose organisations with a presence in South Africa or some influence in the South African dialogue on trafficking and sex work. The desk review consisted of material available online; however, some of the documents are also available to the public in a hardcopy form. The organisations reviewed for the study were:

- New Life Centre
- Not For Sale
- Embrace Dignity
- The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The main themes of the data resulting from the desk review and the comparison of these representations to those of the participants are presented at the end of Chapter 4.

3.3 Workshops and Interviews

3.3.1 Participants

On 19 September 2012, I addressed sex workers who had gathered at the Wits Reproductive Health & HIV Institute (WRHI)[6] in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, for a Sisonke meeting. However, not all of the sex workers present were members of Sisonke. A Sisonke member translated some general information that I presented about the study; I said that we would be writing stories. My requirements for the study were that participants be:

- Zimbabwean cross-border migrants,
- Eighteen years of age or older,
- Identifying as sex workers,
- Living in Johannesburg,

[6] The Wits Reproductive Health & HIV Institute (WHRI), the organisation resulting from the 2010 merger of Enhancing Children's HIV Outcomes (ECHO) and Reproductive and HIV Research Unit (RHRU), is an academic institute focused on HIV, sexual and reproductive health and related conditions. The Institute, associated with the University of the Witwatersrand, conducts research, health, and community programmes and has its head office in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, where this study was held.

- Comfortable writing in English, and
- Willing to commit to three workshop sessions, three hours each.

While I was concerned about the level of literacy among migrant sex workers, I had hoped that Zimbabweans, from an English-speaking country with a high literacy rate, would be more likely to feel comfortable writing in English. I wanted to limit the time a translator might be needed. Additionally, my experiences researching and volunteering in Zimbabwe provide me with a better background of the country's geography, culture, and languages. Finally, the past decade of political and economic unrest in Zimbabwe has caused many Zimbabweans to travel to South Africa. The South African government and South African citizens have had various responses to Zimbabweans. These responses have, at times, attached certain stigma to being a Zimbabwean migrant, which added another layer to the analysis. I wanted to make sure that participants were at least eighteen years old because I wanted to focus on adult women. While de Sas Kropiwnicki has written about how female teenagers in Cape Town make strategic decisions about sex work, resisting labels of victimhood, I wanted to focus on adult women (de Sas Kropiwnicki 2011). Issues of agency and choice are always complex, but additional complexities and debates surround the choices of children. The participants in the study were almost all in their thirties. Ten women agreed to come to the Introduction Meeting on 27 September 2012.

A Zimbabwean PhD candidate in the African Centre for Migration and Society, Duduzile Ndlovu, attended the Introduction Meeting as a translator. Her presence at the introduction meeting as well as the refreshments provided during workshops, workshop materials (stationary and pens), and Pick 'n' Pay (grocery store) vouchers for recognition of time spent in workshops and interviews were paid for by funding from the Centre for International Governance Innovation's Africa Initiative.[7]

The information meeting was part of the informed consent process and provided the time for potential participants to learn more about the research, ask questions, read the information sheets, and sign consent forms. The seven women who came to the meeting said that they felt comfortable writing in English, so the translator did not attend any workshops. During the first workshop, Chidhavazvo said that writing in English was hard for her, and the story that she

[7] http://www.cigionline.org/

brought to the first workshop was partly written in Shona. However, every story she wrote during the workshops was in English, and her confidence in her written English seemed to improve throughout the study. A translator was not needed. The potential participants came to the information session at various times, so they were addressed in groups of one or two. If a person arrived during the explanation of the project, I repeated it. All potential participants read the information sheet provided (see Appendix B) and had the opportunity to ask questions of the translator and me.

3.3.2 Workshop Design

Creative writing workshops began shortly after the Introduction Meeting (see Appendix A for workshop schedule). Workshops were semi-structured to allow participants to help design writing prompts and to allow ample time for discussion. The initial icebreaker exercise and first writing prompt were the only two that did not emerge out of group discussions. Many prompts—such as "Letter to a Young Sex Worker"—were first discussions sparked by other stories that were then more formalized into prompts. Sisonke helped me to secure space for the writing workshops at the University of the Witwatersrand's Reproductive Health and HIV Institute (WRHI) in Hillbrow. Due to scheduling conflicts, one workshop was held in Sisonke's office while the Sisonke staff members were doing outreach work in the community.

The workshop design was based on my years of experience leading and participating in creative writing workshops. Creative writing workshops usually take the structure of a free write session—either prompted by a topic or not—then a reading by each person of her work, followed by a group discussion of each piece. With this basic model, I designed several writing prompts and a very brief, three-point lesson. I wanted a to use basic structure that would be extremely flexible, allowing for lengthier discussions or longer free-writes, depending on the group. This flexibility was also necessary—and added richness to the results—because of the different groups and their shifting dynamics. The flexibility also allowed for more input from the participants. Creative writing workshops, used as a methodology, have the potential to break down the standard set-up of an interviewer asking a question and the participant forced to immediately give a direct response. Researchers working with oral history as a method point to how employing oral histories breaks away from the "assumption that interviewers will conduct interviews in the way men conduct interviews" and thus not account for the "conversational

patterns of women" (Minster 1991 in Smith 2007, 81). Furthermore, Smith argues that "interactive dialogue is more productive than the question and answer turn-taking that marks many interviews" (Smith 2007, 81). While I still provided many prompts for writing exercises that, in a way, replicated the interviewer-interviewee approach, I urged participants to write on any topic that they wished to and sometimes offered multiple prompts from which to choose. I hoped that by offering broad topics, participants would not feel bound to write about details of sex work that they think I would want to hear but write about their everyday lived experiences, which Hirsch and Smith note "are as politically revealing in their own way as any event played out in the public arena" (Hirsch and Smith, 12).

Below is an example of the structure of a workshop from my field notes for the first workshop:

- 10:00-10:15 - Arrivals and introductions
- 10:15-10:40 - 5 minutes to write about your favorite place, 2 minutes to discuss each piece
- 10:40-11:00 – Basic 3-point lesson and introduction of "How I Faced My Fear" topic
- 11:00 - 11:30 – Lunch / thinking / writing.
- 11:30 - 12:00 – Writing on "How I Faced My Fear" topic
- 12:00 - 12:40 – Sharing stories, 5 minutes to read each story, 4 minutes to discuss each story
- 12:40 – 1:00 – Wrap-up comments and discussion of revision and next workshop

This workshop ran close to schedule for Group A, but Group B included only two people, who knew each other, and both brought stories to the first workshop. Thus Group B's workshop structure was very different, consisting of a reading and discussion of the pieces brought as the initial introduction. The lesson and discussion that followed was longer because the participants felt less comfortable with writing a story and also seemed to feel more comfortable expressing their unease at writing. "How I Faced My Fear" became a prompt for a different workshop for Group B and the free write was on "My Favourite Place."

I originally divided the participants into two workshop groups (Group A and Group B) so as to allow more time for everyone's piece to be discussed while still allowing ample time for free writes (under the assumption that participants would not want to write outside of the

workshop). The groups were fortuitously chosen since Group A consisted of the Ndebele[8] speakers (the two friends, Skara and Lungile, and Clara, who was a Shona speaker but felt comfortable with Ndebele) and Group B consisted of the Shona speakers (Cele and Chidhavazvo, who are cousins). Perhaps the fact that Cele and Chidhavazvo were related and Skara and Lungile were close friends before the workshop made them more reticent to speak freely; however, when Groups A and B merged for the final three workshops, there was an initial discomfort that suggested the pre-workshop relationships within the groups had made them safe spaces to share intimate details. I had merged the groups in the fourth, fifth, and sixth sessions because the groups ended up being smaller than I had originally planned and scheduled space at WRHI was limited.

The first introductory prompt and the short lesson were the same for both groups; the rest of the workshops were slightly different for the two groups. The participatory nature of the workshop design resulted in the topics often differing; however, when a topic that one group decided on yielded particular enthusiasm or interest—such as the "Letter to a Young Sex Worker" prompt—I would suggest it as a topic in the other group. The first topic was meant to be an "introduction," a way for each participant to introduce herself to the group as well as write a short piece. I devised "My Favourite Place" as the introductory writing prompt because it seemed simple, general, and less intimidating than other possibilities while still connecting to space and potentially home or migration issues.

The second planned topics (after the introductory prompt) and the short narrative instruction were influenced by a Listening and Storytelling Training Programme for Sisonke members led by Susan Valentine and sponsored by Open Society, which I helped facilitate on the 26th and 27th of September 2012. Valentine had conducted this workshop before with sex workers, employing Narativ's Listening & Storytelling Method (Narativ 2011). Narativ is a U.S.-based company that has trained members of various organisations in their method, including Open Society. Though I discuss this method in the Literature Review, here I would like to point out the particularly significant aspects of the training programme that Valentine ran. Her September 2012 programme had seven participants, one of whom, Skara, then participated in my

[8] Ndebele and Shona are the two most commonly spoken languages in Zimbabwe, aside from English.

study. I had hoped that she might be more vocal in the first workshop with some of what Valentine had gone over in the training, but she was very quiet.

Valentine's focus was on storytelling instead of writing stories, but the structure of her programme was very similar to creative writing workshops that I had been a part of from middle school to graduate school and the design that I used for the workshops in my research. Valentine's aim was to instruct—not gather data—so much of her two-day programme was tutorial. I had not wanted to make the workshops too formally instructive—trying to keep me as the researcher from having more influence over what was written—but I realized during Valentine's programme with sex workers that some instruction on the basics of story would be necessary to allow for a common language to discuss stories.

I designed the lesson around three basic points:

- Show don't Tell
- Beginning/Middle/End
- Why?

The first two points were both part of Valentine's programme, though the concept of "Show don't Tell" was presented instead as "'What Happened' camera," which captures senses not opinions and judgments. This concept emphasizes showing what happened instead of telling what happened, eliminating phrases such as "I felt sad" to enhance more depth of description and emotion. I thought that the "What Happened" camera language seemed more complicated than the popular adage of writing workshops, "Show don't Tell." Drawing from examples in the first writing exercise, I tried to introduce the less as part of the discussion of the stories. This way, I had hoped that the "lesson" would seem to be a more an organic part of the conversation than a lesson; however, it could have also seemed to be a critique on the stories. As I have learned in previous workshops, I tried to turn anything that seemed like a lesson into a positive comment about a part of the participants' stories that illustrated the concept. I used lines from Clara's piece about her favourite place—Zimbabwe—to illustrate the point: "In your piece, you were saying, 'I love my children too much.' You know what said that even more strongly? 'When you said I should be at home making breakfast but I can't'" (group discussion, Oct. 2 workshop). I provided other examples and we discussed what it meant to "show" not "tell."

The next piece of the lesson was a very basic set up of a story's structure of "beginning," "middle," and "end." We also discussed what this meant, and I used a large easel and paper to draw different story arcs to describe a climax of a story. Describing a "climax" of the story led to the third point, the "why." The "why" is short for "Why are you telling this story?" Or "Why does it matter?" While the discussion in Group A was derailed from this concept for awhile, it came back to this idea after an argument over whether to say "sex work" or "bitching." I interjected that each person could use whichever term she wanted to use, and I emphasized that this workshop, although physically located in WHRI building where Sisonke usually has group meetings, is independent of Sisonke. This discussion ended up connecting to a phrase that I had not planned on using but seemed to spark more of a connection to the idea of "story" for the women than the other parts of the lesson: "speak your heart." The participants responded to this idea with more enthusiasm than the other points, and I equated it with the why—that if one speaks her heart, no one will ask why is she writing this?

While the participants seemed to expect—and asked for—instruction about writing, I wanted to keep any instructive information about writing as much an organic part of the discussion as possible—and keep it to a minimum to not influence stories. However, by writing in a group and discussing aspects of "story," the participants seemed to feel as if they were in school again, asking for homework and referring to me as "teacher" in two stories. I had hoped to avoid such a relationship, but it was interesting to note that the women seemed to be more eager to be part of a "class" than part of a research project. Several explained that they had left formal education before they had wanted to and wished they could go back.

I was surprised that the participants requested "homework," since I had assumed that they would not want to take up more time than I had asked for them to provide. This changed the structure of the workshop from what I had originally designed in a welcomed way since the participants were using time at home to write. After the first workshop, workshops began with each participant reading what she had written at home, then we discussed, then the participants would have another free write with a prompt, sharing, and discussion. Depending on the participants and their stories, we would sometimes have two sessions for writing. While I had loosely planned five to thirty minute writing sessions, I would take note of the enthusiasm for the prompt and when each participant seemed to feel as though she had "finished" her story. I allowed for at least five minutes of writing time for every prompt—though most writing sessions

were ten to twenty minutes—to make sure that no one would sit and not write at all. I emphasized in every workshop that anyone could write whatever they wanted to—whether fiction or nonfiction, whether in response to the prompt or on anything else.

During the first three workshops, I provided lunch and refreshments with the CIGI/Africa Initiative funding. However, the participants requested several times that instead of lunch and refreshments I give them the money that I spent on refreshments. For the last three workshops, instead of lunch, I provided refreshments and a R100 Pick 'n' Pay voucher for each participant.

3.3.3 Unstructured Interviews

I conducted three interviews of about one hour each with all five participants (see Appendices A and E for schedule and attendance). A R100 Pick 'n' Pay voucher was given to each participant at the end of the three interviews in lieu of refreshments during the interviews and as an acknowledgement of her time. Interviews were semi-structured around the narratives that participants had written during the workshops. At times, the interviews took on aspects of workshops with free writes or readings of work. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Providing direct quotations from interviews can reveal "respondents' depth of emotion, the ways they have organized their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions" (Patton 1990, 24). By using the stories developed in the workshops as prompts and the basis of questions in the interviews, the participants were part of the process of driving the content that came out of the interviews. The group discussions had, at times, been somewhat akin to "group interviews," which can add insight as participants build on and inspire one another's answers (Patton 1990). I found these discussions helpful to guide the interviews and shape open-ended interview questions.

As the researcher, I must be acutely aware that "unstructured" interviews are still part of a planned research project with a purpose. Placing too much emphasis on the participant's power to direct an unstructured interview can mask the power relations in an interview. Palmary points out that asking questions such as "start where you would like" in an interview is "disingenuous" and "denies that there was a clear purpose to the research":

> *Rather, these kinds of statements give the illusion of an equitable research relationship driven by the participants which ultimately serves to mask the power that we have to represent aspects of her testimony as 'proper' knowledge or useful information.*
>
> (Palmary 2005, 38)

Presenting direct quotations from unstructured interviews in a report belies the researcher's influence. Not only do I, in the writing of this report, choose the quotations to include, I was also the one to transcribe the tape—making decisions on how to represent the audible in writing. Thus reflexivity is important and necessary to accompany the analysis of unstructured interviews.

3.4 Reflexivity: The Role of the Researcher

I believe that in a qualitative study of this kind—especially one that includes a participatory aspect and unstructured interviews—the role of the research is particularly important; "The validity and reliability of qualitative data depend to a great extent on the methodological skill, sensitivity, and integrity of the researcher" (Patton 1990, 11). In qualitative research, Patton declares the researcher herself to be the "instrument" (Patton 1990, 14).

My background is not as a social or political scientist but as a writer. What drew me to the unorthodox method of creative writing workshops was my own experience with them. Since I was in grade school, I have been involved with creative writing workshops. In college, I was able to participate in creative workshops with professional writers such as David Foster Wallace. I have won grants to teach creative writing workshops in places such as a public psychiatric centre in St. Louis, Missouri, and a refugee English class in Durban, South Africa. My three-year graduate program in creative writing was mainly made up of workshops. From my experience teaching and participating in creative writing workshops, I not only feel confident using the structure as a research method, but also I know how powerful these workshops can be. As someone who does not like to share personal information, I found the prospect of memoir writing terrifying. However, in supportive writing environments, I was amazed how much I was willing to share. Writing my thoughts down—having the chance to get out the "whole story" in my own words, uninterrupted—was somehow much easier for me than trying to tell someone a story directly. This bias I have, this love of writing, made me enthusiastic about the research from the

beginning; however, it also colours my expectations for and understanding of the results. For me, writing a story has fewer constraints and not the social conventions and considerations of conversing with another person. However, my participants might have felt differently. Throughout my analysis and discussion, I must be very aware that I come from a different background than my participants. While this section is dedicated to reflexivity, I mean for the whole discussion of results and analysis to include thoughts on my role as the researcher.

The nature of this study—and its lack of precedent—made the role of the researcher particularly complicated. I mentioned in Section 3.1 that I was torn on the idea of including a lesson in the first workshop. This lesson seemed to put me in the role of the teacher—not only the researcher—which could very well have influenced the data. I did not refer to the lesson in the workshop as "a lesson," letting the conversation about the initial stories drift into a discussion (led by me) about stories. However, I was very clearly in a leadership role, dictating when workshops would be held, how long we would write, when we would end the session, and making countless other small decisions.

As I have mentioned above, representing someone is a way of silencing her (Webb 2009). While my hope is to amplify migrant sex workers' voices in the discussion about them and trafficking discourses, I am still silencing them in a way by mediating their voices through this report. By presenting their self-representations, I give the illusion that their unmediated voices come through the report; however, I still made decisions on which pieces to include in their entirety and which to provide excerpts of and which to exclude entirely. While these decisions came, in part, from a need to prioritize information due to limited space, the actions still present a slight adulteration of the participants' original work. As I have mentioned, this runs the risk of presenting an "illusion of an equitable research relationship" (Palmary 2005, 38). While I try to reflect on how I am presenting the participants' self-representations throughout my analysis, I want to remind the reader of the limitations of a researcher and the silencing that necessarily takes place in the act of representing (Webb 2009).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

By writing about perceptions of cross-border migrant sex workers, I contribute to the discourse I am examining. My own subjectivity inevitably affects my analysis and acts as a filter

of the voices that I am trying to amplify. To minimize these effects, I constantly reflected on my own thoughts and biases while conducting my research and analysis.

The very nature of examining a person's vulnerability puts a participant in a potentially vulnerable position emotionally. Workshops and interviews focusing on people's lives brought up sensitive subject matter that could have negatively affected participants. To try to minimize these effects, I reminded all participants that they could withdraw from the study at any time for any reason whatsoever. The time away from work did affect the lives of several participants, who had to miss scheduled workshops to try to earn money during that time instead.

Another ethical consideration for this research was that participants wrote about their involvement in sex work, which is criminalized in South Africa. Participants might have been concerned about revealing too much about themselves and their legal status in South Africa. I stressed that all participants use the pseudonyms chosen while writing and discussing in workshops. While I could not guarantee confidentiality or anonymity because of the creative writing workshop with multiple participants, I encouraged all participants to use pseudonyms. Participants were also reminded throughout the workshop that they could respond in any way to any prompt in a workshop and that they could write fiction or nonfiction. While I meant for this to be a way of helping participants if they felt uncomfortable writing about a particular topic or about their own life, the participants' choice of fiction or nonfiction became another part of my analysis.

Consent for the use of written narratives and interview transcripts in my master's thesis, partner and affiliated research projects, publication in scholarship journals and future academic work were obtained through written consent contracts. Consent was also obtained for the interviews to be digitally sound recorded.

The consent process began in my address at a Sisonke meeting on 19 September 2012, when I explained the study and Pamela Chakuvinga, a Sisonke representative, translated, as I mentioned above. Interested women signed up to come to an information meeting on 27 September 2012. While I had scheduled the information meeting for one hour at the Sisonke Office (Sisonke workers were out of the office on other business), potential participants came over the course of three hours, which allowed me to speak to the women one at a time with a translator present. However, the translator was not needed. I spoke about the project and gave each woman time to read the information sheet. The information sheet, reproduced in Appendix

B, was for the women to keep and included the phone numbers of counselling and support services. The women were offered the opportunity to ask questions and some did. Notoria was particularly concerned with the tape recording of her voice. She and Cele wanted confirmation that I would not be taking any photographs of them because both had been photographed without their consent. Additionally, I pointed out key items on the information sheet and the consent form—namely that I would be recording the workshops and the interviews and that anyone could leave the study at any time for any reason. I also pointed out that my supervisor's phone number was also included in case anyone felt uncomfortable with me or with any part of my study. The women signed the consent for the creative writing workshops (included in Appendix C). While I mentioned the interviews in the information session, I said that the women would have time to decide whether or not they would be willing to participate in the interviews over the course of the workshops. During the last workshop, I explained the interviews in greater depth—namely that they would focus on discussions of the stories. The women were again given the same information sheet (slightly revised to include the change from refreshments to Pick 'n' Pay vouchers) and given time to ask questions about the interview process before signing the interview consent form (included in Appendix D).

The proposal for this study was approved by the University of Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee (nonmedical) on 1 October 2012 with the clearance certificate number H120814.

3.6 Analysis

To analyze my raw data, I used thematic analysis, drawing heavily from discourse analysis. From a social constructionist perspective, I analyzed these texts under the assumption that meaning is created in the process of the interview and "reality exists in a fluid and variable set of social constructions" (Durrheim and Terre Blanche 2006, 6). At times in my analysis, I also employ observational analysis in order to bring the reader into the setting to better understand the context of the workshops (Patton 1990). Relatedly, reflexivity is a crucial part of my analysis since the participatory nature of the project as well as the flexible structure of the workshops and interviews make the role of the researcher particularly influential. My reflection on my own interpretations of the data and how my own personal biases may affect my analysis is

also essential to validate my research. Rigorous field notes and intense reflexivity add validity to my analysis. From a constructionist paradigm, I believe that "meaning is hidden and must be brought to the surface through deep reflection" and that "[t]his reflection can be stimulated by the interactive researcher-participant dialogue" (Ponterotto 2005, 129). The interaction between my participants and myself as researcher is an important part of my data and analysis. Furthermore, reflecting on my own bias and on how to best present my raw data in my final report helps me to minimize my own subjective influence on my participants' narratives.

In the literature review, I present Hinchman and Hinchman's definition of narrative: "narratives (stories) in the human sciences should be defined provisionally as discourses with a clear sequential order that connects events in a meaningful way for a definite audience, and thus offer insights about the world and/or people's experiences of it" (1997, xvi). The underlying assumption of this study is stated in this definition, that stories are *meaningful* and provide *insight*. The meaning and insight garnered from the participants' stories drive the other aspects of this study and are at the centre of this study.

In my analysis of the results, I present the participants' work as unedited; I tried to type the electronic version of their handwritten work to be as close a representation as possible—including spelling, spacing, and punctuation. While, at times, this text may be harder for the reader to read, I hope it also gives the reader a closer to connection to the participants' work and allows the reader to better judge my analysis. Skara, Lungile, and Chidhavazvo all typed several of their own pieces. When quotations from these stories appear in the report, I note that the participant typed the piece herself. In the following chapter, I discuss the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section begins with an introduction of the main themes that emerged in the stories, discussions, and interviews, a sketch of the participants' backgrounds, and a summary of key themes from the desk review. Following this section comes the results of the desk review and discussion. This chapter goes on to present and discuss the results of the workshops and interviews divided into sections by the six main themes and subthemes, which were determined through my grounded approach analysis. Since the story, discussion, and interview data is entwined thematically, it is presented together and the discussion of the results is interwoven. This chapter concludes with the comparison of the representations from the workshops, discussions, and interviews with the representations found in the desk review.

Five very different women, who are all Zimbabwean migrant sex workers in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, told me many different stories over the course of two months. Using open coding and reviewing the narratives they wrote, the details and views they shared in class, the stories they told me in one-on-one interviews, and my field notes of their interactions with one another and with me, I determined six themes: Conflicting Representations of Sex Work, Double Existence and Stigma, Health and Safety, Importance of Independence, Morality of Remittances, and Mobility. These themes—and subthemes—are presented in Table 1 below with participants' quotations that are particularly representative of each theme. While I have coded the data into themes, the analysis reveals that these themes are also fluid—certain issues and representations cross multiple themes and are addressed in several sections, albeit approached from different views. Originally I had approached the data thinking in terms of three categories—power, vulnerability, and agency; however, working with the data, I realized that these broad ideas were woven through all the stories and are interconnected. Although I brought up the words "vulnerability," "agency," and "power" in workshops, the participants did not have a common understanding of these words. From this discussion, participants wrote on the topics: "A Time I Felt Strong" and "A Time I Felt Weak"; "strong" and "weak" were the words that participants decided on after discussing "power" and "vulnerability." Despite the lack of the actual words, issues of "vulnerability," "power," and "agency" are ubiquitous throughout the data.

TABLE 1: MAIN THEMES FROM STORIES, DISCUSSIONS, AND INTERVIEWS

Theme	Representative Quotation
Conflicting Representations of Sex Work • Ambiguity • Money • Age	"This business is trick sometimes. It is dangerous and nice at the same time." – Skara, *To New Sex Workers*
Doubled Existence and Stigma • Doubled • Makweriekwerie • Home	"I made money from this sport to an extend of enjoying this job. I didn't have problems of school fees for my child and her upkeep I even bought all the furniture and electricals in my house, had to rent 3 rooms now and my mother was wondering wat kind of job I was doing bt I lied to her saying I was working at Nandos" – Cele, *My Life as a Sex Worker*
Health and Safety • Disease • Violence • Responsibility	"I go back home crying in pain, because I didn't get my treatment." – Lungile, *The Greatest Threat to My Health in South Africa*
Importance of Independence • Independence • Pride	"From that I learn that you must not trust anyone but yourself." – Skara, *The Big Knife*
Morality of Remittances • Superiority • Motherhood	"We're Zimbabweans. We came to look for money to support our families or kids. The South Africans, they come to the hotels to look for money to drink beer!" – Lungile, workshop discussion
Mobility • Across Borders • Between Jobs	"After having sufferd a lot in Zimbabwe I decided to go to South Africa where I heard there are greener pastures but my problem was that I didn't have passport to use I just decided to go and jump the border I managed to jump and travelled until I reached Joburg" – Cele, *The Story of my Greatest Challenge Living in South Africa*

Coding in thematic analysis is particularly challenging with a limited number of narratives from a small group of individuals; however, I believe these broad themes capture the issues that continued to emerge throughout the written narratives, group discussions, and one-on-one interviews. Different issues were represented as more important or pressing by different participants, and this analysis reflects as much in that certain participant's words are more pronounced in particular sections. For example, Clara continually emphasized the freedom and independence that sex work allowed her and that she would not let anything like a boyfriend or love "disturb" her job (Clara, group discussion October 11).

Below, Table 2 summarizes key background information of the participants. I have included Cecelia and Notoria, although they both attended only one workshop, because their contributions to workshop discussions come up in the analysis (See Appendix E for exact dates of workshop attendance). Notoria attended the information session and the first Group A workshop; since she did not attend subsequent workshops, I was not able to transcribe her written narratives except what she read to the group. Cecelia was a new sex worker who accompanied Chidhavazvo to the second Group B workshop. The beginning of that workshop turned into a mini-information session, during which time Cecelia went over the information sheet with Chidhavazvo's help. While she did not write a story, she participated in the group discussion that day, and her contributions are incorporated into the analysis. As Table 2 shows, Lungile and Skara attended the most workshops. They also asked me for help typing their stories. I arranged time at two computers for them at the WHRI computer lab and helped them type two stories each and then printed out copies for them. This additional time is not recorded in this table; however, the stories they chose to type first are noted in the analysis and were the opening prompt to their first unstructured interviews.

Whether discussing empowering experiences or vulnerabilising experiences, the women mostly presented themselves as active agents—responsible for their past and their future—in their stories, discussions, and interviews. As Wojcicki and Malala argue, sex workers are decision makers; though they may be vulnerable in some ways, they are not "powerless" (2001, 111). Where participants did use language stating or implying a "lack of choice," the sentiment was undercut by an insistence on a decision, a reaction, or a plan. This awareness of agency was one of the strongest threads through the stories as well as the finding that poses the greatest challenge to popular representations of migrant sex workers as helpless and enslaved.

TABLE 2: PARTICIPANTS' BACKGROUNDS

Participant Pseudonym	*Age*	*Place of Birth*	*Started Sex Work*	*Arrived in SA*	*Workshops Attended*	*Number of Interviews*
Lungile	36	Bulawayo	2001 (SA)	2001	6	2
Skara	35	Bulawayo	2003 (SA)	2003	6	2
Chidhavazvo	40	Mutare	2008 (SA)	2008	5	2
Clara	37	Harare	1997 (Zim.)	2008	4	2
Cele	29	Chinoyi	2002 (Zim.)	2012	3	2
Notoria	-	Zimbabwe	2006 (SA)	2005	1	-
Cecilia	45	Nyanga	2012 (SA)	2012	1	-

The desk review of representations of migrant sex workers by organisations with a focus on trafficking in South Africa yielded a similar result to the abolitionist discourses mentioned in the Literature Review—a conflation of all sex work with trafficking. While the IOM's depiction of migrant sex workers was harder to identify because of the organisation's broad focus, it, too, subtly conflated migrants and trafficking victims in literature about human trafficking. What became clear in the review was that many organisations that had a presence in South Africa and were involved in disseminating information about human trafficking conflated migrant female sex workers and trafficking victims. The main themes that emerged from the literature review were: the conflation of migrant sex workers with trafficking victims, the denial that sex workers have a choice in what they do, sex work is not considered work and denied dignity. In the discussion of my results, I will show how this depiction of migrant sex workers as victims is both very different from—but at the same time seems to subtly influence—the migrant sex workers' self-representations. The sections "Conflicting Representations of Sex Work" and "Double Existence and Stigma" offer the most blatant instances of the influence of the trafficking discourses on the self-representations.

This chapter will now provide the results and discussion of the desk review. Then the chapter provides an in-depth analysis and discussion of each theme coded in the fieldwork, presenting participants' narratives and incorporating information from workshop discussions and

interviews into the analysis. The chapter closes with a comparison of the representations of migrant sex workers by others with the participants' self-representations.

4.2 Desk Review

4.2.1 Introduction

Through the literature review and the desk review, I looked at discourses pertinent to migrant sex workers and trafficking victims in South Africa. In this section, I present the findings of my desk review, offering a close analysis of the websites of organisations with a base in South Africa that influence the discourses on trafficking. Table 3 below lists the main themes of the results of the desk review—the conflation of migrant sex workers with trafficking victims, the denial of sex workers' agency, the denial of sex worker dignity or work, the assertion that sex workers need help—and representative quotations from the review.

TABLE 3: MAIN THEMES OF DESK REVIEW

Theme	Representative Quotation
Conflation of Migrant Sex Workers with Trafficking Victims	"The [Coalition Against Trafficking Women] has influenced anti-sex industry and anti-trafficking legislation in the Philippines, Venezuela, Bangladesh, Japan, Sweden and the United States" (CATW 2011).
Denial of Migrant Sex Workers' Agency	"Embrace Dignity recognizes prostitution as a form of violence against women. In conditions of gender inequality and deep poverty, it is false to assume that people involved in prostitution are exercising free choice and agency" (Embrace Dignity 2011).
Denial of Migrant Sex Worker Dignity or Work	"The vision of the New Life Centre is to free women and children who find themselves caught in a web of prostitution and trafficked in South Africa; to reunite them with their families and re-integrate them back into the society as productive, responsible and dignified members of the society" (New Life Centre 2012).
Sex Workers in Need of Help	"**Prostitution** is the oldest **oppression**. Not the oldest profession" (Embrace Dignity 2012)

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) acknowledges that "[t]he proper identification of migrants as victims of trafficking remains the most enduring challenge to their effective protection, both for the IOM and its government and civil society partners," as I have discussed above in the literature review (IOM 2011, 13). The very wording of this statement points to the confusion that can arise when identifying "migrants" and identifying "victims of trafficking," blurring the line between them with the phrase "migrants as victims of trafficking." This desk review finds that many organisations that are involved in the human trafficking discourses and have a presence in South Africa—with a variety of mandates, whether to rescue victims of trafficking or to raise awareness—conflate all migrant sex workers with victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation. To examine the language that these organisations propagate to contribute to and shape discourses on human trafficking in South Africa, I will present each organisation individually: the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, Embrace Dignity, Not For Sale, the Salvation Army, the New Life Centre, and the IOM. While all non-governmental organisations, some of these organisations raise money expressly for public policy advocacy work and attempt to raise awareness in the community, giving them all power to influence human trafficking discourses in South Africa.

The U.S. Department of State's 2012 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report lists South Africa as a tier-two watch list country for trafficking into, out of, and within the country. While no empirical data exists for the number of trafficking victims in South Africa, media headlines and non-governmental organisations highlight human trafficking as a serious problem. Research studies, such as the South African government commissioned HSRC report, state both that the "scale of the problem" of human trafficking is unclear because of its "hidden nature" and that it is a growing problem that "warrants intervention on all fronts" (HSRC 2010). Similar sensational language—often without references to academic studies—was found throughout the desk review.

4.2.2 The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women

The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW)[9] is an international organisation with representation in South Africa. From its very first introductory statement under its website category "Who We Are," the organisation conflates sex work and trafficking. While the group

[9] http://www.catwinternational.org/

proclaims its "mission" to be "to end human trafficking in our lifetime," its history quickly reveals that it considers sex work and trafficking to be implicitly tied (CATW 2011). The "History" of CATW, prominently placed after the concise mission statement on the website, explains when CATW began and where it operates, then continues:

> *Whereas five years ago, it looked like there was little resistance to governments seeking to legalize prostitution as a form of work, and who were considering regulating the sex industry and taxing it as a 'sex sector,' today this situation has changed. The CATW has influenced anti-sex industry and anti-trafficking legislation in the Philippines, Venezuela, Bangladesh, Japan, Sweden and the United States.*
>
> (CATW 2011)

Implicit in this statement—at the forefront of CATW's presentation of itself on its website—is that trafficking and sex work are linked and that sex work in itself is a part of the "sexual exploitation" against which CATW is fighting. Furthermore, the statement declares CATW's influence in legislation around the world. Important to the South African context is CATW's work in the United Nations Transnational Crime Convention's Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (also known as the Palermo Protocol), to which South Africa is a signatory. The Palermo Protocol's definition of trafficking is the widely accepted definition.

4.2.3 Embrace Dignity

Embrace Dignity[10] is part of CATW's regional network and is based in Cape Town. Bannered across the homepage of Embrace Dignity's website is "**Prostitution** is the oldest **oppression**. Not the oldest profession" (Embrace Dignity 2012; emboldened in original). Flashing above is an advertisement for *Masiphakameni*, which is translated from isiXhosa as "let us rise." This name, like Embrace Dignity, also implies that sex work is lowly or without dignity. *Masiphakameni* is "a self-empower, self-lead group for the survivors of prostitution and sex trafficking." This is another way that Embrace Dignity conflates sex work and sex trafficking—

[10] http://embracedignity.org.za/

literarily attempting to make the phrases synonymous and literally putting the "survivors" of both in the same room, supposedly having suffered the same ordeal. The research seminar advertised on Embrace Dignity's website is "Sex Work/Prostitution in South Africa: Issues and Challenges." The mere title of this seminar questions whether or not sex work is work and frames it as a problem. The name of the organisation itself—Embrace Dignity—is at once a command and a judgment, ordering those involved in the sex work industry (whether trafficked or not) to embrace dignity (implying they are separated from dignity) and judging sex work to be inherently void of dignity. While even its name is infused with this idea, the organisation itself sums up its representation of sex work with this statement that opens its "Research" under "Our Work" information: "Embrace Dignity recognizes prostitution as a form of violence against women. In conditions of gender inequality and deep poverty, it is false to assume that people involved in prostitution are exercising free choice and agency" (Embrace Dignity 2012). Representing sex workers as "prostituted women" takes agency away by stating that the women have been prostituted by someone (Embrace Dignity 2012). Embrace Dignity purports the notion that all women in sex work are the victims of violence, "physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual harm."

Not only is this group the representative of CATW, an internationally influential group, in South Africa, but it also professes "Public education" as part of its work—"deepening public awareness of the links between poverty, exploitation and human rights, through a concerted information and education campaign in the media and in civil society" (Embrace Dignity 2012). However, far from an anti-trafficking agenda, Embrace Dignity announces its mission as: "To work with civil society and government to advocate for law reform that recognizes prostitution as violence against women." CATW, by linking its own anti-trafficking mission to this group, seems to further conflate sex work and trafficking. Immediately beneath Embrace Dignity's mission statement on its website is a highlighted box:

> *Article 4 of the Declaration of Human Rights calls for the prohibition of slavery or servitude. Prostitution and sex trafficking are forms of slavery and servitude that persist in the 21st century. Our challenge is to end slavery and servitude in all forms*.
>
> (Embrace Dignity 2012)

These boxed-off sentences are presented as if a direct quotation from the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights; however, Article 4 reads: "No one shall be held in slaver or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms" (United Nations 2013). By filtering UN language through its own representation of slavery, Embrace Dignity colours trafficking discourses in South Africa. Embrace Dignity explicitly links trafficking and sex work and slavery throughout its website, representing sex workers as slaves without agency in need of dignity and rescue. Also of interest to note is that the "team" of six that comprises Embrace Dignity does not include any former sex workers or trafficking victims. The lack of voices of sex workers and trafficking victims was common throughout the websites reviewed.

4.2.4 NOT FOR SALE

Not For Sale[11] is a U.S.-based non-governmental organization with a presence in South Africa that, on its website, professes to create "tools that engage business, government and grassroots in order to incubate and grow social enterprises to benefit enslaved and vulnerable communities" (Not For Sale 2013). Not only does Not For Sale have a presence on the ground in South Africa—and is building a shelter for victims of trafficking in Cape Town—information the organisation propagates is used by other organisations influential in South Africa, such as the Salvation Army. While Not For Sale is not as blatant as groups like CATW in both conflating sex work and trafficking and pushing for the abolition of sex work to combat trafficking—both points are subtly implied.

Under Not for Sale's section on "Slavery," is a chapter on "Legal Efforts to Curb Sex Trafficking," a section suggestively placed between "Trafficking Children: Control and Violence" and "Dignity Beyond The Walls" (Not for Sale 2013). While not directly stating a position on the abolition of sex work, Not For Sale uses language that makes clear value judgments on sex work, and in turn, sex workers. Giving examples of Germany and the Netherlands, Not For Sale presents the argument that "[t]he lawmakers of these nations were persuaded that exploitation thrives in environments of illegality" and that if "prostitution" will always exist, better regulate it. However, Not For Sale is quick to critique this idea, pointing out a "booming underground sex trade" of "foreign-born women," again linking migrant women

[11] http://www.notforsalecampaign.org/

with illegality, vulnerability, and trafficking. Moreover, the organisation argues: "The legalization of the sex trade makes the prosecution of traffickers, pimps, and brothel owners almost impossible" (Not For Sale 2013). This sentence again conflates trafficking with the sex industry—assuming that these are the people "prostituting" foreign women. More denial of the agency of any woman who travels for sex work follows: "If at any point the girl *actually did consent* to work as a prostitute, all subsequent forms of coercion will find legal cover" (Not For Sale 2013; emphasis my own). Making "Legal Efforts to Curb Sex Trafficking" a section mainly about legal efforts to curb prostitution is a conflation of sex work and trafficking, a point made stronger by the choice of the section's closing quotation from Swedish European Parliament member, Marianne Eriksson: "What differentiates us from the Netherlands and Germany…is that we link the 'slave trade' with prostitution and pornography" (Not For Sale 2013). Not only does Not For Sale conflate sex workers with victims of trafficking, it also quantifies the problem of trafficking without providing references for the numbers or explanations of the research that secured those numbers. The slogan "30 Million Slaves" that is prominently displayed throughout the website and the organisation's annual report is not cited. On issues of forced labour, the IOM's report on trafficking refers to numbers from the International Labour Office (ILO). The ILO's 2012 report estimates that "20.9 million people are victims of forced labour globally" (ILO 2012, 13). From "20.9 million people are victims of forced labour" to "30 Million Slaves" is a huge jump and displays how the nuance and complexity can be lost as organisations sensationalize issues whether to raise awareness by catching attention or to gain funding.

4.2.5 Salvation Army South Africa

The Salvation Army[12] in South Africa also focuses on anti-trafficking and provides a toll-free hotline through which to report suspected trafficking victims. While purporting to be concerned with all human trafficking, the website only offers a definition of "sex trafficking":

> *the movement of women and children, usually from one country to another but sometimes within a country, for purposes of prostitution or some other form of sexual slavery. It includes the recruitment, transportation, harbouring, transfer, or sale of women and*

[12] http://www.salvationarmy.org.za/index.php/our-work/community-care-a-development/anti-human-trafficking

> *children for these purposes. Most sexual trafficking also includes some form of coercion—such as kidnapping, threats, intimidation, assault, rape, drugging or other forms of violence.*
>
> (Salvation Army Southern Africa 2012)

While this definition shares features of the Palermo Protocol definition of trafficking, the language differs slightly, causing a huge difference in the meaning and a total conflation of not only smuggling but also sex work. The statement that not all but "most sexual trafficking" includes coercion completely denies agency to anyone who travels for sex work. This definition, beginning "It [sex trafficking] is the movement of women and children," neither points to any "force" moving women and children—allowing for this movement being of their own volition. Men are also excluded from this definition perpetuating womenandchildren discourses, denying women agency and seemingly pathologizing their distance from the home (Palmary 2010). Furthermore, this website also provides information on recognizing a trafficked person:

- *They are often unable to speak the local language.*
- *They appear to be trapped in their job or the place they stay.*
- *They may have bruises and other signs of physical abuse.*
- *They do not have identification documents (passport, ID, refugee or asylum papers).*

While these identifiers may be true of victims of trafficking, they are as broad as the definition of "sex trafficking" provided on the website and—aside from the marks of physical abuse and a vague reference to "trapped"—are identifiers of many cross-border migrants in South Africa. These "identifiers" as well as statistics—such as, there are 10,000 children prostitutes in Johannesburg—are attributed to World Hope South Africa (part of World Hope International).

4.2.6 New Life Centre

While the organisations in the review so far have had a broader focus on trafficking throughout South Africa—and the world—I now turn to the New Life Centre,[13] a non-

[13] http://www.newlifecentre.org.za/

governmental organisation that works in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. There are more organisations near Hillbrow with a focus on "sex work and trafficking," but Richter notes that these small operations do not have a web presence, excluding them from the desk review and thus limiting this study.[14] However, the New Life Centre's website provides insight into work being done on the ground in Hillbrow. The organisation's website seems to immediately equate "women and children" by commanding "SAVE OUR CHILDREN" below its name on its website's home page but announcing that it works with "women and children" (New Life Centre 2012). The Centre's mission goes further to conflate women and children as well as sex work and trafficking:

> *The vision of the New Life Centre is to free women and children who find themselves caught in a web of prostitution and trafficked in South Africa; to reunite them with their families and re-integrate them back into the society as productive, responsible and dignified members of the society.*
>
> (New Life Centre 2012)

Again, "prostitution" and "trafficked" are words placed side-by-side. Words such as "caught" imply a lack of ability to leave sex work, which is not referred to as "work" but as "prostitution." Furthermore, this quotation implies that sex workers—whether trafficked or not—have been separated from society and suggests that they are not "productive, responsible and dignified" while away from society. The New Life Centre states on its website that "there are between 2500 and 5000 women and children living in the Hillbrow area who are sexually exploited, sold as sex slaves or are using prostitution as a form of income because no other option exists" (2012). Here again, the number provided combines "women and children" and "sex slaves" as well as those who choose sex work for the income. Out of the approximately 100,000 people in Hillbrow, 5,000 is a significant number (Venables 2011). Without any reference to any study to back up these figures, labeling 5 percent of an area's population as victims without any options and in need of rescue could potentially add to existing stigma.

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[14] Personal correspondence, October 2012.

4.2.7 International Organization for Migration

The IOM,[15] with its focus on migration, presents more distinction between migrant sex workers and trafficking victims at times. However, the organisation's 2011 Annual Report of activities does veer into the murky question of the agency of poor migrants—especially when restrictive immigration policies are at play:

> *Overly restrictive immigration policies also increase levels of vulnerability by enlarging the pool of migrants in an irregular situation and leaving them inadequately protected and at the mercy of criminal groups and unscrupulous employers. Although migrants are often aware of the inherent risks and dangers of irregular migration, a dearth of viable opportunities at home and the near absence of safe and regular migration channels leave them with little choice.*
>
> (IOM 2011, 10)

Still, this portrayal of migrants' vulnerabilities presents a more complex view of migrants' lives and choices than many trafficking discourses. The IOM's report opens with numbers—nine million people trafficked in the last decade and thirty-two billion U.S. dollars in annual profits from "the exploitation of victims of trafficking"—however the IOM goes on to emphasize that quantifying trafficking—an underground activity—is nearly impossible (IOM 2011, 10). Despite this disclaimer about the lack of empirical evidence of trafficking, these IOM numbers reappear as "fact" on many of the other organisations' websites included in this review.

At times, the report blurs the line between migrants and trafficking victims in subtle ways: "Migrants, and particularly migrants in an irregular situation, are highly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, but only a few are ever identified as victims of trafficking" (IOM 2011, 10). The construction of this sentence implies that migrants, being vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, are therefore trafficking victims but not identified as such. While the overall context and definition of trafficking makes clear that not all migrants are trafficking victims, subtle uses of language like this begin to conflate irregular migration with trafficking. In turn, this conflation portrays deportations as humanitarian endeavors to return victims to their homes.

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[15] http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home.html

In the IOM report's section on East and Southern Africa, the report notes that "women and girls are more vulnerable to trafficking than men" and that "Women are also prone to accepting job offers that end up in exploitative conditions including prostitution" (2011, 68). Again, the wording of the sentence subtly implies that prostitution is one of these exploitative conditions, seeming to exclude the possibility of prostitution as a job that is not exploitative. In the "Preventing Trafficking" section, the report mentions the IOM efforts to prevent trafficking by "raising awareness among aspirant migrants in countries of origin about the risks of irregular migration and human trafficking" (IOM 2011, 11). Of interest is the connecting of "irregular migration and human trafficking." While the IOM, understandably, wants to warn aspirant migrants about how irregular migration could leave one vulnerable to human trafficking, language like this can easily be manipulated as it is filtered through other organisations on the ground in South Africa—just as the other organisations mentioned took the estimates of hundreds of thousands of victims and billions of dollars of profit and presented them as facts. Even the IOM's figure of an estimated 800,000 people trafficked every year becomes "as many as one million people" trafficked annually on IOM South Africa's website.[16] This site—unlike many other anti-trafficking sites—offers a "photo gallery" of "the unseen side of human trafficking" in South Africa (IOM 2012c). The photos are paired with the stories of four female trafficking victims—three of whom were trafficked for sexual exploitation. While protecting the identities of the victims, the IOM presents pictures such as "a girl works on the street of Bloemfontein":

> *It could be any street in any city in South Africa, where young women or girls are trafficked and forced into commercial sex exploitation*.
>
> (IOM 2012c)

Taking the specific story of a trafficking victim and placing it over a picture of a young woman on a street—not explicitly a victim or even a sex worker—and then expanding the issue to "any street in any city in South Africa" takes the focus off of the woman's story and broadens it to encompass a nameless figure walking at night. Subtle juxtapositions such as this can seep into

[16] http://iom.org.za/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=16&Itemid=18&lang=en

popular thought to create a link between trafficking victim and the woman on the street in Bloemfontein—or Hillbrow, which is also pictured in the photo gallery as a place full of victims of trafficking (2012c).

4.2.8 Conclusion

This section has reviewed a variety of anti-trafficking organisations that play a part in trafficking discourses in South Africa. While the IOM provides more precise language, speaking about migrants and trafficking victims, the organisation's information on trafficking is always qualified with disclaimers about the inability to quantify human trafficking because of its underground nature; however, other organisations—such as Not For Sale—seem to drop such disclaimers and state such numbers offered by organisations like IOM and ILO as fact. Similarly, this review shows how international organisations supporting local organisations—such as the relationship between CATW and Embrace Dignity—can conflate issues such as trafficking and sex work by the differences in mission statements: CATW's anti-trafficking mission becomes a mission to rehabilitate prostitutes on the ground in South Africa through Embrace Dignity. Moreover, the language throughout the websites noted in this review—with IOM a notable exception—conflates migrant sex workers with trafficking victims and portrays sex work from a prostitution abolitionist perspective, that sex work is not work and that sex workers are not there by choice (as discussed in the Literature review). This bias appears in the consistent use of "prostitution" instead of "sex work."

This review also highlights a problem that Gould, Richter, and Palmary critiqued in another important document to the trafficking discourse in South Africa, the 2010 HSRC report on human trafficking[17] (2010). The lack of rigorous empirical research on human trafficking leads to the "uncritical repetition and circulation of anecdotes," which "gives rise to the perpetuation of stereotypes and fears in public consciousness"(Gould, Richter, and Palmary 2010). This critique can be applied to the organisations in this review, particularly those such as Not for Sale and Embrace Dignity and New Life Centre, which offer numbers and make great claims about the problem of trafficking without providing references or evidence. Without clear

[17] The *Tsireledzani: understanding the dimensions of human trafficking in Southern Africa* 2010 report by HSRC is not included in the desk review since I discuss it in depth in the Literature Review.

connections to facts or empirical evidence—especially in the underground and "invisible" worlds of human trafficking and of the commercial sex industry—stereotypes and conflations deem foreign women selling sex as victims without a choice.

4.3 Workshop and Interview Results

4.3.1 Conflicting Representations of Sex Work

Considering stigmas associated with sex work and the polarized discourses surrounding it—decriminalisation versus abolition—I was not surprised to find the participants expressed conflicting feelings about sex work and offered ambiguous representations of themselves as migrant sex workers. Some stories presented slightly different shades of sex work—others more explicitly offered conflicting ideas about sex work even in the same sentence. The polarities of "good" versus "bad" came up again and again in the stories and discussions about sex work. The same focus was not on the women's migration status or sense of being Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. Ambiguity around issues of migration did arise, though, particularly around issues of home for Skara and Lungile, who have children living in South Africa. I had expected that the women would represent themselves in different ways from what they wrote to what they shared and from what they said in workshops to what they said in one-on-one interviews, but I had not expected the representations of sex work, and themselves as sex workers, to vary so much even within the same story. In fact, the conflicting representations ran throughout the study and a particular representation did not seem more pronounced in the group or one-on-one setting.

Perhaps some of the nuance of variation in participants' responses in the group versus the one-on-one setting was lost because the participants were writing and speaking in English when their first language was either Shona or Ndebele. This restriction could have also played a role in what I interpret to be "ambiguous" and "conflicting" representations of sex work; some of these contradictions could be an issue of the participants struggling to express certain complex thoughts or feelings in their second language. Chidhavazvo would sometimes struggle to express herself in English. All of the participants at one point or another hesitated, trying to think of an English word or expression, and sometimes they would ask one another for help in translating during discussions. The results might have been slightly different had a translator been present to elucidate these side discussions in Shona and Ndebele. However, the conflicting representations

of sex work were still a strong theme in the results. Expressing the paradoxical nature of a job that is wrought with contradictions is difficult in any language.

4.3.1.1 Ambiguity

An ambiguity existed around the representations of sex work throughout the pieces, an uncertainty I will explore further in other sections; but here, I would like to highlight the contradictions and ambiguous statements that present a nuanced depiction of sex work. The two biggest determinants from the participants' perspective as to whether sex work was "good" or "bad" seemed to be money and age. After I have discussed the ambiguity in the conflicting representations, the next sections will delve further into the ideas of money and age determining how participants represented sex work. Other important factors seemed to be space—where was sex work taking place—and motivation—why was one engaging in sex work; these issues will be discussed in the sections Stigma and Double Existence and The Morality of Remittances.

When ambiguous—or even seemingly paradoxical— representations of sex work were compacted into one sentence, value judgments of "good" or "bad" frequently came up as did an emphasis on the dangers of the work. Chidhavazvo directly points out her mixed feelings about sex work at the very beginning of her response to the prompt "Letter to a Young Sex Worker":

> *Hie my friend young women in the bussiness as a sex worker. What I would like to tell you is the job is good sometime but another way is dangerous*.
>
> (Chidhavazvo, "A Letter to Young Women")

Unlike participants who linked how "good" or "bad" the job is to money or age or place or motivation, Chidhavazvo goes on in her "Letter to Young Women" to link it directly to the volatility of clients:

> *Why I said thise is because sometime we meet pepole who are not the same they are not good all of them. A man can take you to the lovely place, buying you what you want and do everthing for you but only one day he can change to be come a lion*.
>
> (Chidhavazvo, "A Letter to Young Women")

In these lines, Chidhavazvo suggests that the times "the job is good" are those times when it is not dangerous. In a workshop that only she attended—making discussions more like unstructured interviews—she reiterated this sentiment. Skara also juxtaposes the "nice" part of the job with the "dangerous" as the two main and opposing characteristics in the opening line of her letter to young sex workers:

> *Hello to all new and young s workers. I saw Watch out!! This business is trick sometimes. It is dangerous and nice at the same time.*
>
> (Skara, "To New Sex Workers")

After discussing a traumatic event in which she, while working on the street, went with a client to his home and was repeatedly raped without a condom, Chidhavazvo told me: "So this job is very difficult, it's very dangerous at times. At times it's good, if you are staying at a brothel" (Chidhavazvo, interview[18]). Despite at other times associating sex work with being "bad" and morally wrong, Chidhavazvo choses the word "good" to describe sex work again and again. In these statements the "bad" side of sex work is the danger and vulnerable position that sex workers face; however, Chidhavazvo speaks of these dangers as avoidable in a brothel, putting the "danger" and the "bad" in a place (the street) that can be left by choice. This decision to work on the street or in the brothel shows both the vulnerabilities of sex workers but also the agency. In discussing the safety she feels in the hotel where she works, Chidhavazvo told me that:

> *Others they don't fear to get clients on the street, that's why they are still going there. Those who are like us, we fear.*
>
> (Chidhavazvo, interview)

Cele also highlights this choice of sex workers between indoor and outdoor work:

[18] Interviews with the participants took place at the WHRI building in Hillbrow, Johannesburg during the last two weeks of November and first week of December 2012.

> *This place was lyk 'At your own risk' because there wasn't any security if you had a misunderstand with a client he could either beat, take the money from u or fuck u without a condom. of wich i went through all this.*
>
> (Cele, "My Life as a Sex Worker")

Skara and Lungile are two who brave the dangers of the street for clients. Since both of them have children in Johannesburg and must pay rent for a flat outside of the hotel, they say that they cannot afford to pay for a room in a hotel[19] and their flats. Wojcicki and Malala might point to this behavior as similar to the calculated risks that sex workers in Hillbrow take for money, sometimes engaging in unsafe sex for a higher price (2001). However in both instances, it presents the decision to work in one place or another. Furthermore, Skara and Lungile expressed how they only engage in sex work in safe areas outdoors—standing in places with other sex workers and using buildings with security. When I asked about the danger brought up by both my participants and the literature about street-based sex workers going to clients' homes, Lungile responded that she took measures to keep herself safe:

> *Especially around this place, I know this place, the flats, there are securities inside. If I go in, I tell the security that I am not going to sleep, I'm going maybe for short time, I'm coming back maybe an hour or so. The flats that have security, they are safe because if you are going in there, you sign. There is a place where you enter number 21 – and they will know if you aren't out yet. Our job is safe, especially if there is security*.
>
> (Lungile, group discussion 23 October)

While Lungile puts her security in the hands of guards, she also presents herself here as actively taking part in it, alerting the guard to watch out for her. She also claims the right to that security in the flat where an unknown client lives: "that security in the flats is my security also" (Lungile, group discussion 23 October).

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[19] The participants explained that in Hillbrow, most brothels, or hotels, charge sex workers a nightly rate for their rooms; the participants reported paying between 100 to 150 rand per night.

Not only the threat of physical violence—further discussed in the section Health and Safety—is a danger that migrant sex workers represent as part of their everyday lives but also the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. The participants were extremely aware of what Baral et al. point out to be their higher risk of HIV infection (2012). Skara wrote:

> *In this business you can get a lot of money in different ways and if you are not clever you die fast, In our business we allways use two kondoms per client for us to be safe.*
>
> (Skara, "To New Sex Workers")

This danger of HIV, to which Skara is referring in phrase "die fast," is also inherent in the "danger" both Skara and Chidhavazvo juxtapose with the "good" and "nice" part of sex work. The risk of HIV is also juxtaposed to the "good" of making money quickly; clients often offer more money for unprotected sex (Wojcicki and Malala 2001). The risk of HIV also plays into the stigma of sex work, which in turn is another negative aspect of the job, being a major stress and a structural vulnerability for the participants (Baral et al. 2012). While all the participants reiterated that they could not tell their parents or families that they were doing sex work, Chidhavazvo, Skara, and Lungile all specifically mentioned in group discussions and interviews that their relatives would be mad because they associated sex work with disease and death.

Chidhavazvo also pronounces the job "not good sometimes," relating it to the stigma around sex work, especially in Zimbabwe:

> *Like me, when I'm at home, I don't say I'm doing this business. I have to lie because it's not good sometimes. Our business is not nice to me. So I just say I'm going to do some piece jobs.*
>
> (Chidhavazvo, group discussion 4 October)

Chidhavazvo's opinion here seems to belie the opinion of her family and popular opinion at home. As she is speaking, she goes from not qualifying "this business" to stating it is "not good sometimes" to it is "not nice to me." The value judgment seems to be more of her family's, whose opinion would be known to her cousin, Cele, who was the only other participant in the workshop that day.

Cele, who did not attend the second and third workshop because she was short of money and needed that time to work, was the participant who spoke directly about finding sex work morally wrong:

> *What I want is to be better in life. I mean to be a better person in life. Firstly in need to repent and give my life to Jesus, secondly I need to get maried to a loveing and caring husband who can also be able to take care of me and my child.*
>
> (Cele, "What I Want")

Not only does the need to repent in a religious context set this attitude apart from the rest, but so does the "loveing and caring husband who can also be able to take care of me and my child." Besides Chidhavazvo, Cele was the only one to emphasize the desire for a husband, and Chidhavazvo declared a wish for income-generating activities while having a husband. Cele is also the only participant who has never been married. Skara, Lungile, and Clara were all adamant about being able to support themselves; they all emphasized the importance of independence and the financial independence that sex work provided, which will be discussed in a subsequent section.

While Chidhavazvo was the participant who most often declared a dislike of sex work and also was one of the only two who said that she first came to South Africa to look for work other than sex work, she also spoke about sex work as a source of strength and the means to a better life: "I am working in joburg as a sex worker life is better" (Chidhavazvo, "My Life"). She also was the one who told her cousin Cele, to join her as a sex worker first in Botswana then South Africa (Cele, interview). In an interview, Chidhavazvo told me that her life would be "worse" without sex work: "It would not be better"; however, she also enthusiastically replied to the question of whether or not sex work should be legalized: "It must not be legal" (Chidhavazvo, interview 18 October). I asked her why, and she responded, "It is not a good job." I pressed that she had just been saying that it helps people. "It helps more people, it hurts more people, it's 50/50," she replied (Chidhavazvo, interview 18 October). Her piece entitled, "A Time I felt Strong," was about garnering the courage to do sex work and support her two children. Conversely, her piece, "A Time I Felt Weak," was about a rainy day when her children were crying for food and she could not go out and work. She closes this piece with her worries

about a future when she can no longer earn money as a sex worker: "Because when I think about thise my job when is goner finishe I always feel weak" (Chidhavazvo, "A Time I Felt Weak"). This line references the inherent ephemeral nature of sex work and links to other participants' writing such as Clara's closing line to "young girls" about using sex work to save money to start a business: sex work is not a job that can support women into old age and, being illegal, does not have any pension plan.

While "good" and "bad" are simplistic ways to frame a discussion on the complexities of self-representation, they reflect the participants' word choice and shed light on the matter of choice migrant sex workers have in a foreign country. A pronouncement of "good" or "bad" puts sex work in relation to other jobs, which some, particularly sex work abolitionists, believe is not an option for women "caught in a web of prostitution" (New Life Centre 2012). This analysis has also shown the complications behind these labels of "good" and "bad" for the women describing their livelihood as such. The ambiguity of the job being both good and bad had multiple explanations by the participants. Interestingly, instead of moralistic discussions of "bad," the participants often qualified the "bad" of sex work as the dangers involved. They also noted how they responded to those dangers in different ways to mitigate them, whether by deciding to stay in a brothel with security or only seeing clients in areas with which they were familiar. The "good" part of the job, as I will describe in the next section, relates to the money.

Clara told me in an interview, "money is power," and the participants stressed the independence and strength they garnered through their income from sex work; undercutting this "positive" were the dangers of sex work, which highlight migrant sex workers' vulnerabilities. The participants' ambiguous comments often seem to be a way of expressing this paradox—using words such as "good" and "nice" versus "dangerous." The following subsections will continue to explore the conflicting representations of sex work, looking at other "determinants" that influence representations of sex work by migrant sex workers: money and age.

4.3.1.2 Money

Just as over the course of this study the participants provided various representations of sex work, so, too, did they describe their financial situations as drastically different during the same time. While I did not try to track a direct correlation between the women's weekly income and their representations of sex work, their stories reveal the importance of money to how they

view their work. Skara did seem to noticeably change the tone of her representations of sex work throughout the study—from being content with the independence and money garnered from sex work to being frustrated and feeling trapped to appreciating sex work for the quick cash and flexibility. Toward the middle of the study, Skara responded to the prompt "My Greatest Challenge in South Africa" with worries about money and a depiction of sex work that seemed drastically more negative than anything she had written before:

> *I don't want to be a sex w but there is no other way coz I'm not working I even try to ask those people who are working to tell me if they is space at their work place. Coz I'm now tired of being fucked everyday. And sometime I can't get that monie, I end up borrowing monie to monie leeders which they put intrest on To I need job so that I can get a fixed pay, coz in this business they are so many young girls who make me risin, I don't get want I want so why must I stay for I need a decent job.*
>
> (Skara, "My Greatest Challenge in South Africa")

This piece raises several challenges for sex workers that Skara mentions in other stories such as the physically exhausting nature of sex work, the fluctuation of income, the competition for clients with younger sex workers. The opening of this piece would fit into a call for help with a sentence construction of: I don't want to but I have to. The phrases "I don't want to be," "there is no other way," and "being fucked" all create the image of a passive person being acted on. However, the context of Skara's life at the time, which I gathered in interviews with her and her close friend, Lungile, suggest that money is the pushing factor behind the tone. Near the end of the study, Skara found a job as a cleaner at a guesthouse "close by" (Skara, interview). On her day off, she came to see me for an interview. She said that it was hard waiting the whole month for a paycheck and that the money was very little and the hours were very long. "The money is not good. I'm just doing it … just to take a rest [from sex work]. A little bit," Skara explained in the interview, telling me that she worked 6 days a week from 7 in the morning to 7 at night for R1,600 a month (Skara, interview). As a sex worker, she said, she could make R4,000 a month; however, she noted that by getting that money throughout the month, it tended to go quickly. To supplement her income as a cleaner, Skara continued to work as a sex worker on the weekends,

and she continued to identify as a sex worker. When she told me her title in the final interview, I asked her if she would now start a story "I'm [Skara]. I'm a cleaner"?

> ***Skara:*** *Ah, no!*
> ***Greta:*** *Would you say I'm a sex worker?*
> ***Skara:*** *Yeah, it's better.*
> ***Greta:*** *Which is better?*
> ***Skara:*** *To be a sex worker. I can't say I'm a cleaner. From sex working to a cleaner? [Sigh]*
> ***Greta:*** *What do you mean?*
> ***Skara:*** *Maybe if it was paying more, I was going to write something about it. I can see that I cannot stay there for long.*
>
> (Skara, interview)

Despite Skara's piece quoted above about longing for a "decent job"—and the repeated links of "decent job" to cleaning jobs by other participants such as Chidhavazvo—the title of cleaner is less desirable than that of sex worker. Skara explained that the job was easy and not boring but there was one untenable problem: "It's fine, but the money is too small" (Skara, interview). Skara described an ideal existence in Zimbabwe—after retiring from sex work—consisting of maybe a small business with "five or six helpful boyfriends." While she is referring to transactional sex and not sex work, she seems to suggest that a sex-for-money exchange is not the essentially objectionable issue.

Even Chidhavazvo, who, unlike the others, came to South Africa to look for a job cleaning, said that she would refuse her dream job as a preschool teacher if it paid less than sex work:

> *I would not take it because the money would be few. I could not pay rent at home and for the kids to eat*.
>
> (Chidhavazvo, interview)

While Chidhavazvo emphasized in interviews how surprised she was that the friend she came to stay with in South Africa was engaging in sex work—and her reluctance to begin after she failed to find a job—she also spoke of going to bars in Zimbabwe and Botswana with friends before she began sex work in South Africa. She said she would go home after drinking while her friends would engage in sex work, but it was not completely clear when she started to join them. Still, she describes her initial experience in a Hillbrow brothel in a way that highlights an aspiration to be like the experienced sex workers instead of pity or disdain for them:

> *When I reach the Hotel I find ladies dressed in penties and bras top. I ask myself if I can mange thise because everyone looks smart and other gils driving their on cars and I wish I can be like them.*
>
> (Chidhavazvo, "My First Time as a Sex Worker")

Like Chidhavazvo, other participants spoke of being impressed by and envious of the success of other sex workers when they were starting the business. Skara repeatedly speaks of joining sex work because of how beautiful and wealthy Lungile seemed when she returned to Zimbabwe for a visit from South Africa.

The issue of money also seemed to be an indicator not only of whether or not sex work was represented as a desirable job but also how the women represented their "choice" to engage in sex work. The participants who spoke of being "forced" all related this "force" to financial situations; Gould and Fick had similar results in their work, trying to identify victims of trafficking in Cape Town (Gould and Fick 2008). While the participants all worked for themselves, the ones who lived in brothels had to pay rent every night. Cele spoke of this as a huge burden because it forced her to work every day whether she wanted to or not. When money was scarce, participants would speak of feeling forced to do sex work while also acknowledging that they could leave if they wanted to; they would only want to leave if they found a higher paying job. Chidhavazvo explains this use of money as a determinant of a sex worker's relation to her job in a group discussion:

> *To me it's not a good job to be in, but because of the conditions. But others, they like it to*

> *die in this business because they say we don't care, we just decided to die in this business. They don't even think about another thing besides being a sex worker. Maybe it's because they can get more money. It depends. Some are lucky and can get more money. Others are suffering. If you are suffering, you can't even enjoy the business*.
>
> (Chidhavazvo, group discussion 18 October)

In the same discussion, Chidhavazvo spoke of how proud she was to go to Zimbabwe and see what her hard work was able to pay for—a home and land—but also expressed her deep worry about the times when she was not able to make enough money.

Despite her moralistic feelings on sex work, Cele seemed to also change her mind about sex work depending on how much money she was making, much like the other participants. Describing a place she worked in Botswana, she wrote:

> *I made money from this spot to an extend of enjoying this job. I didn't have problems of school fees for my child and her upkeep I even bought all the furniture and electricals in my house, had to rent 3 rooms now and my mother was wondering wat kind of job I was doing bt I lied to her saying I was working at Nandos*.[20]
>
> (Cele, "My Life as a Sex Worker")

In these lines—midway through the story of her life that she brought to the first workshop—Cele explains good and bad aspects of sex work: the quick money that allows her to support her family, but also the embarrassment over the stigma of the work. She also implies the use of money as a determinant of how the participants presented their relationship to sex work: making money to the *extent* of *enjoying* her job. Though she was the youngest of the participants at 29 years of age, Cele spoke of not getting as many clients now as she had before and now struggling to make as much money. Like Skara and Chidhavazvo, Cele also affirmed that she felt that she could leave sex work whenever she wished but that she would only do so for a higher paying job.

Lungile's introductory piece, "My Favourite Place," was about one of the hotels where she had worked:

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[20] Nando's is an international restaurant chain that is popular and common in both Zimbabwe and South Africa.

> *My name is Lungile. I'm 36 years old. My favoute place is present hotel, because I used to work there as a sex worker. The place realie makes me happy. The business was going very fast, there was a lot of money. I was managing to take care of my children. I used to get a lot of money there. I was very happy there*.
>
> (Lungile, "My Favourite Place")

Lungile wrote this piece on the second of October. In discussions in early November, Lungile and Skara spoke of their desire for a job with regular pay that comes every month. Their stories suggest that they made more money when they were younger. The participants all agreed that while they were wiser about sex work now with more experience, they grew less desirable to clients with age and could not earn as much money as sex workers as they had when they were younger. Younger sex workers—inexperienced and making the same mistakes the participants had when they were young—were now taking the participants' business, they said.

4.3.1.3 AGE

For the world of sex work in Hillbrow, Wojcicki and Malala write, "a key element" is "the truism that time equals money"; moreover, my participants not only reiterated this maxim but expanded it to a lifetime (Wojcicki and Malala 2001, 110). Age and money, as I mentioned in the previous section, are connected. This link to money makes age another determinant of whether sex work is presented as "good" or "bad"; being younger and able to charge more or to attract more clients brings more money. And as the participants felt painfully aware that "time equals money," they also recognized that they needed to make as much as they could to save for the time when age would prohibit them from working as sex workers. As I mentioned in the previous section, the participants spoke fondly of a time when they were younger[21] and could earn more money. However, there was a balance since some participants also spoke of the dangers of youth—Clara told me in an interview that her great aunt, who was also a sex worker, discovered that she was charging very little and advised her to charge much more. Clara had also

[21] I should note here that Cele was the youngest to enter sex work at 19 years of age; all of the participants in this study were older than 18 years when they began sex work.

been too shy to insist that her clients wear condoms. The other participants spoke of similar concerns. Whether out of concern that young women would make the same mistakes or out of a dislike for the competition, the participants all disapproved of "small girls" in sex work. Thus "age" becomes an interesting determinant of how the participants presented sex work. Additionally, issues of age complicated the conflicting presentation of sex work since the participants presented their younger days as sex workers as a positive time of good money but a negative business for young woman now.

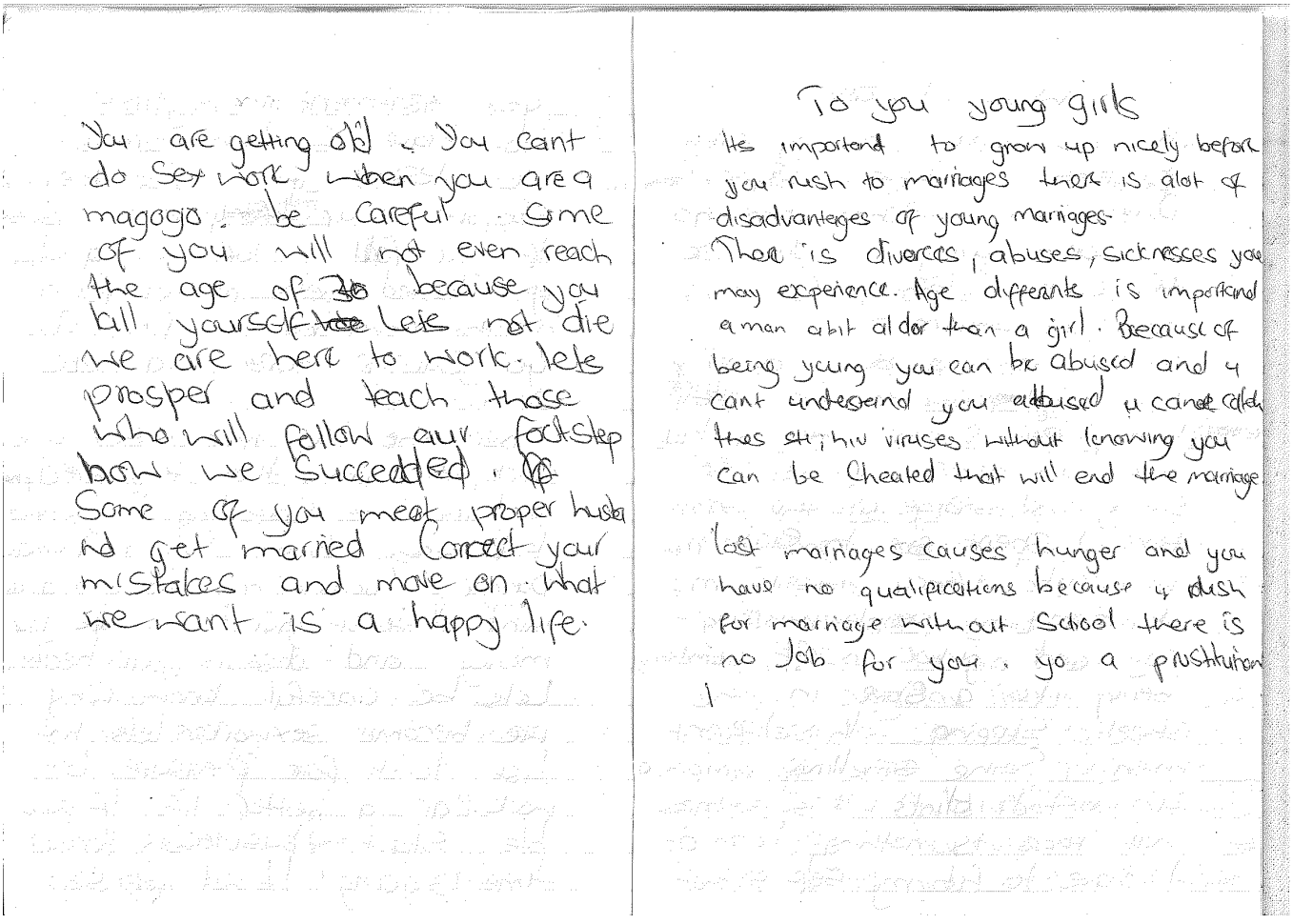
Many of the conflicting representations of sex work concerning issues of age came to light through the prompt that came out of a piece that Clara wrote, responding to an open-ended free write. Clara's piece, which she entitled "To You Young Girls," was a warning for young women not to rush into marriage—as she had done at 17:

> *To you young girls*
> *Its important to grow up nicely before you rush to marriages ther is a lot of disadvantages of young marriages. There is divorces, abuses, sicknesses you may experience. Age differents is important. A man a bit older than a girl. Because of being young you can be abused u can catch the sti,[22] hiv viruses without knowing you can be cheated that will end the marriage.*
> *Lost marriages causes hunger and you have no qualifications because u rush for marriage without school there is no job for you. Yo a prostitution.*
>
> (Clara, "To You Young Girls")

At the heart of this piece is the need for "qualifications" or a way to secure financial independence, which Clara upholds as extremely important in stories, discussions, and interviews throughout the whole study. While not overt in this piece alone, the "story" here is very autobiographical. At 17 years of age, Clara married her young husband, who had impregnated multiple women during their first year of marriage. When he brought one of them home and insisted on the three of them sharing a bed, Clara left him and eventually turned to sex work to support herself and her two children. Though "To You Young Girls" depicts events in

[22] Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)

her own life, she does not associate herself with them—distancing herself; she even uses the word "prostitution" instead of the term "sex work" that she often used in discussions. Clara closes this short piece with a seemingly derogatory remark about sex work—only when one is hungry and has lost a husband and has no job does one turn to sex work. While she wrote, "Yo a prostitution," to the group she read, "You'll end up being a prostitute." The implication is that without qualifications and without marriage and without a job, you *are* a prostitute; in this portrayal, a young girl is very much without a choice. Relatedly, this idea picks up on the notion that young women are not mature enough to make decisions about sex work—or the decisions that would lead someone to, as Clara said, "end up being a prostitute." I will return to the contradictions this ending posed to Clara's other stories later in this section.


You are getting old. You cant do Sex work when you are a magogo. be Careful. Some of you will not even reach the age of 30 because you kill yourself Lets not die we are here to work. lets prosper and teach those who will follow our footstep how we Succeeded. Some of you meet proper husband get married Correct your mistakes and move on. What we want is a happy life.

To you young girls
Its important to grow up nicely before you rush to marriages there is alot of disadvantages of young marriages.
There is divorces, abuses, sicknesses you may experience. Age differents is important a man abit alder than a girl. Because of being young you can be abused and u cant understand you abused u cant catch thes sti; hiv viruses without knowing you can be Cheated that will end the marriage

lost marriages causes hunger and you have no qualifications because u rush for marriage without School there is no Job for you. yo a prostitution

FIGURE 2: CLARA, "TO YOUNG GIRLS"

The discussion around this piece—pictured above in Figure 2—was so lively that I suggested everyone write a similar piece, which turned into the prompt, "Letter to a Young Sex

Worker." The participants asked if the subject was for homework since we decided on this topic at the end of a workshop. I said that anyone who had time could write on the prompt for homework; everyone returned the next week with a letter. Skara had two. Clara had another piece. While some prompts, such as "words of wisdom" or "proverbs" seemed to lead to confusion, with participants more concerned with a response that was appropriate to the prompt—despite my encouragement to write whatever came to mind regardless of its relation to the prompt—this "Letter to a Young Sex Worker" prompt seemed to release something that the participants had been wanting to say. Skara even chose to type this piece out of all of her pieces (Skara and Lungile attended the most workshops and had the most stories); typing for her was a long process since she had never used Microsoft Word before. I asked her why she chose this piece to type and she replied: "I like it because if someone read it, he can know what is happening" (Skara, interview). This prompt might have been so successful as well because it organically came out of a participant's work and group discussion.

This story topic "Letter to a Young Sex Worker" also seemed to provoke the most direct depictions of sex work and the participants' feelings on the subject. Most of the participants' stories opened in a way that emphasized the conflicting representations of sex work that this section has discussed. Clara began her second letter in a way that broadened some of the ambiguities that the participants had ascribed to sex work to show how they apply to everyone's life. Relatedly, she addressed her piece to "young girls" as opposed to "young sex workers," the latter being the prompt discussed in the workshop:

> *Dear Young Girls,*
> *Life is good sometimes its difficult. I am a 37 year single mother and I am there for you today to tell you what I went through until today. Its not that I am good or bad. As a sex worker I earn a living with my 2 kids. I joined when I was 22 years. I got married and divorce with my husband and left with my daughter and pregnant. My parents chased me away saying that I was supose to be strong and built my family. They also lecture me telling me not to leave my abusive husband because that's what they call marriage. It has ups and down so I was supose to stay with the husband until I die.*
>
> (Clara, "Dear Young Girls")

Openings such as this one emphasize the grey area around sex work. Like Skara's wording of not having a choice, this piece opens with a similar reference to a power beyond the participant's control: "what I went through until today." However, this phrase is more assertive, the "I" being the active subject. Like many of the other participants, the ambiguity in the story is over how to think about sex work, or oneself as a sex worker. The line "Its not that I am good or bad" is both explanatory and a sort of defense as if the assumption would be that sex workers are bad. At times, the participants seemed to perpetuate this idea. However, as I mentioned above, Clara's broad opening ties the reader's life—as part of "life is good" and "difficult"—to her life—which is not "good" or "bad"—in this similar construction that highlights the gray area of life; only after Clara makes this connection does she reveal to the reader that she is a sex worker. Other participants also use similar devices in their stories that I will discuss later.

Clara's second piece to "young girls" grew increasingly personal and reached back into her history to when she began sex work in Zimbabwe. In the middle of the "letter," Clara compared the time she was first engaging in sex work to her relationship with her job now:

> *Some guys even fuck me free because they threaten to tell my parent about this job. Look at me now. I am a [crossed out "pros"] sex worker healthy and happy*
>
> (Clara, "To Young Girls")

This proclamation, that she is a "sex worker healthy and happy," is drastically different from her "yo a prostitution" warning that closed her first letter to young women. As a 37 year old sex worker, she seems to here be proclaiming herself a survivor. In the story, she had just explained how difficult sex work was when she first began the job. At the time of the story, she had been hiding her sex work from her great aunt, who was also a sex worker. Once her great aunt found out, she taught her how to use a condom and how to charge higher prices. Despite this very positive declaration of her current "healthy and happy" status, Clara ends this second letter to young girls with a view on sex work as a means to an end, that of starting a business:

> *Lets be careful know why we become sex workers lets not just do it for pleasure. Lets work for a better life. If possible start small businesses because time is going. It will*

> *never stop. You are getting old. You cant do sex work when you are a magogo.*[23] *be careful. Some of you will not even reach the age of 30 because you kill yourself. Lets not die. We are here to work. Lets prosper and teach those who will follow our footstep how we succeeded. Some of you meet proper husband get married correct your mistakes and move on. What we want is a happy life.*
>
> (Clara, "Dear Young Girls")

This warning to young women also highlights another contradiction in Clara's representations of sex work. While at other times Clara seems to revel in her job—making her decent money and giving her flexibility and independence—she here suggests that engaging in sex work is a "mistake" to be corrected. Chidhavazvo also refers to need to change or correct behavior:

> *Me I want to have all so a very very good life with what I want to change my life from all bad thing I have done in life*.
>
> (Chidhavazvo, "What I Want")

This comment also relates to the quotation from Clara's very autobiographical letter to young women, in which she explains how she had originally thought sex work was so disgraceful that men could rape her, threatening to tell her family. Despite Clara's declarations that she herself will never marry again, she urges young girls that securing a "proper husband" is part of this goal for which they should be striving. The issue of age thus presents another theme of the letters to young sex workers: that of do as I say not as I do.

The participants agreed that younger women could earn more as sex workers than older women, not only because of their stamina to see more clients per day but also in their ability to attract clients. The conflicting depictions of sex work also seemed to match the time in the women's lives. The youngest participant was Cele at 29, and all the participants considered themselves old for sex work and not able to continue sex work as they grew older. Some participants, like Skara, spoke fondly of when they were a few years younger and money was easier to come by. A 2010 survey among sex workers around the World Cup found the mean age

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[23] "Magogo" is the Zulu and Ndebele word for grandmother, but it is also used to refer to any old woman.

of sex workers in Hillbrow to be about 29 and the mean age of their sex work debut to be about 25 (Richter and Delva 2011). Gould and Fick's study in Cape Town also found the majority of sex workers to be between 24 and 28 years of age (2008). The participants, having been 19 or older when they started sex work, seemed to refer to "young girls" or "small girls" as young women in their late teens to late twenties. Even older women could be called "young" or "small" if they had a slimmer body shape; Cele, who had a larger figure, commented that her older but leaner cousin, Chidhavazvo, could look more like a "small" girl.

The participants provided many warnings to young women; much of the advice had been learned through personal experience. Young girls, they suggested, were at risk of making the same "mistakes" that they had made; some of these mistakes they now proclaimed to know how to avoid—such as the client who pretends to be a boyfriend to get free sex. The participants suggested that some women were mature enough for the job and others were not. The participants would describe themselves as making business decisions with regard to their job, for example, considering the costs and the benefits of working in a brothel versus the street; however, "small girls," they said, could not understand the costs and were therefore unable to make informed decisions about sex work.

Cecelia, whom I described above in the participants' section, was new to sex work and Johannesburg. Though I did not ask her her age in the one workshop she attended, she looked much older than the other participants and Chidhavazvo told me at a Sisonke meeting after the study that Cecelia was 45 years old. She had lived her whole life in the rural mountainous area of Nyanga and had been married to the same man for two decades before coming to South Africa to look for work. While working for 50 rand a week, passing out advertisements on the road, she met another Zimbabwean who brought her to a brothel. She spoke enthusiastically about sex work: "It's better for me. Me, my life is changed. It's better. Now, I buy my phone… I buy a bed, I buy groceries, I buy clothes, big suitcase; it's nice for me. I buy a stove with four plates" (Cecelia, group discussion 11 October). In the same discussion, she spoke of her husband who beat her with a belt, which was why she said she came to South Africa and "That's why I want to do this job" (Cecelia, group discussion 11 October). Her husband, she said, would have sex with other women but refused to use condoms with her; she spoke of how she was glad that she could demand that her clients use condoms. However, despite how excitedly she spoke of wearing

makeup and earning enough money to buy whatever she liked—"here, I buy, I drink, anything I want. Serious!"—she said that she would not bring any "small ladies" into sex work. Cecelia described other women who wanted her to get them jobs:

> *She said please, can you find me a job. Me, I don't want to take even small ladies, they say let's go; I say, No. Me, I know everything life. Even die, no problem. I've got a baby already. I can't take a small, let's go that side. No. Me, I know life. I never take somebody. Because, sometimes, life, I want to go with myself, because me I'm big, no problem… The young ones, girls, 20, 16, oh, no, no. It's not good*.
>
> (Cecelia, group discussion 11 October)

This sentiment came out again and again, especially in the letters to young sex workers. Chidhavazvo said in an interview, "Sex work must be only not for young girls" (Chidhavazvo, interview 18 October).

Clara, who often adamantly spoke of the financial independence and the happiness she garnered through sex work, also spoke disapprovingly of young women going into sex work. However, unlike Cecelia, who mentioned underage girls, Clara spoke of young adult women 18 years and older. Several of Clara's pieces were warnings to young women about entering sex work. After she read the piece that ended, "Lost marriages causes hunger and you have no qualifications because u rush for marriage without school there is no job for you. You'll end up being a prostitute," I asked her directly: "You had said how happy you are with your job but then in this story you warn girls not to do it" (Clara and author, group discussion October 9). Clara responded:

> *Because I don't want these children to join this prostitution because when they are young, you see, there are those young prostitutes, do you understand what I mean, ladies, you've been experiencing this [Skara and Lungile nod and agree]. Those young prostitutes, they are dying before us because they want too much cash. They are being charged for naked sex too much money, like 1000 rand for one round. They are rushing for that 1000 rand. They didn't think of their life.*
>
> (Clara, group discussion October 9)

Clara goes on to show the cost benefit analysis of the situation: "He can even give you that 100 rand or 200 rand, but what you will be infected with will cost you more than 200 rand. … Even if you get an STI, are you going to treat an STI for 100 rand? No" (Clara, group discussion 9 October). Though the letters to young sex workers often related stories of the participants' own mishaps as young sex workers—whether being too shy to insist on a condom or too gullible to be fooled by sweet-talking clients—the issue of money was of great concern. The younger sex workers could earn more, but they did not know how to be good businesswomen, according to the participants. "They think it's fast money, and they don't see that it's difficult to be a sex worker," Chidhavazvo told me of young women wanting to go into sex work, alluding to the dangers involved with sex work (Chidhavazvo, interview 18 October).

What was not ambiguous was what the women considered sex work and what was not (as in transactional sex). A discussion among Skara, Lungile, and Clara turned to the relationships that developed between Zimbabwean men and South African sex workers, namely how Zimbabwean men—many working as security guards—would have fancy cell phones and clothes well beyond the means of their wages and would be living on the support of South African sex worker girlfriends, whom the participants declared that they did not love. I asked the participants if those men were engaging in sex work, and they said no. Clara explained, "Because if it's like the guys are doing sex work, they are suppose to be selling and charging, because if you are doing sex work, you're suppose to be given, you tell, you ask how much and you say it's this much and you give me. But this one is 'I love you'" (Clara, group discussion 9 October). This definition is similar to that which I present in the introduction to this study with its emphasis on an "agreement between two or more persons" with "preliminary negotiations for a price" (Richter and Delva 2011). Clara's definition also reinforces the discussion about "bitch" versus "sex worker." Throughout the workshops this idea of a negotiation was always important. When I asked about how much money sex workers charge clients, Chidhavazvo continued to stress that everything was negotiable; "It depends, you negotiate" (Chidhavazvo, group discussion 11 October). Group discussions often brought out the strategies behind negotiations. Clara spoke of not going below a certain price when working on the street considering the chances of getting another client for a higher price during the time she would take with the low-

offering client. Despite the ambiguity around some of the other depictions of sex workers throughout this study, the women—even Chidhavazvo—represented themselves as negotiators. I would argue that decision-making is essentially linked to negotiating, part of the cost-benefit analysis I spoke of this point above and will expand on in the section "Morality of Remittances." Representing the sex worker as the negotiator recognizes her agency.

All the women spoke of wanting to become "business women." In the merged workshop, I asked if they ever considered whether or not a sex worker was a businesswoman. They all responded that a sex worker was not a businesswoman. I was a little worried that I was stepping out of my role as a researcher, but I wanted to push this question since they had given me so much information that suggested the sex workers were very good businesswomen. I asked if the things they learned as sex workers—customer satisfaction, marketing, pricing, demand—were also important things for businesswomen to know. While they agreed that sex work had taught them business skills, they still did not think a sex worker was a businesswoman. They had trouble expressing why they felt this way; however, most linked being a businesswoman to having a steady and stable income and social position within the community in Zimbabwe. This discussion seemed to be one that suggested the influence of the discourses that will be discussed in the desk review on the participants. Details that participants cited as making sex work a business were concrete, whereas the idea that the sex worker was not a businesswoman seemed to be indescribable—it just was, as something would be that is ingrained in us.

The conflicting and shifting feelings of the participants toward sex work seem to reflect the clash of polarities in the discourses about sex work—as well as relate to the idea of a double existence lived by those with homes and lives in two countries. The stigma of sex work also seemed to add to the ambiguous feelings toward sex work since many participants were quick to call the work "bad" but go on to extol the empowering benefits, such as a certain amount of economic freedom. The issues raised in this section will reappear throughout the rest of the analysis. A shifting representation of oneself as a sex worker could be a livelihood strategy—a migrant sex worker could represent herself in a certain way to obtain a position with an organisation like Sisonke that has a limited number of paid positions. The same migrant sex worker could represent herself in a different way to evoke a different response in a different context. However, the conflicting representations that emerged—the image of the negotiator and the provider and the moneymaker continually undercut by the idea of the sinner or one in need of

a “better” job—seem to relate more to the stigma attached to sex work than to livelihood strategies.

While the participants all spoke of “small girls” in the industry, they made very clear that these girls were actively competing for business. When participants mentioned “small girls,” I asked if they suspected any of them to be victims of human trafficking. While the participants had heard of trafficking, none thought that there was any possibility that these “small girls” were trafficked. In fact, the reason that the participants did not like the small girls in sex work was because of the competition. Far from the picture of an endless “demand” for sex workers and a booming trade of trafficked women to “supply” it, the participants depicted the sex industry as oversaturated with sex workers. The competition is incredibly fierce; competition not only came up in discussion about young sex workers, but also about tensions between nationalities as I will discuss in the following section.

4.3.2 Stigma and Doubled Existence

Being migrant sex workers, the participants face a sort of “doubling” of their lives in multiple ways—part of this doubling seems attributable to the stigma of being a migrant and a sex worker. Some go back and forth from South Africa to Zimbabwe. Many confide in only fellow sex workers about their occupation, telling family at home that they have a different job. Adding to the weight of this double existence—or perhaps the underlying cause of it—is the stigma of being a sex worker and being a migrant in South Africa. Landau and Monson point out that local South Africans often blame migrants for “the country’s most visible social pathologies – crime, HIV/AIDS and unemployment” (2008, 322). Zimbabwean sex workers in Johannesburg face barriers to health care because of this stigma and also face discrimination in the work place. All the participants spoke of xenophobia and its impact on their lives. Xenophobia was a particularly important topic to Skara, whose very first story centered on this issue. Perhaps in response to such xenophobia, the participants seemed to speak in a way that set them apart from South African sex workers, which harkens back to Landau’s work on the idioms that migrants in Johannesburg use to present themselves as superior to locals (Landau 2006). I will speak more on this in the “Morality of Remittances” section.

The act of representation is itself a doubling (Colebrook 2000). In the process of representation, the mind can be considered a meeting place of the world and its representations;

"Man, mind or subject becomes that 'mirror of nature' or spectral doubling of a world grasped representationally" (Colebrook 2000, 50). Moreover, we all represent ourselves in different ways at different times and to different people; however, the stories that emerged from the workshops highlighted how crucial this process is in the daily lives of migrant sex workers.

4.3.2.1 DOUBLED

Though migrants, all the participants have homes in Zimbabwe. As cross-border migrants, they reflected Vertovec's idea of "transnationalism": "multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states" (Vertovec 1999, 447). However, since these transnational migrants are sex workers, they seem to feel a divide between their world at "home" in Zimbabwe and their world of "work" in South Africa. By working for home as Madsen describes, and creating idioms of transience, as Landau describes, the migrant sex workers in this study are not "rooted" in Johannesburg but have dreams of leaving South Africa (Madsen 2004; Landau 2006). However, unlike many of the migrants in Madsen's and Landau's studies, the participants in this study have homes and even property in Zimbabwe. In this way, they were not "hovering above the soil" but "rooted" in Zimbabwe (Landau 2006, 127). The participants refer to sex work as something they never thought they could do—and the new self who can do sex work must revert back to the pre-sex work self on returning to Zimbabwe.

"I always think that South Africa changes people," wrote Lungile, trying to deal with her husband's decision to abandon her at a brothel when she surprised him in Johannesburg, where he was working (Lungile, "Someone I Didn't Forgive"). He was a migrant living a doubled life—with a family in South Africa and a family in Zimbabwe. While she was his life in Zimbabwe, when she arrived in South Africa he drove her to a brothel. Lungile later wrote, "South Africa changes me," in a revised version of "My Life in South Africa." All the participants spoke in some way about the impact migration and sex work had on their lives. In this section, I refer to a "doubled existence" as how the women explained their lives in South Africa and their lives in Zimbabwe. In some cases the divide was emphasized to a greater extent between their lives as sex workers and their lives outside of sex work. As the section "Conflicting Representations About Sex Work" did, this section, too, I believe, shows the

influence of popular discourses about migrant sex workers in the participants' representations of themselves.

Many stories suggested a doubling of life as the women talked about being sex workers in Johannesburg and mothers in a traditional role at home—though the two roles were also closely connected. Vearey et al. note that "[m]igration is a dynamic process that links individuals with multiple spaces and multiple people" (Vearey et. al 2011, 381). For sex workers, a part of life is often invisible or hidden from other parts and people. However, they also live in the "visible" world. The colliding of these worlds causes great stress for the participants. For example, Skara explained in a group discussion how once she got lost when she was exploring the city; she wandered for hours, too afraid to ask anyone where the Hillbrow Inn was and reveal that she was a sex worker.

Even though their income from sex work supports their families at home, the participants represent themselves to their families as having "decent" jobs in South Africa. In Zimbabwe, the participants must represent themselves one way because of stigma and, in South Africa, they present various versions of themselves. Thus the doubling is not only across borders, especially when participants such as Clara or Cele or Chidhavazvo engaged in sex work in Zimbabwe. The stigma of sex work—and the resulting mental act of doubling—even led participants to take risks with their health. Clara remembers that when she first started sex work in Zimbabwe, she did not want to be considered a "prostitute" so would not insist on using a condom with clients:

> *I was not using condom felt shy to put condom on man because I didn't want them to take me as prostitute because it was a disgrace to be a prostitute.*
>
> (Clara, "Dear Young Girls")

Even while engaging in sex work, Clara, here, shows a doubling; she is both Clara who is not a "prostitute" and Clara engaging in sex work. The men whom she did not want to associate her with sex—but who engaged with her in sex work—coerced her into giving them sex for free, tantamount to rape. As I will discuss further in the next subsection, when the two worlds created in the doubling collided, the participants felt vulnerable.

The act of writing these stories in itself was a doubling—the participants all representing themselves through these narratives. Cele was the only participant to write fictional stories

instead of nonfiction, memoir pieces. At the beginning of the workshops, I emphasized that the women could write fiction if they chose to; however, since I had initially described the project in the information session as migrant sex workers' stories about themselves, I may have given the impression that I wanted only true stories. When I asked Cele in an interview why she chose to write fiction instead of nonfiction, she did not give me a straight answer, talking about school. She took pride in how she was "not dull" in school and said that her [fictional] essays were always very good; "I always write fiction. I don't write anything about my life" (Cele, interview). However, when I asked her which fictional story was her favourite, she replied: "Some of them have been mixed with fiction. Most of them" (Cele, interview). Cele seemed to couch the more traumatic stories in fiction.

The option to write fictional stories could be an advantage of a creative writing methodology as opposed to a more traditional study that only employs interviews, depending on the research. The participant—who may be a part of an "invisible" community and wish to remain invisible—can hide behind the label of fiction while still expressing her thoughts. However, the interviews complemented the workshops by allowing for discussion of those stories and more insight into what might relate to the participant's individual life. The stories themselves, even the fictional ones, still represented the participants' world and self-representations. Furthermore, the writing of the stories allowed the participants to put their "doubled" selves side-by-side in a way that their reality seemed to prohibit—Skara was even able to laugh at the meeting of these doubles in a story whereas the event itself humiliated her.

4.3.2.2 HOME

Part of the participants' conflicting representations of sex work related to place. They portrayed South Africa as a place of work and modernity while Zimbabwe was a place of home and tradition. Though Cele, Chidhavazvo, and Clara all spoke of engaging in sex work in Zimbabwe, they seemed reticent to speak of it—especially Chidhavazvo, who avoided questions about sex work in Zimbabwe. Skara and Lungile spoke of sex work as being acceptable in South Africa while unacceptable in Zimbabwe; however, Skara noted that when she first came to South Africa—knowing that she would be engaging in sex work—it was different than what she had expected; sex work at "home," she said, consisted of going to the bar and going home with one man for the night. Despite the acknowledgement of sex work in Zimbabwe—and even their own

engagement in it—"home" was portrayed as a place where the participants returned to a traditional life where they took care of their children and were respected for having things like "plasma" TVs and nice furniture and property. Home is also the place of the future, which I will discuss further in the section Morality of Remittances.

Important to all the participants in highlighting the difference between their life in Zimbabwe and Johannesburg was the dress code. Clara explained, "It's different when you first go into [sex work]. Joh! Like a mini skirt, in my life, I never wear that thing, trousers or a miniskirt. My parents, they don't allow that thing in their house because they go to church. In their church, they don't allow trousers" (Clara, group discussion 9 October). Chidhavazvo wrote in several stories how shocked she was by the other sex workers at the brothel wearing nothing but panties and bras. The "miniskirt" came up again and again. Lungile used it as a device in one of her stories to signal her entry into sex work when her aunt handed her a miniskirt and told her she must earn her living. The divide in Lungile's life between being a sex worker and not is not necessarily the border between countries; her live-in boyfriend does not know that she is a sex worker. She explained how a tank top with thin straps could become a miniskirt, thus allowing her to leave the house wearing one outfit and turn it into another.

The women speak soberly of the few times people from the family space at home invade their workspace in Johannesburg. Writing on the topic of "A Time I Felt Embarrassed," several participants independently wrote about times someone whom they knew from Zimbabwe saw them working at a brothel. In Skara's story, she races to the man calling her, eager for business, until she realizes it is her uncle:

> *It was 2009 when I stared working as a sex w, one day I was doing my job at diplomat hotel, in my family none knows that I'm doing in Jozi, they jut receive things like grocery clothes without knowing where that moni come from. One day when I was at work my uncle saw me but he didn't belive his eyes, that it's me he was very shocked, he sent someone to call me, I went there very fast coz I didn't think of anyone but a client, wite twinkly of the eye, I was very shocked and by that time I was wearing 2 cm skirt, and my face was decorated like a Christmas tree. He said, is that you Skara. I frezed. He said don't worry about me, is this the kind of job you are doing in South Africa, I was very embarrassed just looking down did your mother knows that you are doing this. I was very*

scared coz I thought he was going to beat me becoz he use to beat us at home. He gave me his phone numbers I you have time call me, he just leave his beer on the counter and leave me standing there and go. I spent a year without going home coz I was afraid of my parents but I was sending them food. They didn't ask. My uncle went home he told them your daughter is working in a hotel wearing very short skirts my parents were very surprised they just keep queit. Even if I was there they didn't ask me. My mother use to warn to me every time you must be careful with your life they are so many deases out there. I tell myself that they knew about my job. I was very embarassed.

(Clara, "A Time I Felt Embarrassed")

In our first one-on-one interview, I asked Skara which piece was her favourite; she replied that this one was. I asked her why. She told me that at the time, she thought her uncle would beat her, but now she could laugh about the incident. If it happened again, she said she would not be embarrassed, that sex work, "It's fine, as long as I'm putting food on the table, it's fine" (Skara, interview 21 November). While in retrospect, Skara takes comfort in links between the two worlds—the monetary link of remittances and the role of the good daughter providing. The story itself highlights the divide between Skara's life in Zimbabwe and in South Africa. At the sight of a representative of her life in Zimbabwe, she is no longer wearing makeup to attract clients—and sparkle—but she is suddenly "decorated like a Christmas tree." Skara says she spent a year in South Africa, afraid to return to Zimbabwe after the incident with her uncle, as if to rebuild the divide between the two worlds.

Cele's response to "A Time I Felt Embarrassed" was also about the embarrassment of her life as a sex worker being exposed to people who knew her in a different context. When she was working on the street in Botswana, she had been arrested:

It was about 2 days after being sentenced and little did I know that those people who were asking us so many questions were journalists. It came as a shock when my friend whom I was arrested with came to me running holding a newspaper in her hands, she rushed to open the second page and the first thing that catched my eyes was a picture with my face and my friend's and a big headline with bold letters written "TWO ZIMBABWEAN PROSTITUTES ARRESTED AND JAILED!" I felt so weak and so many

> *questions came into mind. Because I was not expecting this. By the time I was busy asking myself questions other inmates and prison officers came to us showing us our picture and story from the national newspaper and some they were laughing at us every body was around us and I just wonderd wat if that paper came into the hands of my mother or other ralatives staying in Botswana. I felt so embarasd and guilty also lyk I did a serious crime and I thot to myself that the day I was going to come out, I was going to look for that journalist who publishd that story and fight him because he gave me the most embarising day in my life to puplish me in the national newspaper as a "prostitute."*
>
> (Cele, "A Time I Felt Embarrassed")

A briefer version of this story appears also as a part of Cele's "My Life as a Sex Worker," which she brought to the first class. She referred to this story during the information session as well, worried that the "recording" would also include pictures. This event, which she refers to as "the most embarising day in my life," is also the reason she gives for coming to South Africa: "I was so hurt wen I came out of prison and decided to migrate 2 South Africa where i started this lyf of staying in a bothel" (Cele, "My Life as a Sex Worker). While most of the other participants had their lives divided between their life as a sex worker abroad and their life outside of sex work at home, Cele had worked as a sex worker in Zimbabwe before traveling abroad. She also said that when she would go home from Botswana to visit her family, she would still work as a sex worker. However, in our first interview, she said that she would travel far from her house to work because she was afraid that the preacher from the church she had once attended would see her at the bar. Now that her daughter is old enough to know about sex work, she explained, she would no longer work at home at all, which means she has to save enough money in South Africa to pay for everything she and her family need for an extended visit:

> *Because like now, I told you my daughter is old now, I can't keep doing this type of business in Zim. So I will be forced to come back whether I feel like it or whether I don't feel like it.*
>
> (Cele, interview)

The "forced" here is interesting since the pushing power is stigma. Cele feels that she is unable to continue sex work in Zimbabwe—how she makes money during long visits home—because she does not want her daughter to know that she is a sex worker. She does not say that she must stop being a sex worker now that her daughter is "old," but that she must better hide it from her.

Clara, in a quotation used above, wrote about men who knew her family extorting her for sex, threatening to tell her family about her work when she was engaging in street-based sex in Zimbabwe. The participants are willing to go to great lengths to prevent even the possibility of their world of sex work meeting their world outside of sex work. This pressure is one of the major stresses caused by the stigma attached to sex work.

Lungile also wrote about the meeting of her two clearly defined worlds in her response to "A Time I Felt Embarrassed." A former schoolmate from Bulawayo arrived at the bar where Lungile was working. He had a nice car and nice clothes; she was mortified in her mini skirt:

> *I didn't say much because I was so embarrassed. I didn't think I will see someone I know in that place. If I saw this guy first, I was going to hide myself. I tried to explan my story. Unfortunate he wasn't happy about me. I went upstairs in my room, I wear something decent.*
>
> (Lungile, "A Time I Felt Embarassed")

The line "I didn't think I will see someone I know in that place" makes the doubling of herself clear: the "I" is placed in Zimbabwe. Obviously working at the brothel, she knows many of the people. But this line gives importance and closeness to the "I" that is rooted in Zimbabwe. She ended her story with a line that reinforces this idea: "That day I felt embarrassed in my life to be seen with some one I know doing my job." This closing again separates her job and the people associated with her work and work place from the idea of "I" and a certain kind of intimacy, the knowing.

The stigma of sex work and its influence in the doubling of migrant sex workers' lives is apparent in these three stories of "embarrassment." What was also interesting was what came out in the discussion. Skara saw her uncle and Lungile saw an old friend at their places of work. As we discussed their pieces in a small workshop—only the three of us—they explained how humiliated they felt. I asked them why. Both said because of the way they were dressed—again

the "miniskirt" was important. Lungile said that if it had not been for her skirt, she would have pretended that she was just meeting a friend in the bar to drink and not working as a sex worker. Lungile's story goes on to explain how her friend had been disappointed in her and had a long discussion with her about how she could have done another job besides sex work. I asked Lungile and Skara if the friend and uncle had been embarrassed. They seemed to be confused. They were embarrassed to be in that place, but the friend and uncle were also in that place. Should the men not have been embarrassed as well? They both pointed to the way they were dressed.

Cele told me in an interview that she could not tell her mother about her engagement in sex work—even though the job paid for her mother's food—because her mother would reject the money as "dirty." When I asked Cele if she thought the money was dirty, she responded:

> *Someway, somehow. Although you're not stealing from anybody, but somewhere, somehow, it is. Because if it wasn't, I would be able to say out my job. When somebody meets me, or when my boyfriend asks me what kind of job are you doing, I would say it out. Unlike now, I can't say I'm a sex worker. I can't. So it's dirty money.*
>
> (Cele, interview)

The participants spoke of sex work as acceptable in South Africa but not in Zimbabwe, not only because they wanted to keep the work from their families but also because they perceived a greater stigma existing in Zimbabwe. Cele pointed to Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe's comments against sex work as one of the reasons she thought that sex work carried more of a stigma in Zimbabwe than in South Africa; "He said you resemble a dog when you are a sex worker," Cele said of Mugabe (Cele, interview). A group discussion with Lungile and Skara also emphasized that their parents' locations in Zimbabwe and Malawi made it more difficult to tell them they were engaging in sex work:

> ***Lungile****: For example, my parents are in Malawi. If I tell them, me in South Africa, I work as a sex worker … even the culture, the people there will think that I'm mad or maybe sick. They won't understand.*

[Skara and Lungile laugh]

***Skara**: This job this side is fine, but at home…*

***Lungile**: It's not.*

***Skara**: It's a bad thing.*

***Greta**: But it's fine here?*

***Skara**: Here it's OK.*

***Greta**: Even though it's illegal here?*

***Skara and Lungile**: Yes.*

***Lungile**: Because here, it's like, many people are doing this job. Even if… for example, there are many Zimbabwean girls who are doing this job. It's like everyone if you cross the border, what do you think? It's like maybe you've got a friend here. "Hey, my friend, I've just arrived. I don't have a place to stay and I'm looking for a job." What I am going to advise, "Come and work with me!" You see? Because I'm a sex worker, I won't encourage for something better or something else. I'll encourage them to do the same job I'm doing.*

(Group discussion 6 November)

Lungile's use of "better" here is interesting especially considering that Skara came to South Africa to begin sex work partly because she said that her friend (Lungile) came back from Johannesburg and was "better" than her—so she asked to join Lungile as a sex worker in Hillbrow. Lungile also points to herself being "better" than those at home because of the money sex work brought her:

After 2, after 1 year, I start to realize that it is easy and it's funny and it's my job because I was managing to put food on the table, you see. It was…my life…my life changed by that time. It was very nice because other people, I was better than other people by that time. That's why I discovered that it's fun. I can enjoy my job because I am making a lot of money.

(Lungile, group discussion 23 October)

Ironically sex work, which makes the participants "better" than people at home, is unmentionable at home. However, in Johannesburg, where they feel they can openly say—at least in some places—that they are sex workers, they feel discrimination for their nationality. While the stigma of sex work was represented by participants to be much worse in Zimbabwe—or at least posed a greater risk to their relationships with family and standing in their home communities—the stigma of being a Zimbabwean posed great risk to them in South Africa.

4.3.2.3 MAKWERIEKWERIE

In group discussion, participants mentioned the word "makweriekwerie" came up several time. The participants explained, "that is what they call us"; makweriekwerie is a derogatory slang word used in South Africa to refer to foreigners. With police, health care workers, and even clients, the participants spoke of more stigma associated with being migrants than being sex workers in South Africa, a country with a recent history of xenophobia. The issue was important enough that Lungile wrote about it in her first prompt, which was an unlikely topic to provoke a discussion on xenophobia, "My Favourite Place." Lungile wrote about the President Hotel, a brothel that she had abandoned because of accusations that Zimbabwean sex workers use *muti*, or traditional medicine, to steal clients away from South African sex workers:

> *My favoute place is present hotel, because I used to work there as a sex worker. The place realie makes me happy. The business was going very fast, there was a lot of money. I was managing to take care of my children. I used to get a lot of money there. I was very happy there, But the person who manage the place was not good at all. Each and everyday. He used to call a metting. Compening about the clinte and he said we a using muti. He call the securite to come to hour rooms. To search every room for muti one day. It was early in the morning. He put a 7 list of names in the wall. I knew that he is going to chace us. I was very worried because I have 3 children. There all going to school. It was 10:00 he send the securite to call us. He said they is nothing to explain. Buy tomorow morning, you must leave this place. I don't want to see you again. Other girls they fill sorry for us because there know that we a lot to look for money for our children. I love that place because my life was very beautiful with my children. Every mouth I was paying rent, school fees, transport. My life today is change because of that evil manage.*

(Lungile, "My Favourite Place")

While this story was the first that Lungile wrote—her introductory piece—she did not read the whole work aloud to the group, stopping after "ther person who manage this place was not good at all" and leaving out the xenophobic part of the story. Thoughts about her favourite place led her to the issue of tension between South African and Zimbabwean sex workers—an issue she noted changed her "life today" by prohibiting her from staying at her "favourite place." What she chose to share with the group was less personal and highlighted the representation most prominent and seemingly most approved of by all the participants throughout the workshop—that of the mother working hard and supporting her kids. I am not sure why she did not share the rest of the piece though; this first workshop included not only the close friends Skara and Lungile but also Clara and Notoria. Her hesitancy, for whatever reason, shows a possible strength of a writing workshop over a storytelling workshop: she was able to write her story but she did not have to share with a group. However, the conversation in that workshop turned to xenophobia and South Africans, and Skara joined in the discussion. Clara explained, and the group agreed that the South Africans were not only territorial in brothels but also on the street: "Even me, even you, even anyone [who] go[es to] stand there now, they will throw stones, bottles everything to you. You are not allowed to work there. They are the only ones who are supposed to work there" (Clara, group discussion 2 October).

Once the subject of xenophobia in South Africa was broached, all the participants referred to it in their stories and discussions. Further highlighting the importance of xenophobia was its central role in Lungile's response to the prompt, "My Greatest Challenge in South Africa." She wrote:

> *Last mounth I went to Benoni Hotel. They a South Africa girls only in that hotel. The first day, they ask us where we come from. We told them that we came from Zimbabwe. They said, hear we don't want forenars. We run away from you in JHG, now you are following us. Do us a fever and leave our place. Firstly I freez because I didn't except that. We barg them, but they refuge. The other girl said you Zim girls you use mut to much. We try to explain that not all of us who are using muti. But they didn't understand. The manage of the place said, Please ladies just leave them for today because it is too late now. There*

will go tomorrow morning. We try our best to convice them, but there didn't lesion to us. The following day we wake up in the morning and packs our bags and leave the hotel. That was the greatest challenge, living in South Africa. When you a foren. Some other people, they don't know that, all of us you are not the same.

(Lungile, "My Greatest Challenge in South Africa")

The participants also admitted that they would have felt less free to discuss issues around discrimination if South Africans had been part of the study. In an interview, Skara said:

Yeah, it's hard here. It's hard. Cause you have to be strong. Those South Africans they chase us. Most of the time, they chase Zimbabweans.

(Skara, interview).

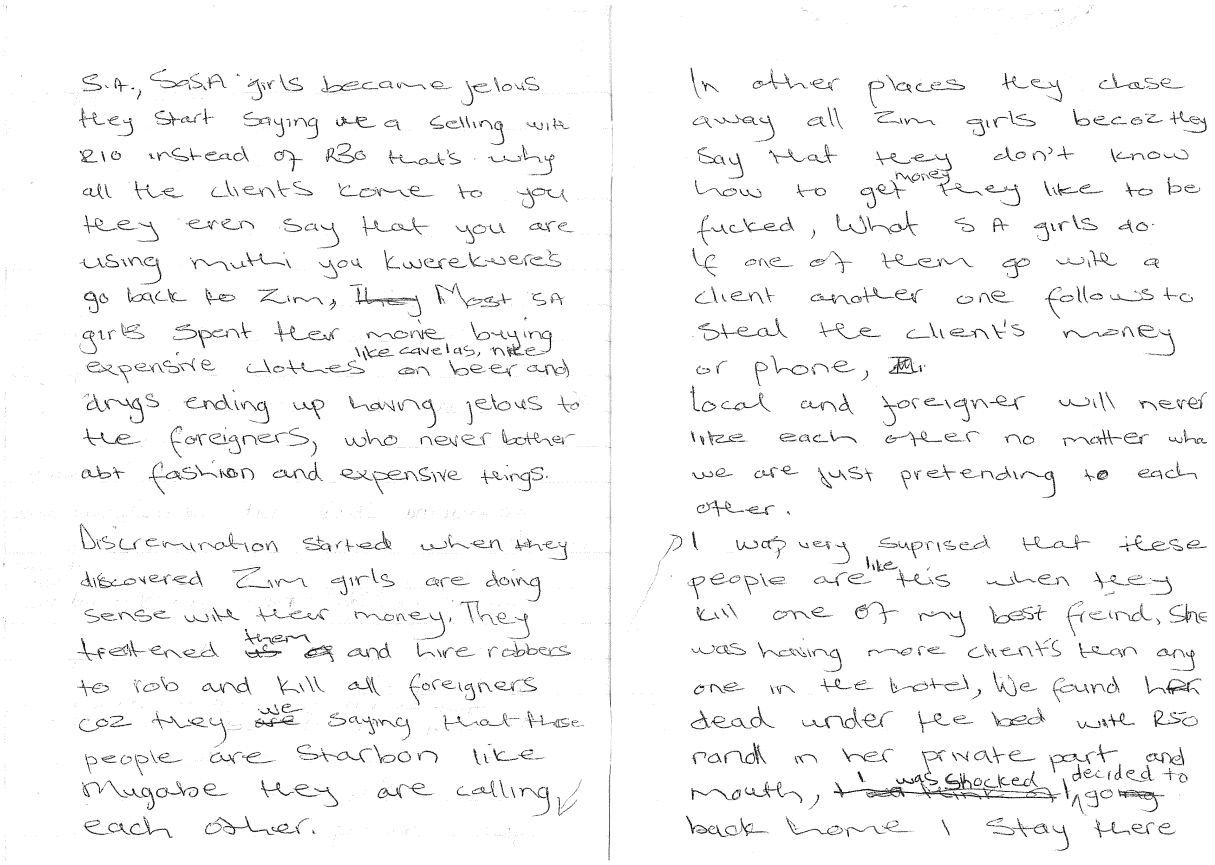
Wojcicki and Malala found that South African sex workers in Hillbrow thought that non-nationals charged clients less and drove down prices; because of the competition, one South African sex worker in their study said of the foreign sex workers: "We hate each other in fact. Not even a fight, we hate each other" (Wojcicki and Malala 2001, 13). The South African sex workers in that study admitted to making derogatory comments to foreign sex workers and about them to clients and even to assaulting them physically (Wojcicki and Malala 2001). The Zimbabweans in my study denied charging less and argued that they were just better workers, who knew how to please clients. Since other participants had accused South African sex workers of stealing from clients, I asked Skara in an interview if South African and Zimbabwean sex workers did business by the same rules:

It's the same rule, only that South Africans like drinking beer, and Zimbabweans like working. And the South Africans don't like that because Zimbabweans would be getting more money.

(Skara, interview)

In a reversal of the things Wojcicki and Malala found South African sex workers saying about foreign sex workers, the participants in my study accused South African sex workers of

disruptive behavior. Landau notes that "foreigners often brand locals with the same flaws ascribed to them: dishonesty, violence, and vectors of disease" (Landau 2010, 323). However, some of the participants felt that certain stigmas attached to them in South Africa were justified—another possible influence of popular discourses on migrant sex worker self-representations.



S.A., SaSA girls became jelous they start saying we a selling with R10 instead of R30 that's why all the clients come to you they even say that you are using muthi you kwerekwere's go back to Zim, ~~They~~ Most SA girls spent their monie buying expensive clothes like cavelas, nike on beer and drugs ending up having jelous to the foreigners, who never bother abt fashion and expensive things.

Discremination started when they discovered Zim girls are doing sense with their money. They treatened ~~us~~ them ~~of~~ and hire robbers to rob and kill all foreigners coz they ~~are~~ we saying that these people are Starbon like Mugabe they are calling each other.

In other places they chase away all Zim girls becoz they say that they don't know how to get money they like to be fucked, What S A girls do. If one of them go with a client another one follows to steal the client's money or phone, ~~Zim~~ local and foreigner will never like each other no matter wha we are just pretending to each other.

I was very suprised that these people are like this when they kill one of my best freind, She was having more client's than any one in the hotel, We found her dead under the bed with R50 randl in her private part and mouth, ~~I was think of~~ I was shocked I decided to go ~~ing~~ back home I stay there

FIGURE 3: SKARA, "HOW I FACED MY FEAR"

Skara's story, "How I Faced My Fear," pictured above in Figure 3, further illustrates the tension between South African and cross-border migrant sex workers, as well as the stereotypes of migrants—such as criminals—that the Zimbabweans reversely apply to South Africans. Whereas group discussions suggested that South African sex workers were not working for money but pleasure, here, Skara writes that South Africans accused Zimbabwean sex workers of liking "to be fucked" (Skara, "How I Faced My Fear"). This feud grows so intense that Skara believes it leads to murder. She even returns to Zimbabwe out of fear that the South African sex workers will pay to have her killed as well. Skara links the tension between the groups to Zimbabweans' better business sense: "Discrimination started when [South African sex workers]

discovered Zim girls are doing sense with their money" (Skara, "How I Faced My Fear"). Her words "local and foreigner will never like each other no matter wha" harken back to the words of the South African sex worker in Wojcicki and Malala's study: "We hate each other" (2001, 13). In both cases, the tension is related to intense competition. Chidhavazvo, when she first came to the Hillbrow Inn, said that the female sex workers made fun of her, especially the clothes she wore; however, the male sex worker there, she said, befriended her and gave her advice.

In the first discussion, Chidhavazvo explained that it was hard to be Zimbabwean in South Africa because of discrimination, but she thought some of the stereotypes were justified: "some of the things we do also is bad sometimes also. So sometimes Zimbabweans [are] thieves, bitches …" (Chidhavazvo, group discussion 4 October). Chidhavazvo places "bitches"—here used as a derogatory word for sex workers—as doing "bad" things; at the same time, she distances herself from "bitches." The other group, Group A, described "bitches" as women who have sex with many men for pleasure whereas the more acceptable "sex workers" have sex with many men for money. All the participants in Group A, except Notoria, said that they were sex workers and not "bitches"; Notoria argued that anyone who had sex for money was a bitch. This discussion around terminology revealed how the pursuit of money legitimizes sex work as work and not "bitching"; furthermore, the participants represented themselves as sex workers pursuing money in a business savvy way and South African sex workers mixing stealing with sex work and drinking heavily on the job. I revisit this tension in the section "Morality of Remittances."

While few of the participants spoke directly of trouble with the police, the potential threat that they represent emerged. In Skara's body mapping story, she writes of her injured knee, which she hurt playing soccer. She speaks of how devastating the injury was—she had played soccer at a professional level—but one of the only details she gives is:

> *This knee is giving me problem coz now I can't run even a short distance, so can't do my planes even if the police are chasing us at our work place it's a problem for me to run, even to use stair I feel the pain.*
>
> (Skara, body-mapping exercise)

The participants joked about sex workers being fit because they have to run from the police. However, the police did not play much of a role in the participants' stories. They seemed to feel that Sisonke would help them mediate any interaction with the police. In this sense, Sisonke, as an organisation for those practicing the criminalised activity of sex, acts much as Kihato identifies cross-border migrants without legal documentation working through an "extralegal" network of migrants to access certain services (Kihato 2007, 263). The participants seemed to feel that now they have some recourse if police abuse them. However, paying bribes to the police was also part of life. Chidhavazvo mentioned that the police do not bother the sex workers in the brothels and, when they had in the past, they would only go after the foreigners.

In response to the prompt Words of Wisdom or Proverbs, Chidhavazvo told two rather muddled stories. She had the most trouble with English, but she was also the only one who decided to use a Shona proverb, which she could not explain very well. The two stories she wrote to illustrate it were linked by the moral of the story: "So don't jude a book with its cover. Because inside can be good or bad things." (Chidgavazvo, "Words of Wisdom"). Though she had trouble choosing a proverb for this exercise, her insistence on sticking to this one seemed to reflect the double existence in the life of the migrant sex worker.

4.3.3 Health and Safety

As cross-border migrants, some of whom do not have legal documentation to be in South Africa, and as sex workers, an illegal occupation in South Africa, Zimbabwean sex workers in South Africa face a double vulnerability. As I have discussed in the literature review, stigma as well as lack of documentation can create barriers to health care for them; the participants echoed these problems and emphasized the vulnerable position they often find themselves in with clients. Despite the vulnerabilities, the participants also spoke of their responsibilities for their own health and safety and how they even provide certain public services—looking out for the sexual health of clients as well as, they say, protecting young girls from rape.

4.3.3.1 Disease

Issues of health were central to many of the participants' stories. They spoke of ways the participants represented themselves as vulnerable but also how they showed themselves to have agency—choice over what happened to their bodies and responsibility as well. The *Letter to a*

Young Sex Worker exercise not only brought out ambiguous feelings about sex workers but also brought out the health risks and the ways sex workers can protect themselves. In the discussion around the prompt, Clara not only raised the issue of young sex workers being more likely to engage in unprotected sex but also being less likely to treat any infection that may come of unprotected sex:

> *You don't know which is right and which is not right. You just take everything. Some guys they say suck me without condom and their dick is full of sores…dotted reddish…you can't even see it because you are rushing for the money. Tomorrow, you got sores everywhere, go to clinic. And they don't want to be treated, those young girls. They are afraid to go to clinic. They are shy. You know what young girls they do, but me, I can go to clinic. I can take my ARVs because I know I have to take them so I have to live. But if I'm young, I can say what if someone see me take the ARVs, I can't take them.*
>
> (Clara, group discussion 9 October).

As with the other letters, Clara here reveals challenges that she and the other participants faced, their experiences disguised as advice. Some of the stories—such as the health risks that sex workers sometimes take because of being shy—might not have come out in a regular interview. The letter format allowed for the participants to distance themselves from the events to explain the challenges that sex workers face.

When speaking about health, the participants downplayed the importance of money, which they use to justify sex work in the face of the moral stigma against it. However, as Skara wrote in her letter, "Don't like money more than yourself" (Skara, "To New Sex Workers"). Similarly, Clara, in the quotation above, warns about being blind to diseases when a sex worker is "rushing for money" (Clara, group discussion 9 October). Though the participants stress that health should come before money, they also make the connection that they must be healthy to work. Clara points out that young sex workers who will accept a large amount of money for unprotected sex do not realize that to treat any STI they contract from that interaction could cost them much more than they make.

The participants seemed hesitant to speak much about their own health history, though they did write about the risky situations they faced. Chidhavazvo spoke of her own near encounters with an STI:

> *When he took of his clothes. I wanted to put the condom. Then he said he gona put himself I said no. When try to put the condom I see that the penis was rotten with what they called cornflower a big diese (S.T.I) I get fear then I said no more business me and you.*
>
> (Chidhavazvo, "How I Faced My Fear")

While in this instance Chidhavazvo and the client parted without doing business, the participants all related stories of clients getting angry about either a sex worker's insistence to use a condom or to put it on herself. The sex workers in Gould and Fick's Cape Town study, identified one of their "most significant problems" to be clients' demands for unprotected sex (Gould and Fick 2008, 52). Wojcicki and Malala also identify sex workers in Hillbrow as constantly making decisions on whether or not to accept more money for unprotected sex (2001).

Several of the women disclosed their HIV positive status. The stories were an interesting way into this disclosure, revealing how the women approached this difficult topic. Never did I ask directly about HIV status, but two women wrote about their discovery of their status under the topic "The Greatest Threat to my Health in South Africa." Lungile and Skara wrote on this topic and shared their stories in a workshop alone since Cele and Chidhavazvo were late for that workshop (they stayed after Lungile and Skara left to make up for the beginning that they missed). Lungile was surprised to hear Skara freely disclose her status. Lungile found it hard to talk about, especially because it was currently a great stress in her life since her treatment had been interrupted. Though hard to write, Lungile felt this story so important that she decided to type it first when she had the opportunity to use the WHRI computers:

> *Last year I was very sick, I went to the nearest clinic. They told me that, I'm pregnant. I was so surprised, they said I must go to counselling. The following day, I woke up early in the morning. I got tested, my results were positive. They told me that, I have to test my CD4 count. My results come back after two weeks. My CD4 count was 297.They told me*

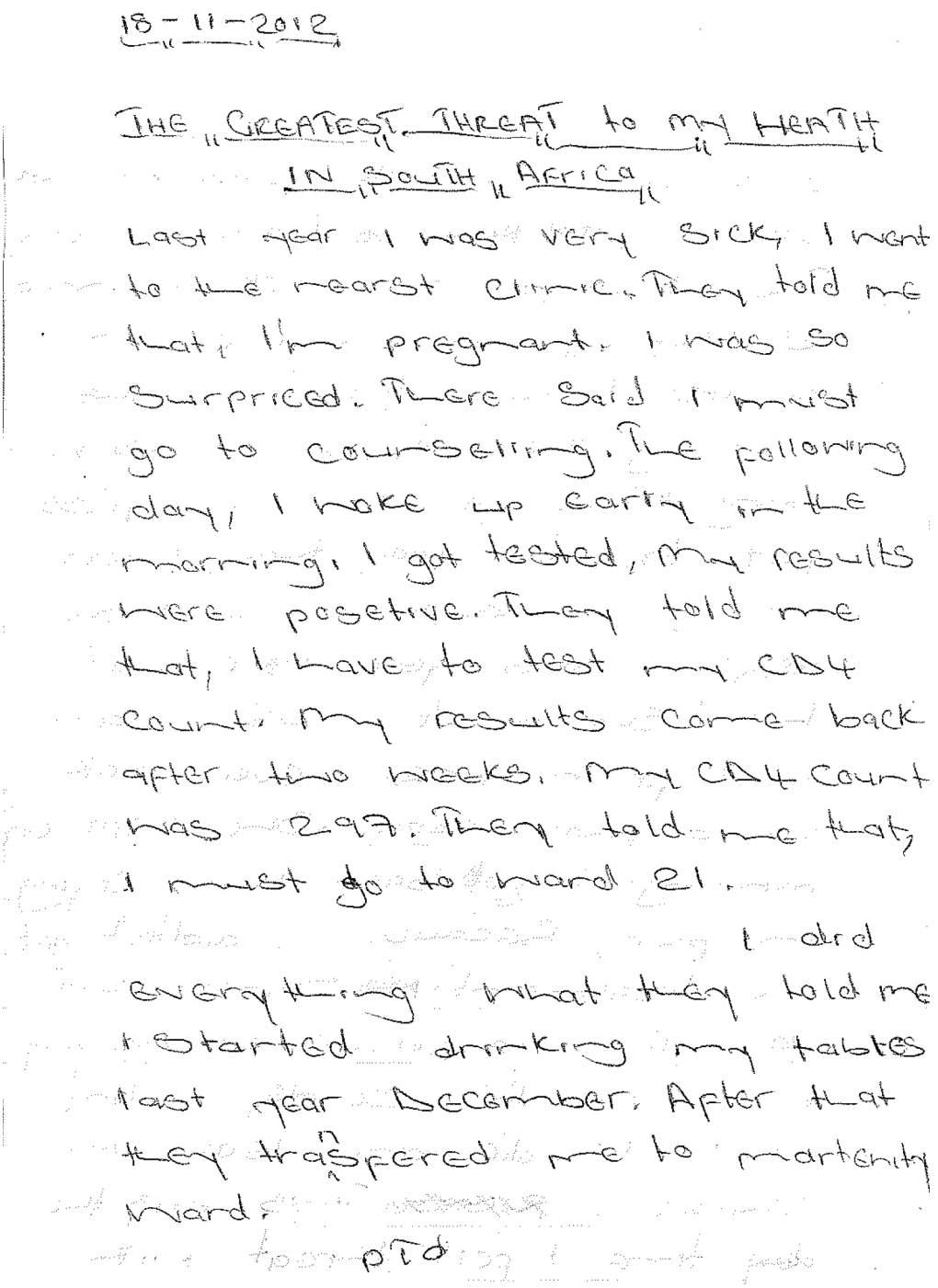
that, I must go to ward 21. I did everything what they told me. I started drinking my tables last year December. After that , they transfer me to maternity ward.
I delivered a heath baby boy at GHB hospital. The maternity they transfer me back in ward 21. My appointment was in October. I went there in the morning. The lady who was working there, she asks me a passport. I told the lady who was working there. I told the lady that, I was using an asylum, I lost my asylum this year. I explain how, She didn't lesion any word from me. I even took out a photocopy. She kept denying. I go back home crying in pain, because I didn't get my treatment. Since that day, I'm no longer taking my medication. I'm scared, I don't want to die and leave my children. This was the time I felt threat with my health.

(Lungile, "The Greatest Threat to my Health in South Africa"; typed by the participant)

Not only did Lungile choose to type this piece first, it is also one of the few that she worked to revise. The version above is a revision of her initial piece, reproduced below as Figure 4.

Lungile's story highlights the problems that cross-border migrants face with accessing health services in South Africa. While she was able to get the initial health care that she needed, problems with her legal documentation interrupted her HIV treatment; as I mentioned in the literature review, Vearey notes that documentation can be a problem for many cross-border migrants seeking treatment and that "frontline" service providers sometimes deny access to health services (2011, 125).

While the participants in this study faced health challenges, a study in a different part of Johannesburg—or South Africa—might reveal more difficulty accessing health services. The WHRI in Hillbrow offers a clinic specifically for sex workers and a mobile clinic that visits brothels in the area (Richter and Delva 2011). Since the workshops were conducted in the WHRI building, the participants were all aware of the services. Even Lungile, who had been denied treatment at a government clinic, said that she still needed to visit the WHRI clinic to seek help.



18-11-2012

THE GREATEST THREAT to my HEALTH IN SOUTH AFRICA

Last year I was very sick, I went to the nearst clinic. They told me that, I'm pregnant. I was so surpriced. There said I must go to counselling. The following day, I woke up early in the morning, I got tested, My results were posetive. They told me that, I have to test my CD4 count. My results come back after two weeks. My CD4 count was 297. They told me that, I must go to ward 21.

I did everything what they told me I started drinking my tablets last year December. After that they trasfered me to martenity ward.

FIGURE 4: LUNGILE, "THE GREATEST THREAT TO MY HEALTH IN SOUTH AFRICA"

4.3.3.2 VIOLENCE

The participants all had stories of violence that had befallen them as migrant sex workers in South Africa. Most of the violence they related included rape at the hands of clients. I was

surprised how many of the participants were very open in sharing some of these terrifying incidents of rape. Clara, wrote her first piece—after her introductory piece—about a rape and even opened the story in the middle of the violent scene:

> *how I faced my fear*
> *12.00 ocklock midnight a taxi driver yelled (hey u fucken bitch bent down I am gona fuck you, mother pussy) he pushed me, forced my waste to bent put his dick staight in me without, a condom, fuck me until he finish. (give me a tissue & get into the car). He gave me R40 he drove off the Industrial area were he was parking. Car stopped. He said my car has got no fuel get out try to push my car. As I was going out of the car some cars passed he call me wait come back I thing the fuel is few but we can go. He changed direction going towards the way to Soweto I ask him were a we going he answered me my home. He said get out of my car. he slowed down. I open the door, he pushed me out and drove away*
> *I struggled to stand up walk toward the way back into the Industrial area trying to stop other cars to give me a lift to town. I walked for about 1 and ½ hours until I am at the bridge.*
>
> (Clara, "How I Faced My Fear")

Clara, the only participant to cry during a workshop and then during one-on-one interview, shed a few tears after writing this piece before she read. She said it was painful to remember, but she did not mind writing it. She also read the piece aloud exactly as she had written it.

All the participants related a story about the threat of violence that they met on the job. Guns and knives played a roll in many stories. Chidhavazvo wrote about a bizarre incident with a man whom she had assumed would be a client but drew a gun on her:

> *Another one is when I go on the street to work I meet man and he said lest go to the bush to have sex I do go with him but he took out a gun and said he want to shoot me. Why I am doing this job as a sex worker then I decide to wake in Hotels which is better becose they will be security*. (Chidhavazvo, *How I Faced My Fear*)

The participant spoke of their fear of violence in Johannesburg as not only related to their engagement in sex work. Clara spoke of her fear when she first came to the city:

> *I met Tsotsis I saw a gangster going to another man beating him at the same time sertching him. They took his wallet that contains ID, money and his bank cards they took his shoes and jacket and left him lying down the street. It was bad. Tht make me uncomfortable to walk around the city alone. Especially wanderers street. I felt scared*.
> Clara, "When I Arrived in Johannesburg"

Chidhavazvo also expressed fear about walking around after 5pm in the city alone. There were certain streets that the women said that some sex workers would go but that they knew not to because of the high levels of crime there.

4.3.3.3 Responsibility

The participants were very aware of the dangerous position they were in as migrant sex workers in Hillbrow. They described violence and discrimination as upsetting as other cases recorded in the Literature Review by studies such as those of Oliveria and Richter and Delva (Oliveira 2011, Richter and Delva 2011). However, I was surprised by the participants' responses to these dangers. Instead of dwelling on the incidents, the participants spoke of the events in conjunction with their responses to them. When Lungile arrived in South Africa, she remembers her aunt telling her, "here in South Africa you must learn to take care of yourself" (Lungile, *My Journey to South Africa*). Even in the face of violent rape or theft at knifepoint, the participants emphasized what steps they took to keep a similar situation from happening again. They did not trivialize the risks of the job or blame themselves for not preventing what happened, but they did depict even violent situations as if they were part of everyday life—which they can be for migrant sex workers in Hillbrow—and as events that require action on their part.

An interesting depiction of sex workers as providers of a public service emerged from both groups through different participants. Both Chidhavazvo and Lungile asserted that sex workers protect young girls from getting raped because a man who wants sex can always buy from them. Responding to a prompt originally titled, "A Time I did something that I did not think that I could do" but turned into "A Time I Surprised Myself" after discussion, Lungile wrote:

Once apon a time, It was 2001 when I start my job as a sex work. It was hard first and one day I realise that if I was to put bread in the table I have to look for money even if it's not easy about it.
So I started my job as sex work. I surprised myself becoz manage to talk to my clints, to make them happy. I can have sex exchanging for money. It's sound fun, but it is my job. Now it is easy for me because I know the job and I know what my clints want. What I realise in this world we are living, man can't leave without sex. So I'm making my money. My bussiness it is going very well. I'm very happy because I'm stoping man who are raping young girl. Those man must sent them to jail because we are hear as sex works to help them. I love my job, because I helping people out there who want sex. I surprised myself for sure.

(Lungile, "A Time that I surprised myself")

In the progress of the narrative, the final "I surprised myself for sure" possibly refers not only to the surprise Lungile felt that she could first do the job at all—surprised by her ability to talk with clients—but also to the surprising role that she found sex workers playing, as protectors. Since the participants used the word "fun" and "funny" at times interchangeably—at times it was hard for me to distinguish which word or meaning was meant. I asked Lungile in the subsequent discussion what she meant when she said that sex work was "fun." She replied:

I started thinking it's about…it's fun because I know how it works now. It's not hard; it's easy, especially if you know how to communicate. You agree. So it's funny.

(Lungile, group discussion 23 October)

As we spoke more, I asked her if she could have written that story when she first started sex work. She replied enthusiastically that she "was suppose to write it" because:

There are people who don't know what sex worker means. [Her baby crying from the floor interrupted her, and I picked him up. She fervently continued.] There are men out there who abuse kids because of sex, who are raping. We as sex workers, we are helping those people. That's why I said those people who are raping, especially young girls, they

must send them to jail because we are there. There are many many girls out there who are sex workers. Sure, how can a man rape young girls? Why? Since you can buy. If you want to fuck, you can buy.

(Lungile, group discussion 23 October)

This conversation led to another public service sex workers see themselves as providing the public: education of clients on protected sex. Lungile continued the discussion mentioned above:

I have experience now. I know if the client is hard, I know how to talk to them to understand, no don't do this, let's to it like this and they can understand if you know how to talk to them. Sometimes clients say, no I don't want condoms. Since I've got experience, I say, no, you see, this world there's AIDS, there's STDs there's what what what, so you must use condom to protect yourself. If you say that, they understand. If someone doesn't understand, I say, no, me I'm positive, do you still not want to use condom? He will change his mind.

(Lungile, group discussion 23 October).

The participants said that they must be vigilant as sex workers because they know that they can be exposed to a number of diseases. I wondered if these participants were particularly aware of the health risks of sex work because they were in some way involved in or exposed to Sisonke and the WHRI clinic. Chidhavazvo was even late for one workshop because she was getting tested at the clinic. The participants seemed to all feel that getting tested regularly was important. Even Cecelia, who only came to one workshop and was new to sex work, said she was planning on coming in the next couple of days to the WHRI clinic.

Some participants point to their improved control over their health since they became sex workers. Cecelia, whose husband of several decades took a new girlfriend, said that when she refused to have sex without a condom, her husband kicked her out of the house:

My husband, I know if I use this one, he doesn't want, he says why, you are my wife. Me, I say no, now you are not straight for me. He said, if you don't want, leave. I do it two

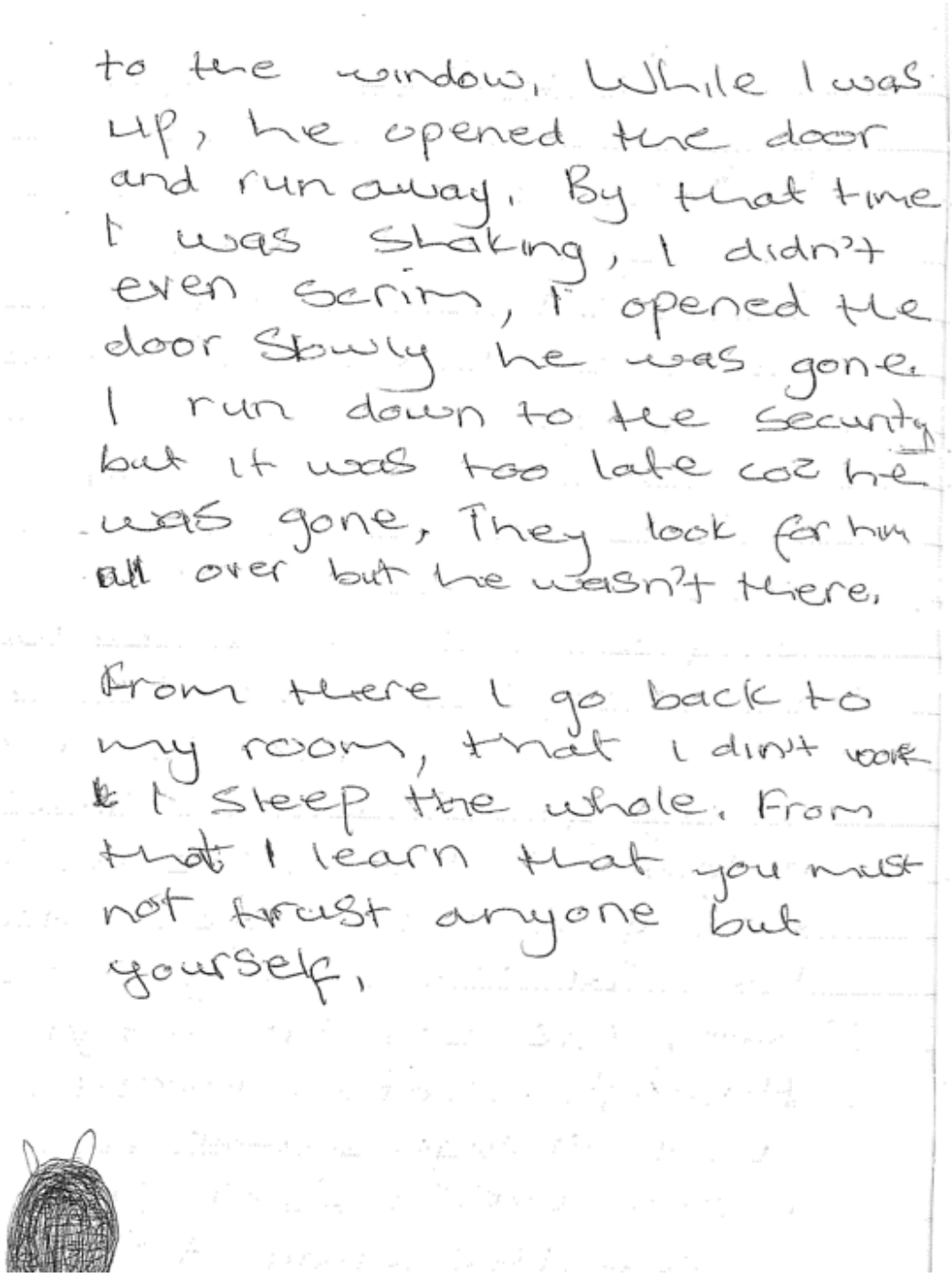
weeks, we sleep without condom. But here, I use condom. That is why I want to start testing.

(Cecelia, group discussion October 11).

In this discussion, Cecelia points to how she is mitigating her risk of STIs in sex work, where she feels that she can demand that her clients where a condom. In Zimbabwe, her husband not only refused to wear a condom with her but was also having sex with various other women. In Hillbrow, she was also near the services offered by WHRI.

Despite the violence they are faced with, the women tell their stories not necessarily as victims but as active players in the drama of the city. They portray the violence that they face as part of life and as something that they can mitigate through their actions. In "My Life in South Africa," Lungile explains that "Some of my clint they a very rough. But I know how to deal with them." Here, again, she seems to emphasize the importance of her actions more than the actions of others done to her. Gould and Fick found in their study of the sex industry in Cape Town that "sex workers appeared confident in handling situations of abuse themselves" (2008, 68). The participants in this study seemed equally confident; though they also were still very leery of the potential of violence and rape with clients that, while mitigated in a brothel-setting with security, was still a very real danger.

Part of their approach to taking responsibility was by being careful not to trust others. Chidhavazvo, in an interview, even speaks of being careful to trust the security guards in the brothel since they also need money and can be bribed; "They protect us [but] sometimes they also need money like they way I need it," Chidhavazvo said (interview). At the end of Skara's story in which a client pulls out a knife in her hotel room, she writes that "from that I learn that you must not trust anyone but yourself" (Skara, The Big Knife). Skara's story is pictured below in Figure 5. The next section discusses the importance of this self-sufficiency in the participants' self-representations.


to the window. While I was up, he opened the door and run away. By that time I was shaking, I didn't even scrim, I opened the door slowly he was gone. I run down to the security but it was too late coz he was gone, They look for him all over but he wasn't there.

From there I go back to my room, that I dint work & I sleep the whole. From that I learn that you must not trust anyone but yourself.

FIGURE 5: SKARA, "THE BIG KNIFE"

4.3.4 IMPORTANCE OF INDEPENDENCE

A very strong theme that came through the women's narratives was the importance of independence and self-reliance. At times they made direct statements about independence; other

times its importance was implicitly written into their stories. The women spoke of the emphasis on women marrying in Zimbabwe—Clara even referred to her wedding day as the time she felt the most proud of herself. While being single thus stigmatizes the women as vulnerable, their life as sex workers and freedom from marriage allows them independence, of which they seem to be proud.

4.3.4.1 Independence

The participants often associated their trajectory into sex work as beginning with a husband or lover and his abandonment or betrayal. Lungile felt "forced" into sex work by her husband who left her at a brothel with no money. Clara began sex work after she ran away from an adulterous husband. Both Cele and Chidhavazvo were abandoned by the fathers of their children and then turned to sex work. Cecelia came to South Africa to look for work when her husband took a new girlfriend. Skara was the only one who professed to chosing to leave her husband; however, her representations of her trajectory into sex work changed throughout the course of the study.

Skara, like Lungile and Clara, told me that she does not have a husband nor does she want one: "I don't want to live with a man. I just want to stay alone" (Skara, interview). However, in stories she refers multiple times to wanting to live like a "queen" with a "king." Though Skara's story of her migration to South Africa came in contradicting parts, the piece that remained the same in her story seemed to be her choice to come to South Africa independent of a man or his money. She highlighted independence in the first story, in which she knew she would go to South Africa to work as a sex worker but would hide it from her husband, all because she wanted more money even though her husband had a stable income as a policeman:

> *One of my freind was staying in SA visited me at my house. She was beautiful, Really liked the way she was wearing high heel shoes and suit and a nice hairpeice, I ask her where are u working. She didn't hid she just tell me the truth. I told her that I will come oneday in S.A. I tell my husband that I need a passport I want to S.A. to buying clothes and sell them, my husband was a understanding person he agreed.*
>
> (Skara, "My Journey to S.A.")

Skara wrote this piece early on in the workshop. The story opens with her living "like a queen" with her "king." The story itself highlights the times when Skara seemed to feel strong or brave—the border crossing with loud uniformed officials, the bus trip "through" the mountain (a tunnel), the beautiful bar. The opening goes into great detail about her loving husband who bought her an expensive bus ticket and gave her pocket money. She makes clear that her husband had enough money to support her, but she ambitiously chose to go to South Africa for sex work because she saw the beautiful things that her friend was able to buy. This early representation of herself to the group was focused on her very stable and happy life. Her reason for entering sex work was ambition; she explained later in conversation that she wanted to buy more land like her friend. However, her representations of herself—and this particular story—changed during the interviews. The long run-on sentence that ended this early story—"I enjoyed my journey very much from there I staying in SA for one year without going back home, I found my husband living another woman, I then came back forever"—became the focus of the later story. Later in the workshops, Skara revised the story. This story still opened with a happy love story from early in her marriage; however, this story reveals how her husband was seeing another women before she left for South Africa. In fact, the new girlfriend was the reason Skara left the marriage, which resulted in her need for money and thus her migration to South Africa. Despite the two separate versions, she focused on both her choice to leave and her desire for her own money.

Tied to independence from men, for most participants, was financial independence. Clara was adamant about the protection of financial independence at all costs. Though not in her stories—which focused on her ex-husband—Clara spoke of her boyfriend in discussions and interviews. She described him as rich and able to take care of her; however, she thought he would be too controlling of her money if she did not generate an income from sex work:

> *That boyfriend of mine, he just say, I will go pay lobola[24] to your family, so that you are my wife. Then the problem is that if he pays this lobola, I am not allowed to come to South Africa to look for money for my own expenses. And I know, he's a mechanic, he owns a garage, and I know he is capable of taking care of me and my kids, but I know*

[24] In Zimbabwe, men traditionally pay *lobola*, or a bride price, to a woman's parents before they are officially married.

> *very well that there is something that I need that the is not going to provide me, especially this thing of my children, because me, I value my children more than anything else in my life. So I know that one day he will say no, I don't have money*.
>
> (Clara, group discussion October 2)

The participants felt as those they made great sacrifice for their children, not buying nice things for themselves and not saving to start a business. They seemed to worry that if they had a husband—or even a boyfriend—he would threaten this investment in their children. Having one's own source of income to ensure that their children were provided for prevented the participants from having a regular boyfriend or seeking a new husband. They also feared that a boyfriend or husband would prohibit them from engaging in sex work. Clara described how she was accustomed to a certain life style that a man might try to stop:

> *I'm use to nice things, my food, my clothes, everything. I need nice things. My standards, my hair, what what what. And I know he cannot afford it. And because of love, I can say OK, I love you and I can stop for some days, but I will end up sneaking around in the afternoon when he's at work, I'll go to the street. Then it is not good.*
>
> (Clara, group discussion October 9)

Far from wanting a man to "rescue" them from sex work, the participants asserted that they would continue to do sex work if a man who was supporting them could not buy them the things that they wanted. Taking care of their appearance was an important part of theses expenses. Before sex work, the participants spoke of not being "beautiful" or at least putting much money into their appearance. Cecelia, who was older and had lived in a very rural area in Zimbabwe, was particularly excited with learning to wear makeup and shave her body hair. The participants all spoke of growing accustomed to looking nice and feared that a boyfriend or husband, if controlling their money, would not allow them to spend money on themselves.

4.3.4.2 PRIDE

This independence—a financial independence, an independence from men, a freedom to do what they wanted—was not only something to be cherished and protected but also seemed to

be a source of pride and satisfaction for the participants. Clara, multiple times throughout the workshop, spoke of the happiness she derived from her indepedence:

> *I've never been happy in life more than the way I am right now. I am even more than 100% happy, more than 90% happy, because I don't have anyone who say do this, don't do this. I want to enjoy, enjoy up to tomorrow*.
>
> (Clara, group discussion 2 October)

Not only did money give the participants freedom, but sex work itself provided a certain amount of freedom since one could set one's own hours and go back and forth to Zimbabwean whenever one wanted. Skara was particularly upset that she could not return home to Zimbabwe over Christmas because she had taken the job as a cleaner and would have to work through the holidays to get her pay at the end of December. Cele spoke of her job as a maid in Zimbabwe. She did not like the conditions or her boss: "I couldn't do that job. Maybe the person I was working for, he wasn't so nice. The people, they were not so nice. Too much work and little money and just harassed and harassed" (Cele, interview). From this job, Cele said that she "decided" to begin sex work. Contrary to popular depictions of cruel pimps, all of the participants in my study stressed how they work for themselves. The closest thing to a pimp—demanding money from them—was brothel owners wanting rent every night. This rent kept them working, as Cele said in an interview, whether she was feeling sick or not.

There are other consequences that come with the potential freedom and independence of sex work—especially for life at home in the more traditional and patriarchal family structures. Despite the pride that the participants expressed over taking care of their families and supporting them with sex work, they also stilled lived with a stigma of being unmarried. Despite Clara's declaration that "money is power," she, as the moneymaker, was disempowered in the household she supported when she returned to Zimbabwe. Clara felt particularly hurt and insulted that her younger sister was considered superior to her in her family because her sister is married. In a group discussion, Clara said:

> *In our culture, they say if you're married, you are responsible, if you are married, you are respectful. If you are like me, you're single, I'm not married, people they don't take*

us the same as those. Even my young sister, she's married and I'm not married. When I'm home, I'm not even told those special things they don't tell me they tell my sister. When I say why? They say because she's married. They value more to those people who are married more than single.

(Clara, group discussion October 2)

The group echoed her sentiment. Clara spoke of this issue again, in tears, during an interview. Chidhavazvo also mentions that a man and a married woman are higher than an unmarried woman when she decribes her pride in working in her brother's store: "I was happy to work like that and be proud of myself that I can manging to do that like a man or a married women" (Chidhavazvo, "A Time Felt Very Proud"). However, despite their lack of status as unmarried women, their status in their communities in Zimbabwe as owners of goods and property commanded at least jealousy if not respect.

The participants all spoke of the things they owned in Zimbabwe. Several of the participants were renting houses in Zimbabwe; Cele even rented a house in addition to the house her mother lived in. Some of the participants said they had purchased "property." While mentioning that she sends groceries home, Skara mentioned buying "*my own* house and car" (my emphasis). Lungile said:

I always go when I'm at home. If I'm at home, I say, wow, this is my property. See, I'm happy about, because I'm proud of myself what I did. Other girls, they're at home, they've got nothing. But because I started this job as a sex worker, everything changed. My life. It was simple. It's nice life now, even if I go home, my house is very smart, very beautiful.

(Lungile, group discussion 23 October)

As Clara did, here, too, Lungile associates her independence and pride with happiness. Furthermore, she attributes this happiness to her "job as a sex worker." A handwritten copy of this story appears in Figure 6 below.

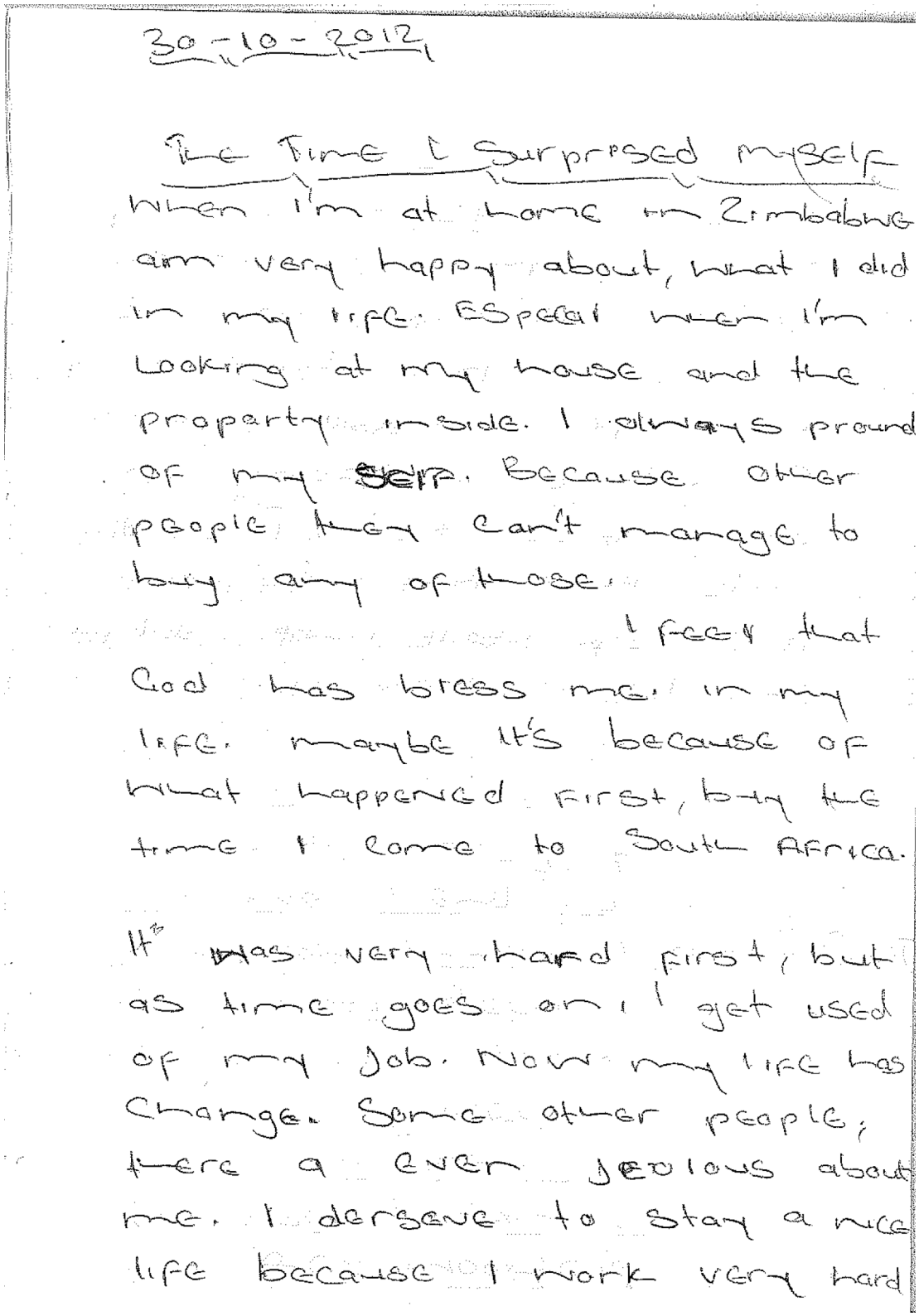
Of course the pride that the women express feeling is directly connected to result and not the means: the money and goods acquired through sex work and not the work itself. Responding

to the prompt "How I Feel about Writing my Story" that resulted from a discussion in Group B, Cele wrote:

> *I feel very good when I am writing my story especialy about my job as a sex worker, writing these stories makes me feel proud of my job because I can easily express anything without being shy unlike when I am talking to someone verbaly. I can be shy to say some of the things I come across in my business bt with pen and paper its easier*.
>
> (Cele, "How I Feel Writing my Story")

While Cele here says that she feels "proud" of her job as a sex worker writing these stories, this sentiment does not shine through her stories themselves. But since she here writes that she takes pride in her job in the stories, perhaps my perception and background keeps me from understanding the pride to which she refers in her stories.

The participants, coming from Zimbabwe, which they all characterized as "smaller" and "quieter" than Johannesburg, felt a pride in learning to live by themselves in the city. They arrived in Johannesburg with little knowledge of South Africa and no knowledge of a city so big. Skara proudly said: "I now know every corner of jozi and know it's not even beatiful like before. I'm now use to everything and I proud coz I teach myself the place." They also took pride in their work ethic as compared to the people they met in South Africa, though perhaps in response to the xenophobia that I have mentioned they faced. I will continue this discussion in the next section.



30-10-2012

The Time I Surprised myself

When I'm at home in Zimbabwe am very happy about, what I did in my life. Especial when I'm looking at my house and the property inside. I always pround of my ~~self~~. Because other people they can't manage to buy any of those.

I feel that God has bless me. in my life. maybe it's because of what happened first, by the time I come to South Africa.

It ~~was~~ very hard first, but as time goes on, I get used of my job. Now my life has change. Some other people, there a ever jealous about me. I dersene to stay a nice life because I work very hard

FIGURE 6: LUNGILE, "THE TIME I SURPRISED MYSELF"

4.3.5 Morality of Remittances

4.3.5.1 Superiority

I use the term "morality" in the title of this section because the remittances that the participants send home are presented as both making sex work "good" or morally acceptable as well as placing Zimbabwean sex workers morally above South African sex workers. The idea of a morality around remittances is in many ways connected to independence in the participants' representations; both focus on money. Madsen describes a similar concept, "the moral economy of money," in his research with undocumented Mozambican migrants in Johannesburg (Madsen 2004). Madsen describes the Mozambican migrants as "working for home" and justifying their use of petty crime for the purpose of both community preservation—survival of the present—and the realization of a stable and worked-for future home in Mozambique:

> *In Johannesburg, given the pressure on undocumented migrants, the narrative, or the moral orientation towards home, guides actions in ways that sustain the community and the survival of its members. Because of the dependency on remaining invisible and the recourse to bribery when invisibility fails, significant acts revolve, one way or another, around money. The right way of making, spending and saving money is pivotal for securing the continued existence of the community in Johannesburg, while working towards the return to Maputo*.
>
> (Madsen 2004, 184)

I was interested in how the participants in my study expressed similar feelings to the Mozambicans in Madsen's study, who made comments such as: "I don't work for South Africa, I work for back home" and "we just want small bread, we don't want to be crooks" (Madsen 2004, 185 and 183). My participants used similar language, especially to set themselves apart from the South African sex workers, whom at times they seemed to look down on or attempt to set up themselves as morally superior to—alluding to Landau's work on migrants in Johannesburg using idioms to set themselves up as superior to locals (Landau 2006). Why I stress the language of "morality of remittances" instead of Madsen's "morality economy of money" links to the biggest difference between the sentiments expressed by his mostly male participants and my female Zimbabwean sex worker participants; Madsen's participants stressed saving money and

buying possessions such as mattresses, which they kept unused, for a future home in Mozambique, while my participants stressed sending money home immediately to support children. This point also emphasizes what the women said was one of the most attractive features of sex work: quick cash.

The idioms migrants use to create a sense of moral superiority to locals—the migrant strategy possibly in response to discrimination and xenophobia in South Africa that Landau describes—were clear throughout discussions comparing Zimbabwean sex workers to South Africa, as I have discussed above. Landau writes that in response to the "violence, abuse, and discrimination" that cross-border migrants often experience in Johannesburg, they do not strive "to integrate or assimilate" but rather "non-nationals' extended interactions with South Africans are leading to a reification of differences and a counter-idiom of transcience and superiority" (Landau 2010, 322-323). In the very first workshop, Skara, Lungile, Clara, and Notoria had a heated discussion of how the South Africans were only engaging in sex work for pleasure and to buy beer and nice clothes.

In this discussion on October 2, Lungile said, "We're Zimbabweans. We came to look for money to support our families or kids. The South Africans, they come to the hotels to look for money to drink beer!" All the women shared the same perspective. Clara added, "Every cent I have, it has got something it has to do." They all agreed that South African sex workers spent their money on R1,000 shoes and nice clothes. This tie to home and its purpose—supporting family—added to the women's assertion of superiority. The cause of working for home and link to family was important to justify the work that some suggested might not be "good" as has been discussed in the first section of the analysis. Sending money home—remittances—being a good thing made the work to get that money good as well, or morally superior to the "bitching" in which South African sex workers were supposedly engaging.

4.3.5.2 MOTHERHOOD

As I referred to in the section on independence, financial independence was particularly important to the participants because of their role as mothers. All of the participant spoke proudly of being mothers. Motherhood was also what disrupted many of their educations. Chidhavazvo's son called her during one discussion about the impossibility to save for a future

and asked for several hundred rand to go on a school trip. Chidhavazvo said—as other participants reiterated—that since everyone in Zimbabwe knows that she is working in South Africa, she must pay. The participants also seemed to express an equally strong attachment to the title of "mother" as they did of "sex worker"—being the two main titles they used to categorize themselves. Chidhavazvo wrote in a short impromptu exercise during an interview, simply "I am…": "I am a mother because I want children so they can take care of me when I am old" (Chidhavazvo, interview). The participants' inability to save for the future was in some ways tempered with comments about how children will take care of them in their old age.

For her first introductory piece, Clara introduced herself as a sex worker and a mother—though the topic was simply "My Favorite Place."

> *I got myself into this business because of my economic hardship. I decided to join 2008. I was married before and got 2 kids a boy and a girl. To tell the truth I didn't enjoy my job but I have to work so that I take care of my 2 kids and my bills.*
>
> (Clara, "My Favorite Place")

In this passage from a short piece about how "home is best," Clara uses language that positions her as actively making decisions, such as "I *got myself* into this business" and "I decided." She says that she did not enjoy her job but must work to support her children, which tightly ties her role as a sex worker to her role as a mother. This representation of herself is particularly interesting given what she revealed in one-on-one interviews. She continued to emphasize her children's importance in her life, but she no longer supports her grown daughter, whom she says is married and no longer asks for money. Her son is full grown and living with his grandfather. However, her stories still emphasize a need to take care of her kids and go back to Zimbabwe to be able to cook for them and be a mother to them.

4.3.6 Mobility

All of the participants referred to mobility in one way or another. But this idea of "mobility" was perhaps more deeply entrenched in their stories than others—and not spoken about directly. Gould and Fick note that "the [sex work] industry is extremely fluid," and most sex workers in their study would regularly change brothels (Gould and Fick 2008, 30). Not only

changing brothels, I found that my participants changed brothels, switched from indoor street work to outdoor street work, and moved in and out of the industry—even over the course of this three-month study. The participants often connected mobility to ideas of power and independence, at least additional livelihood tactic, more than anything else. Migration, within Zimbabwe and outside, was such an obvious survival strategy that it did not need to be justified the way sex work did. Many of the narratives moved in and out of Zimbabwe in stories, conversations, and workshops in such a way that it was hard to know where they took place. The women themselves move in and out of Zimbabwe—more often than I had expected. Mobility also relates to money, in that funds are often required to move and movement is often prompted by financial opportunities or needs.

4.3.6.1 Across Borders

As all of the participants were cross-border migrants, residing at least half of the year in a foreign country, their mobility played a large role in their lives. However, they did not often refer directly to their mobility even in describing their initial journeys to South Africa; their mobility was implicit in their stories, which had a variety of settings in different countries. Though she was raised in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Lungile's parents were Malawian and currently reside in Malawi—and she spoke of travel between the these places as if it were nothing. The participants moved across international borders in a variety of ways and often left out details about how—legally, illegally, temporary visas, asylum papers—unless I asked them directly. At first, I thought that perhaps the participants were shy or even afraid to reveal if they were residing in the country illegally, with detention at the notorious Lindela Repatriation Centre and deportation possible if they were caught by government authorities. However, when asked, they explained willingly about the variety of ways—legal and illegal—they crossed borders. The issue seemed to be not that they were afraid to tell me but that they did not think about crossing a border in terms of legal issues; if they wanted to go to another country, they would. They traveled back and forth from South Africa to Zimbabwe more often than I had expected, most crossed the border at least once a year. Chidhavazvo, Cele, and Clara all had traveled to countries besides South Africa for work—though only Cele, while in Botswana, had worked as a sex worker. All of their international movement was for work. In this sense, their mobility was a power; it was part of their livelihood.

Leaving Zimbabwe allowed the participants freedom from certain cultural traditions. In his work with Senegalese migrants, Riccio notes that the migrants will do things abroad that they would not do at home: "abroad seems easier, because when one is far from home, he is ready to do things that he would refuse in his own country" (Riccio 2005, 109). As I have mentioned above, sex work is a prime example of Riccio's description. Furthermore, migration is not only a power for these participants as migrant sex workers but an important part of the lives of many breadwinners in poor families in the region:

> *In Southern Africa, migration represents a key livelihood-seeking strategy for poor house-holds. Where migrants are able to provide a range of resources to their linked households (including money for school fees and healthcare), migration contributes to social and economic development at the household level.*
>
> (Vearey 2011, 131)

South Africa was not the only country several of the participants had migrated to in search of improved livelihood opportunities. Cele said in an interview: "I use to migrate to Botswana. I use to for some years. But here in South Africa, I was invited by this cousin. She's the one who invited me" (Cele, interview). Clara spoke of illegally smuggling goods into Zambia and Mozambique in addition to working as a sex worker.

4.3.6.2 Between Jobs

The participants used their mobility as part of their livelihood strategy within countries as well. I was surprised how many different cities and villages they had lived in Zimbabwe. Even in South Africa, the participants spoke of traveling to find where sex workers were making the most money. I was worried halfway through the study when Clara spoke of her desire to go to Durban because she said sex workers were making lots of money there. Skara described how she and Lungile would travel from Johannesburg to Pretoria to Carletonville; from living in Pretoria, Skara said, "we heard that there was another place which has a lot of money; then we just change. We go there. It's Carletonville. It was better than Pretoria. There was money there." (Skara, interview).

Chidhavazvo chose to change brothels because the women at the Hillbrow Inn made fun of how she dressed. Her story "A Time I Felt Embarrassed" was about that incident: "One day ladies they come to me and asking why are you doing this job if you don't know it beoz our costmers ask where do you get thiese magogo. Who don't know how to dress. I was so embarassed and decided to change the place" (Chidhavazvo, *A Time I Felt Embarrassed*). Chidhavazvo also related the story of how she left South Africa for Botswana because of fear of xenophobia.

All of the women had had jobs other than sex work, often at the same time. Many of these jobs I have mentioned in previous sections, so I will not revisit them all here. They also were intent on looking for work to transition into after they could no longer engage in sex worker. The participants were either 28 years of age or older and were feeling that they were not making as much money as they had before—and that they would make less and less with age. Chidhavazvo wrote, in "A Time I Felt Weak": "Because when I think about thise my job when is goner finishe I always feel weak" (Chidhavazvo, "A Time I Felt Weak"). Every participant spoke independently of longing to be a "business woman," a job which, like sex work, would allow them a certain amount of freedom. They also saw being a business woman as requiring mobility traveling across international borders, buying and selling goods.

4.4 Comparison of Representations

4.4.1 Overview

"There are people who don't know what sex worker means," said Skara in a group discussion (23 October). Fluctuating between wanting their (anonymous) stories known to a wider audience and only wanting to share stories with other sex workers who would understand, the participants were very aware of the representations of migrant sex workers in the southern African community and how different their self-representations were. As the desk review reveals, migrant sex workers are often assumed to be—or suspected of being—trafficked women who are "prostituted." The non-governmental organisations discussed above, while focusing on trafficking victims, depict all migrant sex workers in South Africa as victims who are trapped and in need of rescue. The language used by organisations working with or researching or advocating for suspected victims of trafficking in southern Africa often conflates the two groups,

creating the illusion that no woman choses to be a sex worker. The solution offered is rescue from sex work and repatriation.

In their own representations of their lived experiences, the participants of this study seemed to agree with aspects of the organisations' representations, such as that they, as migrant sex workers, face violence and have options limited by their education levels, their financial situations, and, at times, their immigration status. At times, participants even referred to being "forced" into sex work or to feeling "trapped." However, financial constraints—not pimps or traffickers—"trapped" them, and most participants commented that they would refuse a job that paid less even if it paid enough for them to survive. Cele quit a job cleaning because, she said, "I was use to be having more money" (Cele, interview). Clara spoke of needing a job even if she had a boyfriend who paid for expenses because she had grown accustomed to looking "smart" (Clara, interview). Though some similarities existed in the organisations' depictions of migrant sex workers with the participants' self-representations—associated with needs and risks—the differences were extreme; the main comparisons are summarized in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4: COMPARISONS

Sex Worker Self-Representations	**NGO Representations**
Self-sufficient/Negotiator	Trapped Victim
Financial Provider/Mother	Corrupted/Without Dignity
Need More Money	Need to be Rescued
Dangers attributed to stigma and how sex work must be conducted in "hidden" context	Dangers inherent in Sex Work

Where the organisations represented migrant sex workers as victims, the participants represented themselves as self-sufficient. They presented themselves as providers, taking care of their families—providing for at least three or more people—and investing in property in Zimbabwe. While they boasted of the things they were accumulating in their homes in Zimbabwe, the organisations depicted them as trapped—some even representing migrant sex workers as "slaves." I use the word "need" to show where these representations overlap. The participants in

the study are not engaging in sex work far from their homes for pleasure; they represented themselves as often in need of money. However this need is very different from a "need" to be rescued that is attributed to sex workers in foreign countries by some of the organisations in the desk review. Furthermore, both groups referred to the dangers of engaging in sex work—especially as foreigners. But, like "need," "dangers" were presented very differently and attributed to different factors by participants versus the organisations.

4.4.2 The Self-Sufficient Victim

The migrant sex workers who participated in this study all represented themselves as women who work hard and take care of their children. They were proud of the homes they had in Zimbabwe and the expensive items such as "plasmas" (TVs) that they brought back from South Africa. While Cele and Chidhavazvo spoke of wanting husbands, Skara, Lungile, and Clara were adamant that they did not want a husband, who could take control of their money and their ability to earn more through sex work. But even Cele stressed her independence and self-sufficiency when she explained why she did not want a boyfriend now: "Because here, if you have a boyfriend, he will need much of your time and he won't give you money every day. I can't" (Cele, interview). The women were not only supporting themselves and their children, but all of them were also supporting other relatives.

The desk review also revealed a perpetuation of the "womenandchildren" discourses in trafficking and migration that position women as especially vulnerable away from the home. In an interesting contrast, all of the participants told me that it was better to be a woman than a man as a migrant in Johannesburg. When Cele first told me this, I was surprised, so I asked the other participants, who all agreed. Some said that it may be better to be a man in Zimbabwe, but as a migrant in Johannesburg, it was better to be a woman because you could always find work and find a place to sleep. In her explanation, Cele also emphasized her option not to engage in sex work if she did not want to: "If I don't want to sell my body, I can find a job as a housemaid. They don't want to take a houseboy" (Cele, interview). While women may be more vulnerable in some regards as migrants, they also see themselves as possessing tactics to survive in the city that men may not.

In some ways, the women did present themselves as victims, such as victims of rape and domestic abuse. But they did not dwell on being victims but rather how they responded in order

to protect themselves, a nod to their presentation as self-sufficient. After describing an encounter with a client who held her at knife point for her money, Lungile wrote:

> *Since that day I very careful with my clites because I know that they are very dargarous. When I'm with a clite, I don't lock the door because I know what there a not trusted.*
>
> (Lungile, "How I Deal With My Fear")

Similarly, Chidhavazvo and Cele said that they only work in a hotel because of the incidents they experienced working on the street. These dangers are very real but the horrible incidents that the participants described only made them victims of that particular incident to which they actively responded; they did not see themselves as perpetual victims or as victims because they are in sex work. Risks and dangers were associated with sex work, but they could be mitigated and were not inherent to sex work. The organisations in the literature review, however, linked sex work directly to oppression and enslavement. "One day I will retrie this job because I know that I'm not safe at all," wrote Lungile in "How I Deal with My Fear"; the job itself does not make her the victim but the circumstances that migrant sex workers face often put them in danger.

In the desk review, the conflation of migrant sex worker and trafficking victim seemed to be the main source of the "victim" label, not necessarily the dangers that sex workers actually face. While the organisations presented in the desk review ascertain that there are large numbers of sex slaves in Johannesburg and Hillbrow, the participants in this study doubted whether or not they had ever even heard of women or girls forced into sex work in Hillbrow. They represented the majority of migrant sex workers as choosing sex work as a livelihood over other options.

The IOM's caption for a photo of a young woman on the street of Johannesburg reads: "It could be any street in any city in South Africa, where young women or girls are trafficked and forced into commercial sex exploitation" (2012c). While the participants in my study all knew the concept of "trafficking," they were adamant that they had not met anyone in the brothels and on the streets where they had worked from Pretoria to Hillbrow to Carletonville whom they suspected of being trafficked. Competition for clients among sex workers is intense in inner-city Johannesburg, according to the participants, which suggests that the "supply" more than meets the "demand." When Cele told me in an interview that she had seen some "young girls" in the

"clubs" of Johannesburg, whom she guessed could be as young as 15 years, I asked her if she thought they had been trafficked.

> ***Cele:*** *I don't think so. I've never heard. I know that human trafficking, but I've never heard it here in South Africa. Maybe someone who is not around here… It's just by your own will. If you get your money, it's yours. Isn't it when they are doing this human trafficking, you'll be working for someone?*
>
> ***Greta:*** *Trafficking, someone makes you leave home and do sex work against your will.*
>
> ***Cele:*** *No, I've never heard of that.*

(Cele, interview)

Though only five participants were in this study, some of them had been in the sex industry in South Africa for ten years. Others had practiced sex work in Zimbabwe and Botswana. They had all worked in various brothels throughout Hillbrow and Pretoria. They had worked at many different places on the street in Johannesburg as well. As the anti-trafficking organisations assert, human trafficking for sexual exploitation is an underground business and trafficking victims may not be easily identifiable. However, the sex industry in South Africa is also underground and, according to some of these organisations, part of the systems of human trafficking. Thus the participants' insistence that they had never known or heard of a case of human trafficking for sexual exploitation is a notable contrast to the estimations of 10,000 child prostitutes in Johannesburg or the 5,000 women and children in Hillbrow who are "sexually exploited" (Salvation Army Southern Africa 2012; New Life Centre 2012). The discrepancy suggests more research needs to be conducted with rigorous methodology that takes into account the difference between victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation and migrant sex workers.

4.4.3 Corrupt Provider

The moralistic discourses that surround sex work—which were prevalent throughout the desk review—seem to have the most influence on how migrant sex workers represent themselves. A difficult contradiction for the participants in the study was that they felt they needed to continue engaging in sex work because it allowed them to make quick cash to support their children—not only keep them in school but dress them and feed them well—but they felt that they could not reveal this livelihood to their children. They were also aware that this job would not last forever.

The letters to young women and young sex workers, as well as the stories "What I Want My Children to Know," all included warnings about the violence and deception of men. While the organisations in the desk review spoke of the "oppression" of sexual exploitation resulting in a need for migrant sex workers to "embrace dignity," the participants seemed to take pride in the wisdom that they garnered from their experiences and could pass on to their children. By capitalizing on their experiences, they seem to harken back to the Wife of Bath, countering the "authority" of scholarly men with her personal experience.

While in the representations of migrant sex workers by the organisations in the desk review suggest that migrant sex workers need to be rescued or reformed—their dignity to be restored—the migrant sex workers themselves represented themselves as proud to be taking care of their families and providing their children with an education.

4.4.4 NEED

While the participants in this study spoke of need, they mainly referred to the need for more financial security. They spoke about the danger of their work, but they often explained ways that they found to mitigate the danger, as I have mentioned above. The stigma that came with sex work, the physically exhausting nature of the work, and the fluctuating income that went with the job were reasons the women gave as wanting to find a different job. However, they all said that they would refuse a job if it would not pay more than sex work. The participants also spoke of times that they had a "proper" job and still engaged in sex work on the side to earn more money, which is how Clara began sex work—for money to supplement her job at a factory—and what Skara was doing at the end of this study—engaging in sex work outside of her full-time job as a cleaner. The desk review reveals that many anti-trafficking organisations in South Africa declare that migrant sex workers need to be rescued from the sex industry and even returned to their home country. For the migrant sex workers in my study, these forms of "rescue" would be disastrous unless they came with a steady income higher than what they currently earn as sex workers.

4.4.5 DANGER

Another need that both the participants and the organisations mention is that of violence and physical danger. However, this danger is represented in slightly different ways. Sexual

exploitation is the focus of the non-governmental organisations in the desk review. However, the dangers migrant sex workers explained were both broader and more specific. Many of the dangers that they expressed—violence from South African migrants, violence from clients, violence from police, barriers to health services—were more a result of the illegality of sex work forcing their work underground and, at times, making them hesitant to seek help from the police. However, the participants spoke of the support they found in Sisonke to navigate some of these dangers, particularly giving the participants confidence in human rights that allow them to demand police protection. This recognition of rights—not the liberation from "prostitution" as sexual exploitation—was important to the participants and their sense of safety. They did not want to be saved from "prostitution" itself but from the dangers associated with it as an illegal livelihood. Interestingly, they did not actively talk about the decriminalisation of sex. Nor did they seem to desire some kind of inclusion in South African society or any privilege of a South African citizen; Landau notes that unlike groups of migrants in France and the U.S., "migrant organizations in Johannesburg—and to some extent elsewhere on the continent—have rarely fought for formal rights to the city or for formal political incorporation" (Landau 2010, 326). Instead, they prefer to not integrate; Landau references Simmel's notion of the stranger who does not wish to commit to the "peculiar tendencies" of the people and place where they reside (Landau 2010, 327). Similarly, the migrant sex workers in my study represented themselves as capable of responding to the dangers they face but still aware of their vulnerabilities. They did not represent themselves as in need of "rescue" from dangers but more in need of the recognition of their rights as human beings to be protected from violence.

4.4.6 Conclusion

Migrant sex workers face very real dangers and express very real needs. However, the participants of this study represented their needs and the dangers of their lives differently than the organisations in South Africa purporting to rescue migrant sex workers from danger and help them with their needs—or at least raise awareness about what they see as migrant sex worker's needs.

Perhaps one of the most direct and memorable quotations of the participants that seems to be a response not only to xenophobia but also the conflation of migrant sex workers with victims of trafficking was Lungile's closing line to her story, "My Greatest Challenge in South Africa":

> *That was the greatest challenge, living in South Africa. When you a foren. Some other people, they don't know that, all of us you are not the same.*
>
> (Lungile, "My Greatest Challenge in South Africa")

This response to stereotypes is simple—we are not all the same—but important for researchers, government officials, non-government workers, and others working on issues of trafficking, immigration, and policies around sex work in South Africa. The desk review shows that non-governmental organisations with an anti-trafficking focus in South Africa, by grouping migrant sex workers with victims of trafficking, represent women who cross-borders and engage in sex work as a livelihood strategy in a very different way than they represent themselves. In doing so, they fail to address the dangers that migrant sex workers do face—such as the violence they face without being able to rely on police protection—and advocate "rescuing" them instead. The huge discrepancy between migrant sex workers' self-representations and those of them by anti-trafficking organisations in South Africa show the need for not only more research on the hidden population of migrant women in the sex industry but also the need for more innovative methodology, such as creative writing workshops, that will amplify the voices of this population in the discourses about them.

CHAPTER 5: LIMITATIONS

This study faced many limitations, some due simply to the time requirements of a one-year master's thesis and others caused by the complexities of working with an "invisible" population such as migrant sex workers. Access to and retention of participants was the greatest challenge of the study. The Sisonke Sex Worker Movement was crucial to recruiting participants; however, my reliance on the organisation could have potentially skewed the results.

Since sex work is illegal in South Africa—and since some migrants involved in sex work do not have legal documentation—migrant sex workers are a group not easily accessible to researchers. Additionally, migrant sex workers may be reticent to participate in a study for fear that attention to their status a sex workers could bring legal repercussions or, if in South Africa without legal documentation, deportation. This double vulnerability of migrant sex workers makes them part of a "hidden" community that chooses to avoid formal systems. As I mentioned in my analysis, "time equals money" for sex workers in Hillbrow (Wojcicki and Malala 2001, 110). Not only do migrant sex workers not want to be written about in formal reports but they also do not want to waste time that could be spent earning money. Even though I followed Sisonke's suggestion and only scheduled workshops between 11am and 1 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, some participants still were unable to make sessions because they were either working or sleeping after working late into the night.

With Sisonke's help, I was able to identify ten participants to agree to attend an information session. Only seven women showed up for the information session. Only six women came to the first week of workshops. And only five women continued coming to workshops and completed the interviews. The low number of participants reflects the challenges of accessing a hidden population that is doubly vulnerable and the time constraints they face, but it also leads to another limitation of the study. Since I collected data on only five women, the generalisability of the study is limited.

Relying on Sisonke for participants ensured that the women in the study knew about the health services for sex workers offered through WHRI. This meant that the study provides a limited understanding of the barriers to health care that migrant sex workers without exposure to Sisonke face. Another limitation of the study related to working with Sisonke was that all of the participants had been exposed to the language of Sisonke—that a job is a job. Furthermore, by Sisonke introducing me to the sex work community in Hillbrow and my participants, I appeared

as a researcher associated with Sisonke instead of an independent researcher. I emphasized in workshops that I was a graduate student at the University of Witwatersrand and that no real names would be associated with a story; however, by conducting the interviews in the same building that houses Sisonke's office, the workshops felt more an extension of a Sisonke meeting than completely independent research. Though this association may have influenced the participants' responses, the building also seemed to be a comfortable place for the participants and seemed to help me gain a level of trust with the participants.

Another limitation of the study was the time constraints, which particularly limited the assessment of the innovative methodology of the study. As the women were beginning to feel comfortable writing their own stories on their own topics without prompts and as they were beginning to type their own stories—choosing which ones to type—the study ended.
Time limitations also had the potential to affect the results on a workshop level. Clara wrote a piece that ended with a comment that contradicted what she had said earlier in the discussion about sex work. When I asked her outright about the contradiction, she explained that she had not yet reached her point; she continued her line of thought and said: "You see? That's where I was going, then the stop time" (Clara, group discussion 9 October). Her meaning was misunderstood because I had ended the writing session too soon, and her story was unfinished in a misleading way. In future studies, perhaps the participants could be allowed more time to write. While I introduced the idea of revision to the participants and some participants revised stories, the time constraints also limited the revision and polishing of drafts. Several participants had hoped that I would "correct" their notebooks and were dismayed to find that I had not edited their spelling and grammar when I returned their notebooks. Working with participants through multiple drafts of a story and helping them to type the stories on a computer would be an interesting addition to the methodology that I used; it also might allow the participants to feel that they were directly benefiting from participation in the project. I worked with Lungile, Skara, and Chidhavazvo on typing three stories, but these interactions were informal and not part of the study—the participants had wanted to learn more about using computers.

Planning the study, I had anticipated that proficiency in reading and writing in English would pose a challenge. Some researchers had cautioned me that I might not be able to find migrant sex workers in Hillbrow with sufficient English skills to participate in creative writing workshops at all. I even invited a translator to the information session, but the women all said

they felt comfortable reading the information sheet by themselves and writing in English. While the participants were all confident in their English, their vocabularies were, at times, limited. I came across problems that I had not anticipated trying to articulate certain prompts to which I had hoped the participants could respond. At times, this caused confusion in the writing exercises, especially for Chidhavazvo, whose English was the most limited. On the other hand, it was interesting to look at each participant's interpretation of the prompt; their interpretations were sometimes wildly different in a way that might not have been the case if their vocabulary had been broader or if I had made the topic easier to understand in the first place.

Relatedly, spelling and grammar occasionally caused confusion in my analysis of stories; however, I found that having participants read their stories to the group often clarified illegible parts of the story. Spellings used in text messages were also common—e.g., "4get," "coz." As an American, my cultural background limited my understanding of certain slang or phrases that my Zimbabwean participants used in discussions and writing. My accent and theirs also caused some confusion; the whole room had to say, "bitch," before I understood that a participant was not referring to a "beach" on the first workshop. Nuances of the participants' interactions were most likely lost on me. My limitations in understanding Shona and Ndebele additionally blocked me from being privy to side comments made in workshops—though I always asked for explanations of Shona and Ndebele words or conversations. Having a translator in the room might have helped, since sometimes the women felt limited in translating for one another; however, having an additional person in the small, intimate workshops might have brought additional limitations as well.

The help of Sisonke and African Centre for Migration and Society researchers, Jo Vearey and Marlise Richter, was critical in helping me mitigate the challenges of accessing members of this "invisible" population.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 KEY FINDINGS

This study has shown a complex self-representation of migrant sex workers that greatly contrasts with the portrayal of migrant sex workers in popular discourses on trafficking. These discourses often conflate migrant sex workers and victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation. Furthermore, this study has also explored the use of creative writing as a methodology and asserts that it can be an effective research tool in accessing a marginalised population. While the time constraints of this study limited the number of creative writing workshops, the six conducted yielded a rich depiction of the lived experiences of a "hidden" population. To conclude this report, I will revisit and respond to my initial research questions and objectives and provide some recommendations for further research on this methodology and improvement of migrant sex worker experiences.

6.1.1 MIGRANT SEX WORKER SELF-REPRESENTATIONS

While few in number, the cross-border migrant sex worker participants in my study represented themselves in a variety of ways, at times conflicting or ambiguous. My analysis shows that the stigma attached to being both a migrant and a sex worker—perpetuated in popular discourses—might influence some of the paradoxical self-portraits that the participants' stories, interviews, and discussions reveal.

Drawing from the stories, interviews, and discussions, I noted six main themes in the participants' self-representations: Conflicting Representations of Sex Work, Doubled Existence and Stigma, Health and Safety, Importance of Independence, Morality of Remittances, and Mobility. Throughout all of these themes ran issues of power, vulnerability, and agency. The participants in the study present themselves as both strong and vulnerable but always aware of the dangers they face and calculating the risks. As Cele wrote of a place where she engaged in outdoor sex work: "This place was lyk 'At your own risk' because there wasn't any security if you had a misunderstand with a client he could either beat, take the money from u or fuck u without a condom. of wich i went through all this" (Cele, "My Life as a Sex Worker"). Cele's description, "At your own risk," highlights both the dangers and the decision to pursue sex work as a livelihood. The participants in this study all presented both "good" and "bad" depictions of

their lives as migrant sex workers, giving a complex, at times ambiguous, portrait of migrants and sex workers in South Africa; however, despite their vulnerabilities and varying views of sex work, these women all took pride in the independence they have garnered under difficult circumstances.

6.1.2 Discrepancies in Language

The language used by the non-governmental organisations reviewed in the desk review—as well as that of many discourses revealed in the literature review—showed a discrepancy between how popular discourses represent migrant sex workers in South Africa and how the Zimbabwean sex worker participants represented themselves in this study. First and foremost, popular discourses tend to describe migrant sex workers as "prostitutes" or "trafficking victims" or, in some cases, "sex slaves." Language that places a moral judgment on sex work seemed to have the greatest impact on how the participants in this study represented themselves, not only in their representations in their stories but also in their representations of themselves to their families at "home" in Zimbabwe. The doubling that the participants indirectly referred to seemed to be associated with the stigma that is perpetuated by popular discourses, especially connecting sex work with disease and death. Moreover, conflicting representations of sex work also seemed influenced by moralistic discourses about sex work. The moral discourses were prevalent in the desk review; many of the organisations that focus on anti-trafficking in South Africa are religiously affiliated. The idea that sex workers must "embrace dignity" and find "respectable" work seeped into some of their stories, contradicting the pride they declared in other stories about providing for loved ones and acquiring respect in Zimbabwe through property ownership and educated and well-dressed children. Furthermore, the "womenandchildren" discourses, prevalent throughout the desk review, also appeared in the participants' stories; while the money-makers of the families, the participants felt that they were second-class citizens at home because they were unmarried.

6.1.3 Methodology

The use of participatory research methodology using creative writing proved successful in this study, drawing out stories and self-representations from a group of women who are often discussed but rarely heard. This study will therefore help to add their voices to the literature

about them. Creative writing proved to be a successful methodology in several ways. The participants seemed to feel that this medium allowed them to voice certain feelings that might not be culturally acceptable and that they might not be able to say in another venue or through another medium. In a group discussion, Clara said: "You understand our culture, this culture of ours, sometimes it put us down. Like, as women we are not uplifted the way men are. Because I'm a woman, I've got kids with you. Even if I take care of those kids, whenever the husband wants the kids, no matter how many years it has been or how much you've suffered or no matter how much expenses, they don't even care. If they want their children, they want their children. It's our culture and it's very bad. We are also supposed to write it, so if someone reads these books, they will see how we feel about this. They must know that we don't feel good." (Clara, group discussion 2 October).

Not only did the creative writing workshops produce informative data on the self-representations of migrant sex workers, they also seemed to be empowering to a certain extent for participants. Chidhavazvo continued to ask for more "prompts" even after the study had ended, bringing me another notebook with a story to share with me at a Sisonke event. She wrote in one piece about how she feels about the writing workshops: "I feel good because I get education from writing difrent storys and to have some ideas from others" (Chidhavazvo, *How I Feel Writing My Stories*). Her cousin, Cele, wrote on the same topic: "I feel very good when I am writing my story especialy about my job as a sex worker, writing these stories makes me feel proud of my job because I can easily express anything without being shy unlike when I am talking to someone verbaly" (Cele, *How I Feel Writing my Story*).

6.2 Recommendations

Despite the time constraints and limited generalisability of this study, several recommendations can be made about the innovative methodology of creative writing as a research method to reach marginalised or hidden groups and about improving the lives of migrant sex workers in South Africa.

Further research employing innovative methodology and a participatory approach to reach "hidden" populations should be conducted. I recommend that future research:

- Conduct creative writing workshops with small groups or participants over the course of more than three months in order to allow for the incorporation of participant revisions and rewrites once participants have become comfortable with the format and have generated enough work to revise;
- Attempt to incorporate creative writing workshops into a participatory action research approach that allows participants even more involvement with all steps of the workshop process;
- Investigate follow-up research with creative writing groups that would allow for participant reflection on the process and the potential to revise written work that would be more accessible to a wider audience.

While I argue throughout this study that migrant sex workers are active agents who make livelihood decisions, I do not mean to ever downplay the dangers they face on a daily basis. The data and analysis show that migrant sex workers face doubled vulnerabilities as sex workers in a country where sex work is illegal and as migrants in a country with restrictive immigration policies and a recent history of violent xenophobia. To improve the conditions for migrant sex workers in South Africa—including health and safety—I recommend that:

- Research about human trafficking for sexual exploitation and sex work strive to always include the voices of those involved in trafficking and the sex industry and, in the interest of both groups, resist the conflation of trafficking victims and migrant sex workers;
- Government not only recognize the human rights of migrants and of sex workers in South Africa but also attempt to raise awareness of the rights of migrants and sex workers among government workers with direct interaction with migrants and sex workers, such a police officers and public clinic workers.

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APPENDIX A

Workshop Schedule

- 27th September - Introductory Meeting
- 2nd and 4th October – First workshops, groups A and B – free writes and discussion
- 9th and 11th October – Second workshops, groups A and B – free writes and discussion
- 16th and 18th October – Third workshops, groups A and B – free writes and discussion
- 23rd October – Fourth workshop, group A – free writes and discussion
- 6th November – Fifth workshop group AB
- 15th November – Sixth workshop group AB
- 20th November – Seventh workshop group AB

Semi-structured Interviews Schedule

- 21st October – First interviews with Skara, Lungile, and Clara
- 27th October – First interviews with Cele and Chidhavazvo
- 28th October – Second interviews with Skara, Lungile, and Clara
- 29th October – Second interviews with Cele and Chidhavazvo
- 5th December – Third interviews with Skara, Lungile, and Clara
- 6th December – Third interviews with Cele and Chidhavazvo

APPENDIX B

Information Sheet

Migrant Sex Worker Participants

Greetings. My name is Greta Schuler. I am a graduate student at the University of the Witwatersrand. For my master's degree in forced migration, I am doing a study on the stories of migrant sex workers. This study will explore how migrant sex workers think about their lives and share their stories. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. This paper offers important information if you choose to participate.

Time demands: If you participate, you will need to attend four to six meetings, called workshops, at the Sisonke Office, WHRI building in Hillbrow. Each meeting will be three hours, and there will be refreshments. During the meeting, you will write stories. I will give you a topic to write about, and you can write about that or about anything else. There will be 2 to 3 other women in the group. You will be asked to read your story to the group, but you can choose not to read. After the six meetings, you will be asked if you want to be interviewed by me. You can say yes or no.

Risks: There are not many risks in participating in this study. Excerpts of your stories may be included in my research report. I will never use your name, but your story might give someone a clue as to who you are. The report will be presented to Sisonke Sex Worker Movement and reported in the researcher's master's thesis as well as subsequent published pieces. This research will take 18 hours of your time, which could also be a risk since you will be away from work. Sensitive topics may come up in your stories. If you feel uncomfortable, **you may stop participating in the study at any time for any reason**. Here are the numbers for some counseling services if you feel uncomfortable and would like help: Lifeline National Counselling Line 0861-322-322; Lifeline National AIDS Helpline 0800-021-322; Lifeline Gender Violence Helpline 0800-150-150; Lifeline Norwood 011-728-1331; People Opposing Woman Abuse (Support with counselling and with leaving abusive situations) 011 642-4345.

Benefits: You might not receive direct benefits from participating in this study; however, the

resulting research report may help more people to better understand the lives of migrant sex workers.

Costs: There are no direct costs to participate in this study. Each of three workshops will require three hours of your time. Refreshments will be provided at each workshop. A R100 Pick 'n' Pay vouchers will be given for three completed interviews instead of refreshments.

Contact: For more information about this study, please contact me by cell phone (0718366383) or e-mail (gretaschu@gmail.com). If you do not feel comfortable talking to me and need to talk to my academic supervisor, you can contact her, Jo Vearey, at 0117174033.

APPENDIX C

Workshop Consent Form

This study is about the stories of women migrant sex workers and is explained in more detail in the information sheet.

As a participant of this study, I, _____ (Participant's Name) confirm:

- I agree to participate in six meetings/workshops, where I will write stories;
- I have read the information sheet and had the opportunity to ask questions;
- I agree that the stories I write during the creative writing workshops may be used for research, and I am aware that I may be identifiable in the final research report.
- I agree to have the workshop discussions recorded so the words can be used in subsequent research reports, publications, and seminars

  I do / I do not agree to be audio recorded. (Please circle one)

- I understand that I do not have to take part in this project and that I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage.

Printed Name (Participant) Signature Date

APPENDIX D

Interview Consent Form

This study is about the stories of women migrant sex workers and is explained in more detail in the information sheet.

As a participant in this study, I, _____ (Participant's Name) confirm:

- I agree to participate in three unstructured interviews;
- I have read the information sheet and had the opportunity to ask questions;
- I agree that the things said in the interviews may be used for research, and I am aware parts of my story may be in the final research report so someone reading the report, who knows me, might be able to recognize me.
- I agree that the interviews will be audio recorded / I do not agree to be audio recorded.

  (Please circle one)
- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project and that I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage.

Printed Name (Participant)	Signature	Date

APPENDIX E

Participant's Pseudonym	*Age*	*Place of Birth*	*Started Sex Work*	*Arrived in South Africa*	*Workshops Attended*	*Number of Interviews*	*WS 1 A*	*WS 1 B*	*WS 2 A*	*WS 2 B*	*WS 3 A*	*WS 3 B*	*WS 4 A*	*WS 5 AB*	*WS 6 AB*
Lungile	*36*	*Bulawayo*	*2001 (SA)*	*2001*	*6*	*2*	2 Oct.	-	9 Oct.	-	16 Oct.	-	23 Oct.	6 Nov.	15 Nov.
Skara	35	Bulawayo	2003 (SA)	2003	6	2	2 Oct.	-	9 Oct.	-	16 Oct.	-	23 Oct.	6 Nov.	15 Nov.
Chidhavazvo	40	Mutare	2008 (SA)	2008	5	2	-	4 Oct.	-	11 Oct.	-	18 Oct.		6 Nov.	15 Nov.
Clara	37	Harare	1997 (Zim.)	2008	4	2	2 Oct.	-	9 Oct.	-	16 Oct.	-	-	-	15 Nov.
Cele	29	Chinoyi	2002 (Zim.)	2012	3	2	-	4 Oct.	-	-	-	-		6 Nov.	15 Nov.
Notoria	-	Zimbabwe	2006 (SA)	2005	1	-	2 Oct.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cecilia	45	Nyanga	2012 (SA)	2012	1	-	-	-	-	11 Oct.	-	-	-	-	-

APPENDIX F

University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Clearance

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON MEDICAL)
H120814 Schuler

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER H120814**
PROJECT TITLE	Migrant Sex Worker Narratives and Discourses of Vulnerability, Agency and Power: Self-representations in the shadow of non-state actors representations of migrant sex workers and trafficking victims
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Ms G Schuler
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	African Centre for Migration and Society/forced migration
DATE CONSIDERED	17 August 2012
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Unconditionally
EXPIRY DATE	31 August 2014

DATE 01 October 2012 **CHAIRPERSON** (Professor T Milani)

cc: Dr. J Vearey

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

Signature Date 27 / 11 / 2012

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES