

Their narrative: a feminist study examining the everyday lives of unaccompanied migrant girls who sell sex in Chipinge, Zimbabwe



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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the Master of Arts in Migration and Displacement at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.



Gloria Nyaradzo Nyahuma

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Abstract

This thesis explores the everyday experiences of unaccompanied migrant girls who sell sex in Chipinge, a small town in eastern Zimbabwe. The participants of this qualitative study were four adolescent girls, ages 16 to 18 years old, of Mozambique descent. Guided by feminist standpoint theory, intersectionality, and adolescent theory, the study examined three main areas: (1) factors that lead adolescent girls to migrate unaccompanied; (2) trajectories of unaccompanied migrant girls into selling sex; and (3) how unaccompanied migrant girls who sell sex access their daily needs in their host countries. Drawing on arts-based research (ABR), the main methods used were storytelling and mapping. Unstructured interviews were also conducted with each participant after the ABR phase of the study ended. Although each participant had unique circumstances that led them to migrate unaccompanied, most explained family circumstances such as, death of parents, violence in the home, and poverty as being immediate drivers for migrating to Zimbabwe alone. Each participant also had unique experiences that influenced their decisions to sell sex, but social networks and exploitation in other informal livelihood activities played a major role. Selling sex was the primary livelihood strategy that the participants in this study engaged, which enabled them to access their basic needs of accommodation, food, and childcare. Whilst being an important livelihood strategy, selling sex exposed the participants to risks of violence and health, including HIV.

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CHAPTER 1

1. Introduction

This qualitative study explores the everyday experiences of unaccompanied migrant girls who sell sex in Chipinge, a small town in southern Zimbabwe. It analyses the circumstances that lead adolescent girls to migrate across international borders alone, without a primary caregiver, how they access their basic needs on an every day, and how migration influences trajectories into selling sex.

Due to the sensitive nature of this study, I would like to point out at the onset that the participants were females between 16 and 18 years of age. Although still considered children in Zimbabwean law, which is in line with international and regional instruments, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), people over the age of 16 are legally recognized as able to give sexual consent (The African Child Policy Forum, 2012). To put it another way, under Zimbabwe's Criminal Code (Chapter 9:23), a person can consent to sexual intercourse beginning at 16 years of age (Kika, 2019). Whilst persons over 16 years of age can consent to sexual intercourse, soliciting for sex is unlawful in Zimbabwe (Lawhub Zimbabwe, 2017).

This research is guided by three theoretical frameworks: feminist standpoint theory, intersectionality, and adolescent theory. Feminist standpoint theory argues that knowledge is locally situated and it advocates practicing social science from the perspective of women (Collins, 1990; Halpern, 2019). Intersectionality is an analytical tool for understanding how social categorisations are interconnected, specifically how one's social, political, and racial identities (to name a few) can combine or overlap to generate different forms of discrimination and privilege (Crenshaw, 1989). Adolescent theory asserts that adolescents are capable of self-governance and act autonomously in their lives (Lerner et al., 2018). All three frameworks share a commitment to centralizing and prioritizing the voices of adolescent girls.

The study used an Arts-Based Research ABR approach to collect data, primarily storytelling and mapping. After the ABR phase ended, unstructured interviews were conducted with each participant. As Oliveira & Vearey (2019) explain, “ABR is a set of methodological tools used by qualitative researchers across disciplines during all, or some

stages of the research process, including data collection, analysis, interpretation, and representation” (p. 220). ABR is influenced by the visual arts, literary writing, music, film, and performance (to name a few). According to advocates of ABR, the approach offers participants a unique opportunity to actively participate in research (Capous-Desyllas & Morgaine, 2014; (Walker and Oliveira, 2020).

The technique of storytelling, which consists of conveying past, present, and future experiences (real and/or imagined) to audiences (Walker & Oliveira, 2019) was vital to examining the daily experiences of unaccompanied migrant girls who sell sex. Not only is it common to tell stories in African cultures (reference), as Kistner (2019) explained in her recent reflection about her involvement in a project with refugee women from across the African continent, now living in Johannesburg, the act of telling and listening to stories can allow everyone involved (tellers and witnesses) an opportunity to gain new insights into their own lives and the world. Participants can also learn from one another through storytelling, as well as share and receive support (Kistner, 2019). The study that informs this thesis provided participants with the opportunity to reflect on their lives in ways that traditional research approaches, such as observation and surveys, might not have allowed.

To promote storytelling and reflection, I invited participants to partake in social mapping. The purpose of social mapping, as Powell (2010) explains, is to document and analyze social networks, movements, and spatial relationships. This study used social mapping to encourage participants to share stories about how they were influenced by their interactions with the diverse environments they negotiate.

A rigorous ethical approach to research is crucial for all academic projects, but it is particularly important when working with marginalized populations, such as unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls who sell sex. The ethics section of this research report provides detailed information about my ethical considerations and what I did to maximize anonymity and protection. However, I would like to stress at the onset the importance I placed on remaining critical and reflexive throughout the entire research process, especially paying close attention to the ways my positionality could affect this work.

I am a female adult researcher of Zimbabwean descent. As someone who has spent over 15 years working with unaccompanied migrant children, I assume they are likely to experience extreme forms of marginalization. While conducting this study, I have remained conscious of age, class, education, and nationality differences (to name a few) and how these differences between my participants and I might likely have a bearing on the ways my participants perceived me, as well as the ways that I perceive(d) them. As feminist scholar

Hanisch (1969) explains, the work that we do is entwined with our histories, subjects, and identities. Indeed, one of the driving forces of feminist research is to challenge the arbitrary lines that have been drawn between researchers and participants (Oliveira, 2019). Throughout this research journey, I have worked to remain critically aware of my privileges, respecting the agency and autonomy of my participants as I do in my professional work. It is my hope that this thesis reflects the high regard I have for my participants.

1.1 Research Questions

The following three questions guided this study:

1. What are the life circumstances that lead Mozambican adolescent girls to migrate to Chipinge unaccompanied?
2. How does the context of migration influence participants' trajectories into selling sex?
3. What strategies do Mozambican adolescent girls living in Chipinge use to access their basic needs on an everyday basis?

1.2 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this master's project is to better understand the everyday experiences of unaccompanied migrant girls who sell sex in Chipinge, Zimbabwe.

Objectives

1. Explore circumstances that lead adolescent girls to migrate unaccompanied.
2. Examine how the context of migration influences adolescent girls into selling sex.
3. Consider the strategies that adolescent girls use to access their basic/needs, including food and shelter.
4. Share findings that highlight the narrative of unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls from Mozambique selling sex in Chipinge, Zimbabwe.

1.3 Rationale for Study

Across the globe, there is little research on unaccompanied migrant girls selling sex (Busza et al., 2011, Kerfoot et al., 2007). This study seeks to make a contribution to a large gap in the literature.

Unaccompanied migrant adolescents are often considered vulnerable due to a number of factors, including traveling unaccompanied, which frequently exposes them to risks of harm along the migration journey (UNICEF, 2019; van de Glind & Anne Kou, 2013).

Understanding the everyday experiences of unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls involves finding out how they negotiate life on a day-to-day basis (Das, 2007). This includes finding out how the girls in my study negotiate their day-to-day lives and how they traverse the visible and invisible boundaries they face, such as cultural and gendered norms.

My motivation for conducting this research was to gain insight into the complex lives of migrant adolescent girls who sell sex. Having said this, I also understood/understand that such a sensitive topic requires a high level of professionalism and integrity on the part of the researcher. It is my belief that my personal and professional experience(s) enabled me to undertake this study.

I've worked with accompanied migrant children for more than 15 years. As part of my work, I evaluate the needs of unaccompanied migrant children and their experiences of services. I conduct risk assessments with children and adolescents, and agree on prevention and mitigation measures to keep them safe as they participate in the program activities. To gain a deeper understanding of these young people's experiences, needs, and aspirations, I often use arts-based approaches such as drawing, body mapping, and storytelling. I apply ethical mechanisms that include: informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity (to name a few) as I work with these young people. As I did with this study, I always inform the young people I work with that they are not required to share information they are uncomfortable sharing, and that they can withdraw from the activity at any time without facing reprisal.

My experience working with marginalized adolescents in a variety of contexts and settings has provided me with valuable insights into the lives of unaccompanied migrant adolescents. Among the most significant insights I have gained over the years is that selling sex can be both a livelihood strategy and a place of refuge for some migrant adolescents (Mahati, 2021; Miguel, 2018). However, selling sex can expose adolescent girls to high risks of violence, including being murdered and exposure to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV (WHO, 2015). I was motivated to conduct this research so that I could better understand the experiences of unaccompanied migrant girls who sell sex.

Dr. Elsa Oliveira, has extensive experience using arts-based approaches in her work with marginalized migrant populations in southern Africa, including with female sex workers (Walker & Oliveira, 2020; Oliveira, 2019; Oliveira & Vearey, 2015). Dr. Oliveira is the co-founder and co-coordinator of the MoVE (method. visual. explore) project at the African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS). As she recently wrote,

Founded in 2014, the MoVE project aims to: involve collaboration with migrant groups that are typically excluded, under-represented, or misrepresented in research,

policy, and public debates; explore ways that knowledge can be co-produced between researcher(s) and participant (s); and share outputs created during research processes (Oliveira & Vearey, 2016). To date, MoVE projects have involved partnership with migrants residing in informal settlements (Vearey, 2010); with Somali migrants and refugees (Ripero-Muñiz & Fayad, 2016); with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ+) asylum seekers (Dill et al., 2016; Oliveira et al., 2015); with migrant women in inner-city Johannesburg (Walker & Clacherty, 2014; Oliveira & Walker 2019); and with migrant women, men, and transgender persons involved in sex work and sex worker activism (Huschke, 2017; Schuler et al., 2016). These, and other MoVE projects, have culminated in a range of research and advocacy outputs, including public exhibitions, newsletters, engagement with officials, and the development of free downloadable e-books that archive projects and workshop processes (Oliveira, 2019 p 531).

As a result of the ABR methodology, I was able to engage research participants in a participatory manner, where information was brought to the surface through storytelling and mapping. In ABR, knowledge is generated by collaborating with research participants and communities rather than being generated by the researcher alone (Chatterton et al., 2007).

1.5 Research Report Outline

This research report is divided into six chapters. **Chapter one** introduces the research and provides some background to the study, research problem and rationale. Following is **Chapter two**, the literature review, which focuses on the circumstances that lead adolescent to migrate alone and the livelihood opportunities that unaccompanied migrant adolescents often engage when they arrive at their host destinations. This chapter also includes a literature review on each of the three theoretical frameworks that guided this research. **Chapter three** focuses on data collection, specifically outlining the data collection process and the research tools used. A detailed discussion of ethics is also presented in this chapter. **Chapter four** shares the findings of this study and **Chapter five** presents the conclusions of the research, recommendations for the improvement of the lives of unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls and suggestions for further research in area of migration, adolescent girls, and informal livelihood. The last chapter (**Chapter six**) is the list of references.

CHAPTER 2

2. Locating my study: Literature review

The purpose of this study was to explore the everyday experiences of unaccompanied migrant girls in Chipinge, Zimbabwe who sell sex. I reviewed existing literature while conducting this research to gain an understanding of the circumstances that lead adolescents to migrate unaccompanied. In addition, I researched different livelihood activities that unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls often engage in, including selling sex, and how their basic everyday needs are met (or not) in their host countries. Furthermore, I examined literature on the theoretical frameworks that shaped this research, such as feminist standpoint theory, intersectionality, and adolescent theory. A discussion of these literatures is presented below.

2.1 Circumstances Leading Adolescents to Migrate Unaccompanied

Children and adolescents migrating within and across African borders form a significant proportion, constituting approximately a third of all undocumented migrants on the continent (Awumbila, 2015; Dodson, 1998). Over the years, the proportion of girls, many of which are adolescent girls migrating has surpassed that of boys (Thatun, and Heissler, 2013).

Adolescents who migrate unaccompanied either do so on their own volition or because their families ask them to (Casillas, 2009). Circumstances such as war and persecution, poverty, hopelessness and unemployment form some of the major drivers for unaccompanied migration amongst adolescents (Bhabha, 2010).

Poverty and inequality are major drivers of unaccompanied adolescent girls' migration across national borders. In Guatemala, for example, poverty and inequality have forced some adolescents to migrate unaccompanied in search of better livelihood opportunities (Lorenzen, 2017). In 2014, the Gini Index in Guatemala was 0.55, which was the highest in Latin America, and the poverty rate was 67.7% (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2017). In Zimbabwe, high levels of poverty, which are up to 95%, forms one of the main drivers for unaccompanied migration amongst adolescents (ZIMVAC, 2017; Mabvurira et al., 2020). Whilst poverty and inequality pushes some adolescents to migrate unaccompanied, the hope of a better future, getting a job at their host destination and/or engaging in other forms of livelihoods also motivates some adolescents to migrate (Dako-Gyeke et al., 2022).

Families' expectations that children should contribute towards the household income when they become adolescents also influences some young people to migrate unaccompanied. For example, migrant adolescents from Ghana and Gambia report that family members are expected to contribute to their household income when they become teenagers (Chant & Jones, 2005). When families decide that an adolescent should migrate, gender tends to play a significant role. Poor rural households in Thailand, for example, often prefer sending boys between 12 and 21 years to migrate unaccompanied (Curran, 1996). Interestingly, studies show that migrant girls are more likely to send remittances back home when they migrate because they are more likely to be dependent on kinship networks (ibid).

Unaccompanied migration among adolescents is due to a number of factors, including parental death, a decrease in household income, and a reduction in child care capacity in the family (Young & Anesll, 2003; Ansell & van Blerk, 2004). Upon death of a parent, children typically move in with a relative, including their grandparents, who are likely to have reached retirement age, so living under their care increases risk of household poverty, and the elderly are also likely to have diminished physical health, which makes it difficult for them to nurture and support children under their care (Whitley & Fuller-Thomas, 2017). In such circumstances, adolescents may engage in unaccompanied migration in search of opportunities.

The threat of violence against adolescents is another factor found in the literature to contribute to an adolescent's decision to migrate. For example, Children from Central America's Northern Triangle states of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador often see migration to the United States as necessary for their survival from violence back home (Ciaccia and John, 2016). Violence, which is often linked to the expansion and widespread presence of gangs and other criminal organizations, has been seen to push adolescents from the Northern Triangle to migrate unaccompanied to the United States for self-protection (Dako-Gyeke et al, 2022).

Violence at home is another push factor contributing to adolescents migrating unaccompanied. According to research findings from Ethiopia, most adolescents decide to migrate unaccompanied in response to domestic violence (Adugna, 2006 in Yaqub, 2009). In a study conducted by Mabvurura et al (2020), a participant revealed that physical abuse in the home prompted him to migrate unaccompanied from Zimbabwe to South Africa. The participant said, "... our parents died last year, and I went to live with my abusive aunt... My aunt is so abusive, she beats me every day... that is why I decided to run away with an aim to crossover to Messina..." (p.173). Violence in the home, which serves as a push factor for

unaccompanied migration includes violence in the form of intimate partner violence. Respondents in a Save the Children study in Southern Africa revealed that some of the respondents, who were also young mothers mentioned experiences of violence and severe abuse, leading to them deciding to leave home and migrate to South Africa (Besedic, et al, 2020).

2.2 Adolescents and Work

Migration can present itself with increased opportunities for adolescents to escape threats in their countries of origin, such as violence, forced marriage and poverty (ILO, 2013). The adolescents seek work and better lives when they arrive at their destination countries (Mabvurira et al., 2020; Dako-Gyeke et al., 2022). Social networks of friends and family already living at their host destinations, play a significant role in enabling the adolescent find employment (Brown, 2007).

Employment opportunities often available to adolescent migrants are in mines, farms, domestic work, and the sale of sex (Van de Glind & Anne Kou, 2013). Unaccompanied migrant girls often find employment as domestic workers (Human Rights Council, 2016). For example, the migration of girls from poor rural households in Ethiopia to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia for domestic labour offered them access to food and lodging, which their parents couldn't provide (Kifle, 2002).

Mining is another sector where migrant adolescents often find work. In the mining sector, migrant adolescents are often employed by artisanal and small-scale miners (Thorsen, 2012). For example, approximately 40,000 children and adolescents work in mines across the southern Democratic Republic of the Congo (Human Rights Council, 2016).

The kind of work children and adolescents do at the mines is largely determined by their age and gender. Adolescent boys above 14 years of age tend to do labour-intensive work such as digging, crushing rocks, and transporting gravel from pits to sites where washing occurs (Hilson, 2018). In mines, migrant adolescent girls also perform labour-intensive tasks, such as panning for precious stones, transporting gravel from pits, sorting rocks, crushing stones, and assisting in amalgamation (ILO, 2007). Younger children perform ancillary roles, such as food preparation and water collection (Thorsen, 2012).

Globally, unaccompanied migrant adolescents also work on the streets. The Limpopo province of South Africa, for instance, has migrant adolescents who often work as porters, collectors, human smugglers, and vendors.

As earlier mentioned, adolescents seek employment in their host destinations to earn a better living (ILO, 2013). However, the work that adolescents do can be potentially harmful (Okyere, 2012). The adolescents are at risk of working under precarious conditions as a result of their irregular migration circumstances, including not having proper documents in the form of a passport and visa, as well as traveling without an adult caregiver (ILO, 2013). This, in turn, exposes them to a high risk of exploitation, including child labour, bringing forth the challenge of balancing between the adolescents considered to be working and being in child labour circumstances (Okyere, 2013; ILO, 2013).

The absence of laws that protect undocumented labour migrants places unaccompanied adolescent migrants at risk of being underpaid. A case in example is that of example is that of migrant adolescent girls working as domestic workers in Thailand, who earn half the monthly salary of local adolescents doing the same work (van de Glind & Kou, 2011). Similarly, many migrant adolescent miners working in artisanal mines in the Democratic Republic of Congo do heavy work for little pay, whilst adolescents working in the Kono District of Sierra Leone tend to earn less than they are entitled (Thorsen, 2012; Human Rights Council, 2016).

Adolescent migrants often work in hazardous environments, which pose a threat to their health and safety (Okyere, 2013). According to Okyere's research findings in an artisanal gold mining site in Ghana, there were sharp rocks at the site and the environment was generally unhygienic and posed a health risk to the people who lived and worked at the site (ibid). Environments that pose a threat to the adolescents' health and safety are what the ILO considers non-negotiable environments under which children should not work, regardless of circumstances (ILO, 2005).

Even though adolescents sometime work under harmful conditions, some do make the choice to work under such conditions because of the circumstances that they will be facing. A 16 year old responded who worked in gold artisanal mine in Ghana said, "No one can tell me this job is bad, I know it myself and I do not like it but I have to do it. If someone wants me to stop or if they want to help me then they must provide me with my needs. Without this work I have nothing anyway so why should I stop?" Okyere, 2013 p 85. The adolescents know the risks that they face and some do have coping mechanisms, for example the children working on the streets of Limpopo Province in South Africa are aware of the risks associated with living and working on the streets, including being arrested, detained, or deported (Mahati, 2021). These unaccompanied migrant children avoid potential risks by working in groups and respecting the territory of other groups, such as not touching trash bins in town,

which are reserved for certain adolescents who live and work on the streets (Mahati, 2021).

2.3 Adolescents Selling Sex

Some migrant adolescents sell sex as a means of livelihood, especially those facing extreme economic hardship (Mahati, 2021; Miguel, 2018). Conditions in which adolescent girls find themselves contribute to their trajectories towards selling sex. Unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls are described by Besedic, et al (2020) to be lacking options and choices, due to the vulnerabilities they face, including a lack of documentation and a safe means by which to cross the borders, entering into another country. Selling sex is identified as one of the multiple vulnerabilities that the unaccompanied migrant girls face, whilst on the other hand, selling sex is considered to be a survival strategy (ibid).

Unaccompanied migrant adolescents sometimes prefer to sell sex than remain working under abusive conditions in other informal livelihood sectors. For example, in a recent study conducted in India, participants reported being poorly paid and sometimes unpaid and being abused emotionally, physically, and sexually by their employers, which resulted in them deciding to sell sex instead (Temin et al., 2013). According to a study conducted in Ethiopia, adolescent girls mentioned similar circumstances that led them to start selling sex. One responded said, “I came to work as a maid but the work was very hard and I did not earn any money. When I got to Nazareth I saw the girls working in the bar and then I decided I could also make money” (Van Blerk, 2008:248).

Teenage girls who sell sex are often driven by poverty and the desire to earn an income, similar reasons that lead them to migrate unaccompanied. Adult sex workers similarly sell sex as a result of poverty. Approximately 80% of female sex workers in Soweto for example mentioned that they entered sex work as a result of extreme poverty and/or homelessness (Coetzee, et al, 2017). According to a survey of adolescents who sell sex in Kumasi, Ghana—poverty, dropping out of school, and migration for employment were motivators for selling sex (Onyango et al., 2015). Encouragement from friends, the desire for money, small luxuries, and early experience with selling sex also seemed to contribute to their decision to sell sex (ibid). As one research participant said, “When I came to Kumasi, the friends that I met at the station informed me about their work and what they do for a living. They asked my willingness to join and I agreed to it because I wasn’t having anyone to help and support my living. I was at the age of 14 years when I was introduced and started this work.” (Onyango et al., 2015:133).

Many adolescents who sell sex are able to provide for their daily needs and also support their families back home (Temin et al., 2013). Adolescents who have babies and young children either send the children back home or raise them themselves (Busza et al., 2016).

Even though migrant adolescents who sell sex manage to meet their daily needs, they are subject to several risks, including the risk of abuse, exploitation, and violence, as well as health risks (WHO, 2015). Some of these risks are discussed in this section.

The risk of contracting HIV and other STIs among adolescents who sell sex is higher than among adult sex workers. HIV prevalence among females who sell sex in Kolkata, India, for example, was 8.4% among those over 20 years of age and 27.7% among those 16–20 years old (Global Network of Sex Workers Policy Brief, 2016). Madagascar also shows that young people between 16–19 years of age who sell sex are at higher risk of chlamydia and gonococcal infection, in comparison to those aged 20 and above (World Health Organization, 2015). Legal structural barriers limit these girls' access to health services, such as parental consent required for access to sexual reproductive health services including HIV testing in some countries (Busza et al., 2016). Unaccompanied migrants, especially adolescents, are often prevented from receiving health care because of such parental permission requirements. Adolescent girls are also at greater risk of contracting HIV due to the fact that they have more high-risk partners and are less likely to access health care than adult sex workers (Lau et al., 2002).

Unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls who sell sex also face the risk of violence. A study of adolescent girls who engage in sex work in Canada, for example, found that 30% of the adolescents experienced violence, allegedly perpetrated by clients (Shannon et al., 2009). A study conducted in Kumasi, Ghana also found that adolescents who sell sex are vulnerable to intimidation by their clients, who are usually much older men. One adult sex worker who participated in the study said, “These girls are naïve so the men can always bully them, with the young girls you cannot guarantee their safety.” (Onyango et al., 2015 p134). In the same study in Ghana, participants mentioned that they feared being killed by clients, with some sharing stories of their friends who were murdered by clients (ibid). Though unaccompanied migrant adolescents seem to be at greater risk of experiencing violence as they sell sex, adult women who are sex workers are equally at risk. Research findings from a cross-sectional community-centric national study in South Africa reveal that 37.5% of the respondents had experienced physical intimate partner violence, 31.9% had experienced sexual intimate partner violence and 54.8% had experienced non-partner rape perpetrated by a policeman,

client, or another man (Jewkes, et al, 2023). Interestingly, rape by clients, other men, and the police was associated with several factors, including having entered into selling sex as a child (Jewkes, et al, 2021).

Whilst unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls who sell sex are able to earn a living, they face significant risks including health and safety risks (Garip, 2008). Similarly, adult sex workers also face risks whilst engaging in sex work, with those who started selling sex in their childhood being at higher risk of being sexually violated (Jewkes, et al, 2021).

2.4 Theoretical Lens

As stated in the introduction chapter of this thesis, this study is guided by feminist standpoint theory, adolescent theory, and intersectionality. This section describes literature review of the three theories.

2.4.1 Feminist standpoint

Feminist standpoint theory is a social theory that aims to empower marginalized populations, value their lived experiences, and improve their lives (Collins, 1989; Gurung, 2020). The term 'standpoint' was coined to designate moral and political commitment to marginalized women participating in research, which was largely ignored in other social-political theories (Rolin, 2009; Gurung, 2020).

Feminist standpoint theory emerged in the 1970s and 80s as a feminist critical theory that discussed the relationship between knowledge production and power (Harding, 2004). In this theory, marginalized groups have knowledge about their lives (Kokushkin, 2014) and by situating their voices at the centre of discussions, new insights can be generated (Gurung, 2020). In other words, by including marginalized women in research and valuing their contributions, researchers can understand and explain the social world from the perspective of women (Schranner & Ho, 2000; Henn et al., 2013).

Feminist standpoint theory is based on three main theses: situated knowledge, epistemic advantage, and power relations (Gurung, 2020). Based on these three tenets, the theory has provided useful perspectives about how knowledge is produced locally and globally (Harding, 1997). These three theses reflect the notion that marginalized groups hold a unique position in society and are less partial than dominant groups.

Power structures and social locations influence the production of knowledge through situated knowledge (Intemann, 2010). According to the power structures perspective,

marginalized groups are socially situated in such a way that they are more likely to be aware of things and ask questions.

The epistemic advantage argues that marginalized groups can provide in-depth and wide knowledge that is more authoritative than that of dominant groups (Gurung, 2020). The marginalized groups' lower social status renders them more prone to struggle and pain, which is the reason for their higher epistemic authority (ibid). In their interactions with dominant groups, marginalized groups do not only experience their realities, but also witness other people's realities.

A key component of knowledge production is power relations. By using the accounts of marginalized women's life experiences, one can gain insight into how power works, showing the differences between what is claimed and what is actually experienced (Harding, 2004).

Feminist standpoint theory's three theses make it highly relevant for application in the global south, where it enables the prioritization of excluded groups (Gurung, 2020). The use of the feminist standpoint theory in this research study recognizes the marginalization that unaccompanied migrant adolescents face, especially due to them being within the childhood age group, being adolescent mothers, females, and engaged in irregular cross-border migration, without their primary caregiver nor required travel documents. Feminist standpoint theory recognizes that regardless of the marginalization that unaccompanied migrant adolescents face, they are best placed to share their experiences, thus important to provide them with a platform to share their experiences.

Whilst the feminist standpoint theory was adapted for use in this research study, I took note of its shortcomings, which largely influenced the conclusions I drew from the findings. The feminist standpoint theory is, "socially produced and not immediately available to all women" (Hennessy, 1993 p14). The diversity of women and their circumstances makes it impossible to generalize findings from research done within the feminist standpoint theory framework. As such, the lived experiences of unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls who participated in the research study could not be generalised.

There are a host of other possible feminist theories I could have adapted in the research study, instead of the feminist standpoint theory. The feminist social theory for example is concerned with understanding the existing inequalities between men and women and with analysing the power that men have over women (Jackson, 2023). This theory was not a fit for my research study because of its focus on the inequalities between men and women, an area that my research did not intend to look at. The standpoint theory instead was

more suitable as it enabled me to focus on the adolescent girls, without having to make a comparison of these adolescent girls to their male counterparts.

2.4.2 Adolescent approach

Adolescent approaches fall under broad childhood theories, which include early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence. Adolescence represents the second decade of life, when the majority of physical, emotional and, social changes occur (Lerner & Steinberg, 2009). I focused on the adolescent theory in my research study because the research participants in my study were within the adolescent age group of 16 to 18 years of age. Adolescence is described by two approaches, both of which I made use of in my research study.

One of the approaches that describes the period of adolescence is the deficit adolescence approach. As viewed by the approach, adolescence is troublesome as one's body undergoes changes due to puberty (Susan & Dom, 2009; Freud, 1969). The changes taking place in adolescents' lives have influenced scholars' perception of adolescents as a potential danger both to themselves and to society at large (Anthony, 1969; Lerner et al., 2018).

An alternative approach to the adolescence approach emphasizes the development of intentional agency in adolescents. An important aspect of agency in adolescents' interactions with the world is their ability to control themselves and make strategic decisions about their lives. (Lerner et al., 2018). Adolescence approach argues that one is able to recruit goal-related resources that enable actions, which optimize the change of fulfilling their purpose, as a result of "executive functioning, strategic thinking, and behavioural skills" (Lerner, 2018 p110). When the goals they would have been pursuing are blocked or lost, adolescents have the inherent ability to identify and pursue new ones (Getsdottir & Lerner, 2008).

A literature review by Roth & Brooks-Gunn (2003) concluded that adolescents should not be considered problems, but as resources to be developed. Throughout the literature, emphasis has been placed on adolescence's strengths, including its ability to self-regulate (Lerner et al., 2018). Furthermore, adolescents can be nurtured into possessing competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring traits (Lerner et al., 2005).

2.4.3 Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to how different forms of discrimination combine, overlap, or intersect (Crenshaw, 1989). This theory argues that people's vulnerabilities are not a result of clear-cut discriminatory factors, for example, of being male or female, black or white but are associated with a whole host of complex discriminatory factors, which can only be fully

addressed through unique, case by case-base strategies (International Women's Development Agency, nd). In this study, the unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls' vulnerabilities were associated with them being female, adolescent mothers, unaccompanied migrants, children and selling sex.

This theory of intersectionality originated in the Combahee River Collection, a response to racism and sexism within feminist movements as well as sexism within the black liberation movement (Smith, 1983). The theory was developed in a bid to explain the experiences of the oppressed populations in legal research, especially in relation to anti-discrimination laws and gender-based violence (Crenshaw, 1989; Fehrenbacher & Patel, 2019). From a gender perspective, intersectionality challenges the existing gender norms and power structures in order to reduce gender inequities (Pederson et al., 2015). The theory of intersectionality has become one of feminist scholarship's most important theoretical contributions (Crenshaw, 1989; Fehrenbacher & Patel, 2019).

2.5 Summary

The purpose of this literature review was to understand what existing literature says about the everyday experiences of unaccompanied migrant girls who sell sex. Literature shows that unaccompanied adolescent girls migrate across national borders in order to escape conditions such as ill health, death of primary care givers, poverty, inequality, and violence, as well as to gain a better quality of life and potential livelihood opportunities. In most cases, adolescents make their own decisions to migrate unaccompanied, but there are times when a collective decision within the family leads them migrate, especially if they are expected to contribute to the household income. Adolescents utilize social networks to access livelihood opportunities and basic necessities. Adolescent girls who are unaccompanied usually work as domestic workers, in mines, selling sex, or on the streets. Feminist standpoint theory, adolescent theory, and intersectionality theory guide this study. Feminist standpoint theory recognizes strengths in empowering marginalized populations in social science research. Based on this theory, marginalized women's lived experiences are valued in research, as these experiences contribute towards improving their lives. The adolescent approach recognizes adolescence's agency and their ability to make constructive decisions. Intersectionality allows researchers to conduct social science research, while acknowledging the complexity and cumulative impact of the vulnerabilities of research participants. Use of the three theories in my research study enabled me to be mindful of the multiple lenses through which my research participants could be perceived and ensure that, regardless of the multiple perceptions the participants are given

an opportunity to speak for themselves about how their everyday experiences were as unaccompanied adolescent migrant girls who sell sex. The theories increased my sense of understanding of my positionality as I engaged with them.

CHAPTER 3

The research site and data

The process of making knowledge and humanizing the ways we think about knowledge and research have greatly inspired my investigation of the everyday experiences of unaccompanied migrant girls who sell sex (Django & Maisha, 2014). This study utilized a narrative research framework to explore how humans attribute meaning to social issues. It was an 'intimate inquiry', which Laura (2016) describes as a way of acknowledging young people as active thinkers, movers, and shakers. Intimate inquiry asserts that the fastest way to get the reality that a participant constructs is through asking simple questions.

By asking simple questions, people are able to respond organically and have tangential conversations (Django & Maisha, 2014). During this study, simple questions such as "can you tell me about your work at the canteen" led to free-flowing conversations in the group, such as during storytelling and mapping activities and unstructured interviews. The participants spoke a mixture of Shona and Ndaou, languages that I also speak. The first thirty minutes of the storytelling workshop were filled with giggles. Participants looked tense during this time, until the first participant started to share her story. In the wake of the first participant's story, participants began to loosen up and were more attentive.

3.1 Study Location

The study that informs this thesis was conducted in Chipinge, an urban area in Manicaland Province of Zimbabwe. Chipinge is in south-eastern Zimbabwe, where it is bounded on the north by Chimanimani District, Masvingo Province to the west and Mozambique to the east. According to the 2012, national census, Chipinge urban had a population of 25,292 people. The main source of livelihoods in Chipinge district (rural and urban) is agriculture, with at least six estates involved in plantation agriculture (Central Statistics Office, 2014). The map on the following page positions Chipinge district on the map of Zimbabwe and positions Chipinge urban in the district.

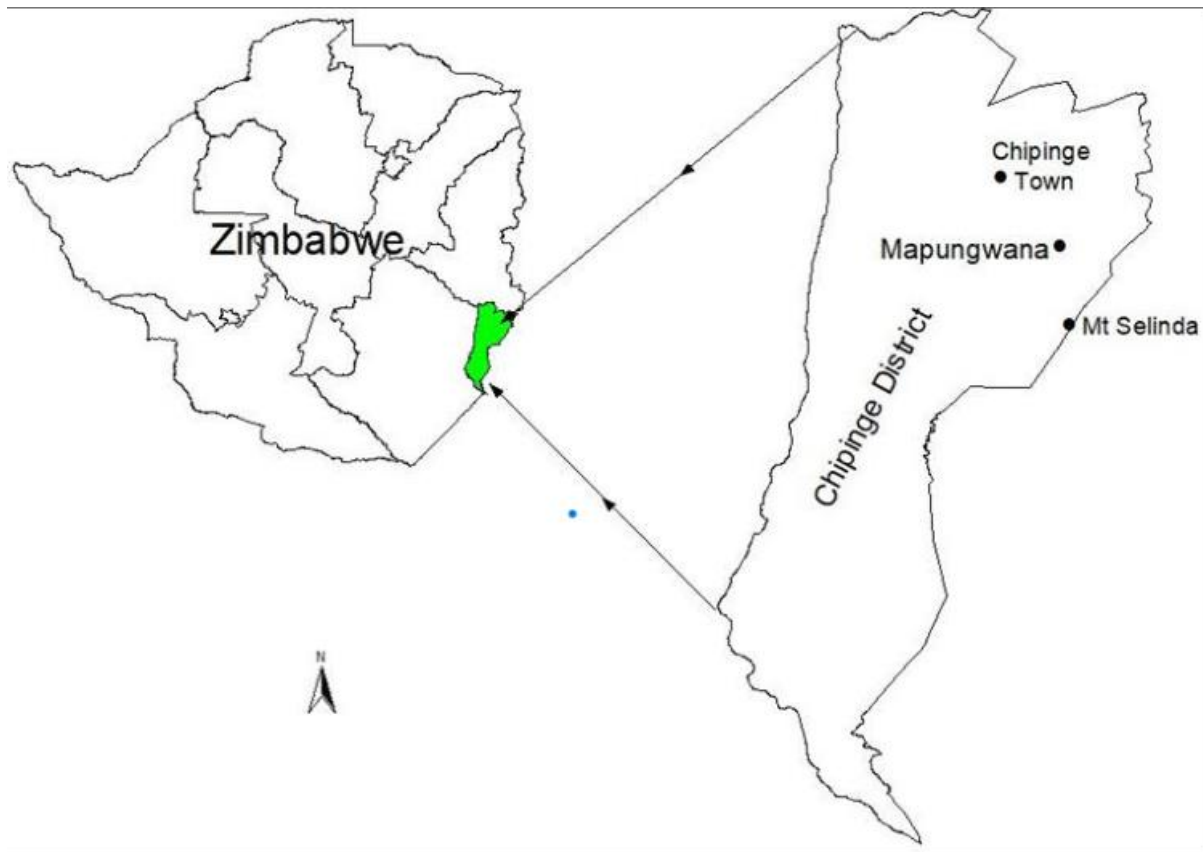


Figure 1: Location Map of Chipinge: Downloaded from [Location Map of Chipinge Town - Bing images](#)

3.2 Participants

Participants in the study were four migrant adolescent girls who sold sex in Chipinge. I used purposive sampling, the most commonly utilized method for studying and identifying hidden and stigmatized populations such as migrant adolescent girls selling sex (Gerassi, Edmond & Nichols, 2017).

The first two participants that were invited to take part in this study were working at a local bar in Chipinge when I first met them. This bar is known to be a hot spot for sex trade and is often frequented by migrant adolescent girls who sell sex. The other two participants in this study were referred by the first prospective participant that was approached.

At the beginning of the storytelling workshop, the first prospective participant indicated that she would use Ngoni as a pseudonym. Using pseudonyms is the primary method for maximizing anonymity in research (Crow & Wiley, 2008).

Ngoni is an adolescent possibly selling sex because an estimation of her likely age to be between 16 and 18 years at the bar. A man much older than Ngoni was fondling her, and she left the bar after some time, returning about thirty minutes later. I suspected that she

had gone out to provide sex services to a client even though I had no idea where she went or who she was with. During one of her alone moments in the bar, I approached Ngoni. I walked up to where she was standing and I greeted her. A beaming smile returned my greeting, giving me confidence to continue my conversation. As I tried to build rapport with Ngoni before broaching my subject, I asked her how she was and talked to her about how full the bar was. She passed a comment in colloquial language about the bar's many patrons gave her the opportunity to sell sex to numerous clients; that more patrons mean 'more big fish to catch' (meaning that more patrons increases chances of getting rich clients). Having talked with Ngoni for about five minutes, I then introduced my research interests. I told her my name and that I was interested in learning about the life circumstances of adolescent girls who sell sex in Chipinge. Since adolescents who sell sex at the bar are mostly of Mozambique origin, I knew that it was highly likely that Ngoni was of Mozambique origin. I asked her where she was from to cross check and she replied that she had come from Mozambique and had been living in Zimbabwe for three years. I requested a time during the day when she would be open to speaking with me for more information. Once she agreed to speak with me, I gave her my cell phone number and requested a 'call me back' text message whenever she was ready.

Also that day, I observed another adolescent girl with an older woman in the same bar. These two were talking to each other over drinks. A man approached the adolescent girl and the older woman and spoke with them for about two minutes. These three people's body language, which included laughter, made me think they were not strangers, but familiar with each other. The adolescent girl, who later picked the name Rudo during the ABR workshop, left the bar through the back door, leaving the older woman sitting at the bar alone. Rudo returned to the bar about an hour later. The woman whom she had previously been sitting with had left the bar and so Rudo was alone. As with Ngoni, I approached Rudo, greeted her, and engaged in a general conversation with her. Rudo mostly gave one word answers, and was a bit more reserved than Ngoni. In spite of this, we had a five-minute conversation, chatting about the chilly weather that night and how crowded the bar was. Three men tried to interrupt our conversation at some point and so I knew I needed to quickly broach my subject and leave Rudo. I introduced my research interests to Rudo, asking her if she was from Mozambique, and she confirmed that she was. I told her my name and that I wanted to understand more about her everyday lived experience as an adolescent who came from Mozambique and visited the bars at night. I found it difficult to openly mention to Rudo that I wanted to speak with unaccompanied adolescent girls who sell sex because she was not as

open as Ngoni. Rudo asked me if I was one of the people from the local organization (whose name she had forgot) who come to bars to talk to women who sell sex. I replied that I was not a member of the organization. I gave Rudo my phone number and asked her to call me if she was interested in speaking with me further.

I received 'call back' messages from both Ngoni and Rudo the day after we met at the bar.

It was a Saturday night that we met at the bar. Since I had not yet provided them with detailed information about my research, I was afraid that if I met these adolescents at the same time, I might accidentally divulge their practice of selling sex to each other, something they might not have wanted. I had one-on-one conversations with Ngoni and Rudo at a local shopping centre in Gaza, a high density suburb in Chipinge where they suggested we meet.

During these conversations, I explained my research interests in more detail, guided by the information sheet that I had prepared. After asking if they had any questions, the two said there were none so I sought their consent. Ngoni preferred to give verbal consent because was not willing to sign the consent form. Despite her hesitation to explain why she did not want to sign the consent form, she stressed that she was willing to participate. In light of the fact that I was only meeting Ngoni for the second time and I had not yet gained her trust, I decided not to continue the pursuit. Nevertheless, I asked her if she would be willing to meet with me for an ABR workshop along with other adolescents and she agreed. I let her know that I would call her with information of the day, time, and place we could meet again. At this point, I asked Ngoni if she could refer two other adolescent girls for Mozambique, whom she knew sell sex and she agreed. She mentioned that she still had my phone number and would pass it along to two other adolescents. After our meeting, I gave Ngoni \$2 so that she could buy a snack on her way home.

The same day I met Ngoni for the second time. Using the information sheet I had prepared as a guide, I explained my research to Rudo. Like my meeting with Ngoni, at the end of the information session, I asked Rudo if she would be willing to participate in my study, which she agreed to. Rudo also did not want to sign the consent form, explaining that she did not want to expose herself to potential risks, which she did not explain further on. As I stated in my ethics application, I would accept either written or verbal consent. After the information session, I told Rudo that I would contact her with details of when and where the ABR workshop would take place. I then gave her \$2 for a snack as she returned home.

Ngoni referred two adolescent girls to me. These participants sent me 'call back' messages two and three days after I had had an information session with Ngoni and Rudo. I

contacted each participant after I received their 'call back' messages and asked if we could meet later in the week. These two participants would pick the names Millicent and Jane at the ABR workshop.

To go over the details of my research, I met with Millicent and Jane at the same shopping centre in Gaza. Both Millicent and Jane seemed curious, asking whether I would take them back to Mozambique and why I wanted to speak with unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls who sell sex rather than other adolescent girls of Zimbabwean descent. I explained that my research was a study for academic purposes in which I aimed to understand the girls' experiences so that I could make recommendations to improve their everyday lives. Moreover, I explained that I was only interested in speaking to unaccompanied migrant girls from Mozambique who sell sex as I wanted to understand their specific lived experiences. In addition, I reiterated that my research was for academic purposes and that I was studying migration. Millicent mentioned that she would want to give feedback to the friend, with whom she stayed with, so wanted to really understand what I wanted the information for. Later, I found out that Millicent's friend who she wanted to give feedback to was the woman who had introduced her to selling sex.

While Millicent and Ngoni gave verbal consent, neither would give written consent. I asked the two of when we could meet again and the time, for which they said that they wanted to meet at a private venue in the Central Business District on the following day, which was a Saturday. A safe and comfortable environment was important to both the participants and I, as such a private place Central Business District, away from the local community where the participants lived was indeed suitable. I hired a room at an outbuilding that could be used for office space. I gave the two \$2 each for a snack as they returned home.

After meeting with Millicent and Jane, I phoned Rudo and Ngoni to inform them that we would meet at a private venue in the Central Business District for the ABR workshop, for which they agreed. Ngoni said she would request to be excused from work, where she was as a bartender, in order to attend the ABR workshop. Upon securing a short-time rental space in the Central Business District, I phoned all four participants to tell them where we would meet. We met for the ABR work on a Saturday from 12 noon to about 3:30pm.

I found the process of identifying research participants intriguing, particularly when I identified the first two participants at the bar. It was fascinating to try to guess the ages of the female patrons at the bar. Because the lights in the bar were dim, I did make a few wrong guesses about people's ages and then realized as I approached them that they actually looked

much older than I had thought. As I reflected, I realized that I had assumed a woman with a small body frame was an adolescent, which was not the case.

Since I am an adult woman seeking to speak with adolescent girls, I subconsciously believed that the adolescent girls would be more willing to speak with me than if it were women. As someone who has worked with children for over 15 years, I was confident that I would be able to establish rapport with the adolescents quickly because I have experience working with children of all ages.

Although I have worked with other groups of children in the past, my experience with these adolescent girls was quite different. The children I work with are identified as vulnerable and I normally approach them from the point of view of a service provider. Engaging with the adolescents as research participants was different in that this process of research really ensured that I remained reflexive of my positionality, something that is not always obvious when I work with adolescents as a service provider.

3.3 Data Collection Process

The primary data collection methods used in this study were storytelling and mapping, as briefly discussed in chapter one. Practitioners and advocates of ABR often consider this approach to social science to be a form of participatory research in that ABR strives to produce knowledge ‘with’ rather than ‘on’ or ‘for’ research participants and communities (Walker & Oliveira, 2020; Chatterton et al., 2007). It is important to me to conduct collaborative research with individuals who sell sex because people engaged in the sex industry are often talked about, but rarely heard (Schuler, 2016). Calls from sex workers around the globe for inclusive research with those engaged in selling sex is evident in Sisonke’s¹ motto: *Nothing About Us Without Us*. As Dewey & Zheng (2013) explain in their book *Ethical Approaches to Sex Work Research*, inclusive forms of knowledge production are a “means of engaging in collaborative, social justice driven research that eliminates, inasmuch as possible, the patronizing and cruel distinctions between researchers and research subjects” (p.4).

¹ Sisonke is a sex worker led non-profit organization advocating for the decriminalization of adult, consensual sex work in South Africa. Sisonke’s vision is to see a South Africa where sex work is recognised as work, where sex workers’ health and human rights are ensured. <https://www.sisonke.org.za/>

The research that informs this thesis had two phases of data collection, which took place over a total of three days. The first phase was an ABR workshop of three hours, which used storytelling and social mapping, and the second phase was unstructured interviews that took place after the ABR workshop ended.

During the ABR phase of the study (first phase), I drew from the storytelling work of Walker and Oliveira (2020), specifically their project with refugee women living in Johannesburg. Their study, entitled *Mwangaza Mama*, invited seven migrant women from across the African continent to share stories of migration and everyday experiences in their new host country. It was important to me that my participants were free to share their stories organically, rather than being prompted by a list of interview questions, similar to what Walker & Oliveira (2020) did. Allowing stories to be told organically is important because it allows participants the freedom to speak or not, and it allows tangential conversations to be held.

While all four participants shared their stories verbally, one participant (Ngoni) complemented her oral story with a social map whilst the other (Millicent) complemented her story with a picture depicting her fantasy. I asked each of the participants to tell me about their experiences, from the time they were still in Mozambique, why they decided to migrate without their adult care givers, how they access their daily needs and how they ended up selling sex. I provided the option of storytelling through a narration, mapping, or any form of drawing. All four participants were open to narrate their stories, with two sharing intricate detail on their migration journey, whilst two only shared little information. I used a tape recorder to record the stories, with permission from the research participants.

Ngoni, who did social mapping to complement her narrative, did the mapping as she narrated her story. Powell (2010) defines mapping as a multi-sensory research method that involves evoking existing connections between physical space and experiences. In the ABR workshop, the research participant who used mapping identified geographical areas, and showed how these areas invoked feelings of fear, sadness and desperation as well as love and joy whilst she was still at home, on the migration route and at her destination. Ngoni participant used the heart symbol to express her feelings, with a crossed heart symbolizing she was broken hearted due to her negative experiences, and an uncrossed heart symbolizing she was happy.

One participant (Millicent) drew a picture of her love fantasy. She mentioned that she opted to share her fantasy through a picture because she was not too sure of how she could

include the fantasy in her narrative. The picture of a heart symbolized the participant's desire of being in love and not selling sex.

The second phase of data collection involved 20–60-minute interviews with each participant. One set of interviews were conducted with individual participants over two days. The purpose of the interviews was to probe further into issues that surfaced during the group storytelling process. The one-on-one interviews were conducted at a community park in Chipinge's Central Business District.

Each interview began with checking with the participants to make sure they still wanted to participate in the research and have their stories included in the report. I played the recording of the stories each participant had narrated and asked their consent to include them in the report as they were. All four participants gave their consent for their stories to be included into the research report, and consented to participate in the second phase of the research. I sought further information from each of the participants on issues that I needed elaboration or clarity on from their stories. I recorded the interviews on audio, following which I transcribed, together with the stories.

I conducted data collection in line with the Covid-19 guidelines, through ensuring social distancing during activities. I gave each participant \$5 at the day of the ABR workshop and also on the days for the interviews a lunch meal and drink.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis process began following the ABR workshop. As part of the thematic analysis process, I familiarized myself with the data, which I translated into English language. Thematic analysis is a data analysis approach that is used in qualitative research (Hayfield et al., 2017). This approach involves following a number of steps, from data familiarization, to data coding, collation of associated data segments, to theme development and then report writing (ibid). Thematic analysis is a deductive approach, in which the researcher brings in existing theoretical concepts in order to 'see' the data for meanings of codes, which then become themes (Braun et al., 2015).

Thematic analysis uses three levels of data coding, beginning with a very basic description and progressing towards more interpretive levels in a systematic manner (Langridge, 2004). Data coding began before the participant interviews and was completed after the interviews. Coding data after the ABR workshop, but before the interviews, helped me identify information gaps, which I needed to address during the interviews.

Upon completing data coding, I collated similar segments into themes. Based on the research questions, I developed three broad themes, followed by sub-themes. I presented the themes and sub themes derived from the data segments in the form of a table and text. I concluded my analysis of the data by interpreting the themes and writing a report on my findings.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The ethical conduct of this study has always been a top priority for me. As a result of emerging research instruments such as the ABR methods I used in this study, I took particular care to pay attention to ethical issues such as confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, and consent (Knight, 2019).

3.5.1 Informed Consent

As part of the research, I continuously sought informed consent from participants, beginning with the initial contact, during information sessions, storytelling sessions, and interviews. The four participants gave their consent to participate in the study.

At the information sessions, I explained the scope and nature of the study, the safety measures in place, and the risks and benefits of participating. An information sheet in local Ndaou was provided to each participant. By providing adequate information to the participants, they were able to decide whether to consent. We discussed the information sheet with the participants after I read it, and they had the opportunity to ask questions. Before seeking their consent, I shared the following information with participants;

- The research was a project for academic purposes. Information provided would be used to generate a research report, which would be submitted to the University
- Participation remained voluntary throughout the research. Consent could be amended or withdrawn at any time, without reprisal
- Pseudonyms, of the research participant's choice, would be used to identify the participants throughout the research. Change of pseudonym could be done throughout the study
- Participants would be asked to share stories and engage in a mapping exercises and one on one unstructured interviews
- Participants would meet with the researcher up to three times for up to three hours each as the activities were conducted
- The researcher would ask permission to record the storytelling workshop and interviews and then transcribe for inclusion into the research report

- Participants were expected to share details about their everyday experiences, but were not forced to disclose any information
- All research materials would be stored securely on encrypted cloud storage a password-protected hard drive and computer that is only accessible to the researcher.

3.5.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

Research participants' anonymity and confidentiality are central to ethical research. CROW & WILES (2008) emphasize the importance of ensuring that participants are not identifiable through reports, presentations and other dissemination methods.

This research relied heavily on maintaining anonymity and confidentiality. Zimbabwean law does not criminalize selling sex, but it is illegal to solicit clients, live off sex work earnings, facilitate, and procure sex work, in addition to highly stigmatizing the practice. Because this study engaged with adolescent girls who sold sex, there was some risk that they would be exposed to the general public as well as to law enforcement as persons selling sex, which can lead to arrest on suspicion of solicitation.

While interacting with the research participants, I maintained anonymity and confidentiality to minimize these risks. I drew inspiration from Brannelly and Boulton (2017), who encouraged researchers to be careful whenever they establish new relationships with research participants, because they risk suffering unintended consequences, such as arrest or deportation. Specific actions I took to uphold anonymity and confidentiality include the following;

- I consulted participants of the time and places we could meet, which made them feel safe. The participants selected a private venue in the Central Business District of Chipinge town, during mid-morning. One participant who was employed at a local pub in Chipinge asked to be excused from work during the time of data collection
- I asked each of the participants to pick a pseudonym of their choice to use in the research, and let them know that they could change pseudonyms at any time. All names of participants used in this thesis, then, are pseudonyms and no clearly identifying descriptors of places have been included in these pages nor will they feature in future publications about this research.
- Since the research included group work, I could not guarantee confidentiality. Engaging with the participants in a group setting meant that there was no anonymity amongst them during the storytelling process. I spoke about this during my one-on-one information sessions with each participant and again with the group prior to beginning the

storytelling/mapping activities. Participants agreed to keep what was shared in the workshops private; that nothing discussed during the storytelling exercise would be shared with outsiders.

3.5.3 Minimizing Psychological Distress

I employed ABR methods that enabled my participants to freely share and discuss whatever aspects of their lives they chose, while also remaining critically aware of the risks of psychological distress. There was extensive discussion about past and present trauma during the ABR workshop, which could have contributed to increased psychological distress. As a result, it was imperative that my interactions with participants remain carefully managed to prevent existing vulnerabilities and difficulties from being exacerbated. For the purpose of reducing psychological distress amongst research participants, I had a social worker on hand to provide therapeutic support in the event of any distress among the participants. I informed the research participants of the availability of the social worker to provide support in the event any of the participants needed their services. None of the participants showed signs of distress during the ABR workshop nor interviews. One participant acknowledged the storytelling session to have been therapeutic to her though this was not the intention of the ABR workshop. She said, "...thank you for talking to me, this was a healing session of the trauma I went through but had no one to talk to all along..."

3.6 Limitations and Challenges

Limitations and challenges that I faced, associated with the research methodology were mainly associated with the sensitive nature of the study. I ensured that all measures I took to address the challenges and limitations remained ethical. This section highlights some of challenges and limitations I faced during the study and how I addressed them.

There were some data gaps from the stories shared and interviews conducted with the research participants, which after completing the data collection exercise, I thought would have enhanced this study. All four research participants mentioned the border points from which they entered Zimbabwe, however I did not probe on how they managed to actually cross the border, in terms of whether there could have been state security personnel at the border and how they manoeuvred, whether there were other people also crossing the border at the same time. This data gap was a limitation in that I did not get to know what actually happened along the research participants' migration journey into Zimbabwe. Though I had the phone numbers of the research participants, I decided not to phone them to ask them

further question as I would have wanted to speak with them face to face, in case the research participants' experienced some form of trauma on their journeys.

Though I was able to probe on some areas where I needed clarity, it was not always possible to probe on some aspects of the research participants' stories that seemed to contradiction with other aspects of the stories. One of the research participant mentioned that she uses a condom at all times that she sells sex. However, this participant had a six month old baby, after falling pregnant as a result of selling sex. I did not probe on this contradiction as I sensed the participant knew the importance of protected sex, however she might not have been able to describe to me the difficulty of always negotiating for safe sex with the older men especially to whom she sold sex to.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Participants

The study included four, unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls who were selling sex in Chipinge. As stated in chapter three, the research participants selected pseudonyms to use in the study. The participants shared their lived experiences through storytelling and interviews. Storytelling and unstructured interviews offered participants an opportunity to share the circumstances leading to them migrating unaccompanied, circumstances leading to them selling sex and how they access their basic needs on a day-to-day basis. This blending of methods (storytelling/mapping and interviews), is what led to the rich findings that I present in the following pages

4.1.1 Ngoni

Ngoni was 18 years old and had migrated from Mozambique to Zimbabwe when she was 15 years old.

I want to use the name Ngoni. I am 18 years old. I come from Rotanda in Mozambique. My mother died when I was young and my father remarried. I lived in Mozambique with my father stepmother and younger brother. I first arrived in Zimbabwe in 2019, when I was 15 years old. Why I came to Zimbabwe was because of something that happened when I was in school. I went to a sports event at another school with my 3 friends, without permission from school. When we returned to school, the school head said he was going to invite our parents to come to school so that he would address the issue of us having absconded from school in their presence. This was just a simple matter, but knowing my father, it was not going to end simple. My father beats until you bleed, until your skin comes off. He uses the belt of a grinding mill to hit. When I saw my father arriving at school, I went out of the school yard, and got onto public transport, using my pocket money. I thought I better run away with my flesh.

When I left, I decided to go as far as possible so that my father would not find me and beat me. My father phoned me and said that I should return home, but I said I will not come. That's when I decided to cross the nearby border to come to Zimbabwe. I crossed the border via Cashel area, but not at the formal border as I did not have a passport. I stayed with a friend and her mother who worked at the Cashel estates. My friend and her mother had

migrated to Cashel but would return to Mozambique often, so I knew where to find them. My friend's mother initially told me to return home, but I told her I wasn't going back home. She then just left me to stay with her and we lived together for about 2 months.

At some point, I started communicating with my family, until my aunt invited me to live with her. I went back to Mozambique and lived with my aunt for a while, then she sent me back to my father. My aunt started saying bad things about me to my father, that I am lazy, I waste food, I am naughty. I wondered why my aunt was saying such bad things about me. I phoned my aunt and she said she never said it. We ended up shouting at each other. I told her I did not ask her to take care of me, I can afford to do so on my own. If someone helps another, they should not go about bragging and saying nonsense. My father was angry with me and he told me that shouting at his sister was shouting at him and disrespecting him. He then said I was no longer his child and he sent me away.

I came back to Zimbabwe to look for a job. I met an old school mate in Chimanimani, who took me in for a few days. She was staying in Chimanimani with her child. Someone told me of a job that was available at a canteen. I went to the canteen at Nhedziwa shops in Chimanimani. I got the job and started working at the canteen. It was painful to work at the canteen. The weather was hot, I spent the whole day on the fireplace preparing meals. I worked alone and I did not have time to sit down to rest. Whenever customers wanted drinks or anything else from the shops, I would be the one to go and buy. In addition to all this, I swept and cleaned the place. My daily payment was US\$1.50. I worked from 6 am to 10pm, from Sunday to Sunday. I lived with the woman whom I worked for at the canteen, at her lodgings.

I was paid my daily payments during my first week of work. In the second week, my employer told me that I was now a child who was a member of the household so what the family would eat, I would eat as well. She stopped paying me. This woman had adult sons who were troublesome and rude to me. The owner of the canteen was a single lady, who sometimes went away to see her boyfriend, leaving me with her sons. After the second week, I was being given sadza (thick maize meal porridge) and green vegetables only, as her sons would not allow me to have meat.

After about three weeks, I got a boyfriend who worked in the butchery. He used to give me extra meat whenever I went to buy meat for the canteen, but my employer would take away the meat and use it for the canteen. Whenever I asked about my meat, I would be told we needed to sell it so that we buy soap and other things to use. Since I was not being paid, I became so desperate, but I told myself that what is important is that I have somewhere to

stay. Life was hard for me at the time. I was saying, God, as long as I have somewhere to stay.

My friend whom I had stayed with in Cashel came to join me. When she came, I introduced her to the woman I worked for. She was also given a job to work with me.

I told my boyfriend of the challenges I was facing at work and home. He looked a room to rent for me and he furnished the room. I did not immediately move into the rented room because I was afraid of what my employer would say. One day, my employer went away to visit her boyfriend. I remained at the canteen working. After closing the canteen at 10pm we went home but were locked outside by my employer's son. He sent my friend and I away, calling us prostitutes. It is on this day that I went to my rented room. I don't know where my friend went that day. I didn't go back to work at the canteen.

I started staying at the lodgings and my boyfriend bought me a cooler box and two packs of freezits for resale. At the end of the month, my boyfriend said my friend should also pay 50% of the rent, since she had moved in with me. My friend was no longer working at the canteen as well and she could not get another job. My boyfriend ended up just paying the rent but then asked me to move out of the rented room to stay with him at his house.

I moved to stay with my boyfriend. He was 28 years old and had lied to me that he was not married. He said he wanted to marry me as his wife had died and left a child who was living with his mother. Some people were asking me why I was staying with a married man who had a violent wife. Each time I asked my boyfriend about this he would say that people are lying. After about five months, his wife came. She went to the butchery where my boyfriend worked. When I went to the butchery, I saw her, and she started shouting asking who I was. My boyfriend told his wife that he didn't know me, that's when I knew he had lied to me, and I said that you had told me your wife died and you cannot waste my time.

I continued to live with this boyfriend. His wife did not come home to live with her husband but would come every now and again to shout at me and cause a lot of commotion. I then fell pregnant and had a baby boy. My boyfriend got a job in Harare as a Town Planner, and so we moved to Harare and started living in Highfield.

When we started living in Highfield, my boyfriend began having so many girlfriends and he was neglecting me and my baby until I left him and went back to Chimanimani. I started cooking and selling food at the shopping centre. We would talk over the phone with this boyfriend, and he sometimes sent money.

Right now, I sell in the bar and am paid \$80 per month, and I also sell sex. It's difficult for me to be selling sex but I must force myself to do so because I need money to take

care of my child. I charge \$6 per session. In a week I have a minimum of 3 clients. I'm glad that I have a job, if I sell sex whilst on a job, I will be valued but if you are not gainfully employed, you can just be paid \$2. My current employer knows that I sell sex and when they negotiated with me, they did say I can continue to sell sex so that I do not take money from the business.

I use protector condoms. I currently do not have a boyfriend. I joined an organization called CeSHHAR, where I get tested for HIV and I have a CeSHHAR card.

I stay at the bar where I work and I live with my son. When I go to work, I leave my child with a woman who lives nearby, and I pay her \$15 per month for childcare. I do not pay rent, so I use my money to buy food and other supplies that I need together with my child. Right now, I don't have a friend. I once had a friend who then started dating my boyfriend. I am relieved to have spoken with you, it has helped me so much. It's like I have gone through a healing session. I do not have a friend to talk to so talking to you has really helped me. I recently turned 18 years old, and my child is almost two years old.

My picture shows the places I felt so much heartbroken, that was in my home and when I worked at Nedziwa. The fear of my father's beating and the overworking at the canteen and harassment at home I didn't like. What I love the most is my son, I will do everything I can for him, I love my son.



Figure 2: Ngoni's mapping exercise, November 2022

4.1.2 Rudo

Rudo was a 17 years old, and had migrated from Mozambique to Zimbabwe when she was 15 years old

My name is Rudo (meaning love) I choose this name because it speaks about my job of love. I came via Checheche through the bush. My father died when I was two weeks old, and my mother remarried and went away to live with her husband. I have older stepbrothers who are in South Africa. One of them said he is making plans for me to join him in South Africa. When my mother left, I remained home and stayed with my grandmother.

Life was very difficult back home. My grandmother struggled to take care of us as she was old. We sometimes went without food or soap. I dropped out of school when I was about 11 years old. I decided to leave home to seek a better life. I was 15 years old when I left home. I had some money and so I took the money and left for Zimbabwe. I skipped the border through the bush and when I got into Zimbabwe, I first went to Checheche, in Chipinge rural. I quickly realised that there was nothing I could do in the rural area, so I moved to Chipinge town. My mother knows I am working in Chipinge, and we keep in touch.

I got stranded when I arrived in Chipinge as I knew no one and no place at all. I lived on the street for some days, until I met a girl who befriended me and she took me into her home. I told her that I am looking for a job as a maid. My friend helped me, and I managed to get a job after a few days. I worked as a maid for two months. I was paid very little, compared to other housemaids. I got \$25 per month, yet other housemaids were getting between \$40 and \$60. I ended up leaving employment.

My friend then asked me to join her in selling sex whilst I looked for another job, so that I could at least get some money. I moved to stay with my friend. There was nothing in the house, no food, nothing. She used to buy sadza in town and so didn't cook at home. We started going to the bars at night, moving from one bar to the other, looking for clients. I began making money, charging \$5 per session, and negotiating with clients who did not have enough money.

Right now, my friend is out of town. She went to a place called 'gomba' (meaning deep hole). We go to places where there is money at the time so these days that were money is. She went on Thursday (2 days before the meeting) and has not yet come back. I couldn't go with her because I have a baby who is six months old. I fell pregnant sometime last year and now I have a baby boy.

I leave my child with a neighbour overnight and I pay her a dollar each morning. I sell sex for \$5. I get an average of 3 clients per day. I work from around 7-pm at the local beer hall or in the CBD. When I come back home in the morning, I prepare maize meal porridge for my baby. I then have breakfast at around 11am then dinner at 6pm before leaving home. We pay rent of \$10 per month so we pay \$5 each. When I get money, I normally buy cooking oil, maize meal, sugar, and peanut butter.

When I sell sex, I don't think of it, I know I need to make money and that's why I do so. I bring clients to our shared lodgings, which is close to the pub, or we go to the bush. We have a motto that a person pays before providing the service. I use a condom and I do not offer sex without a condom as I am afraid of contracting HIV. If the client does not have a condom, I use the female condom. My fear is coming across a murderer and being killed or not getting paid after being forced to have sex with someone.

4.1.3 Millicent

Millicent was a 17 years old and had migrated from Mozambique to Zimbabwe when she was 16 years old

I am Millicent, I came from Mafuse in Mozambique via Rusitu in Chimanimani. I fell pregnant when I was 15 years old, and so I eloped. I had dropped out of school at the time because there was no money for school fees. My husband was 25 years old. We stayed together for about 7 months. I left him just after the birth of my daughter because he used to beat me so much. I decided to leave him, and so I went back home to my stepmother. Both my parents died and I was left with my stepmother only, whom I lived with back home. I then decided to move to Zimbabwe because the father of my child would come to insult me at home as he wished. The father of my child remained in Mafuse.

When I came to Zimbabwe, I came with my child, who was a year old at the time. I started working at a shop in the outskirts of Chipinge in Madziwa at 'gomba' (meaning deep hole). The shop was a grocery store during the day and a bar at night. I worked day and night as a shop keeper. I worked at this place for two months only. I was paid \$40 per month and was given maize meal and cooking oil, which I felt was too little considering the long hours I worked and the money was not enough to fend for my child. I met a lady from Chipinge at work, who became my friend.

When I left employment after two months of work, I went to Chipinge town and started living with my friend, whom I had met earlier at gomba. My friend introduced me to selling

sex and so we have been working together for some months now. I live at her house, for which she is responsible for paying rent, whilst I buy food. We go out at night, and I leave my child with my friend's sister.

I sell sex for \$3 to \$5, depending on what the client has. I normally start from \$5 but a lot of clients say they don't have money. I normally have an average of 2 clients per day and make \$6 to \$9 per day.

I am moved to sell sex because I need money. My fear is contracting HIV. I use condoms to reduce risk. There are clients who insist on not using a condom, but I have always used a condom. I go to the CBD to sell sex. I'm not afraid when I walk in the evening because it will be the 2 of us. What gives me strength is being able to get money from selling sex and be able to take care of my child.

My picture (below) shows my love fantasy. My picture is about a man that I will be having a relationship with. The man will tell me not to sell sex and I tell him that he gives me the money that I will be needing. We go to the bar together and I will not be selling sex to anyone. This picture shows love, I am loving him and he is loving me. When I sell sex, there will be no love, it will be just a transaction where they give me money, I give them sex and we part ways.

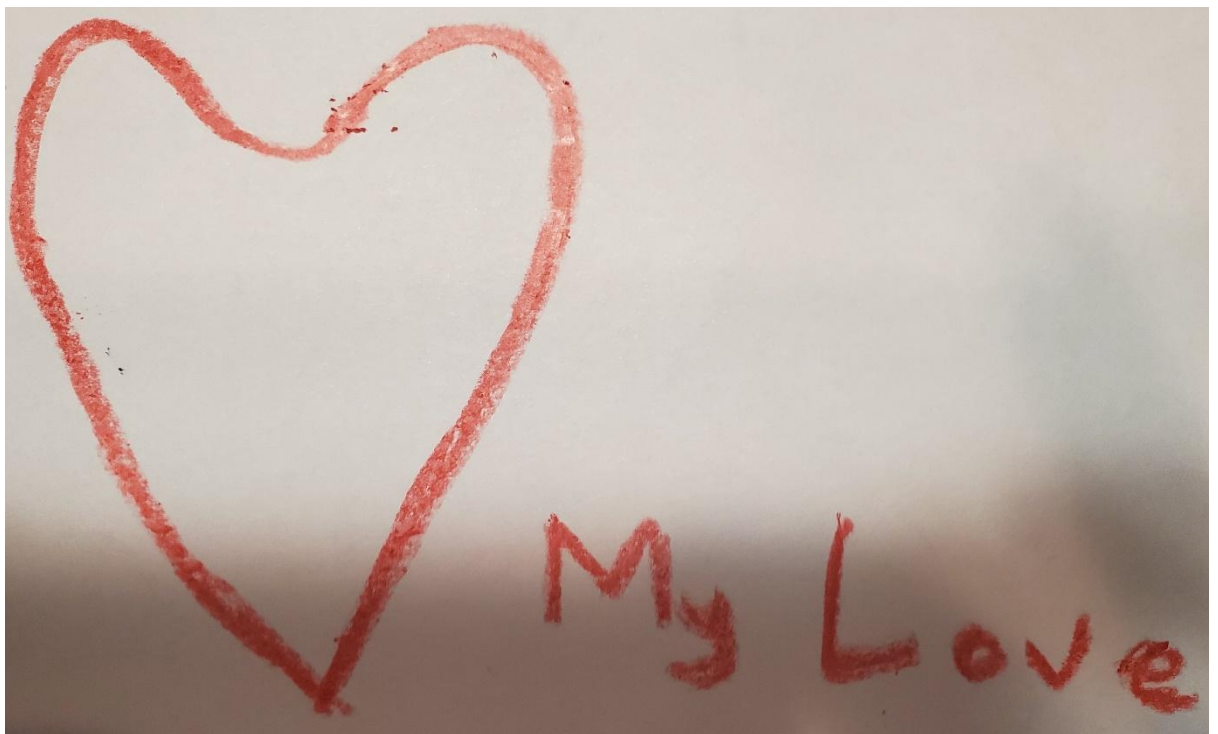


Figure 3: Millicent's mapping exercise, November 2022

4.1.4 Jane

Jane was a 17 year old girl who migrated from Mozambique to Zimbabwe when she was 15 years old

I want to use the name Jane. Both my parents are alive, but they live apart, and so I lived with my mother and younger siblings. My mother did piece jobs in farms. I moved to Zimbabwe, Chipinge because I was told there are job opportunities. I decided to come to Zimbabwe to look for a job because there was nothing to do back home. I got into the country through the bushy area close to Mt Selinda. I went to school up to grade 7 level, when I was 13 years old. There was no money at home to enable me to continue going to school.

When I first arrived in Chipinge, at 15 years of age, I worked as a house maid. A girl from my village whom I knew had come to Chipinge and is the one who helped me get a job at her employer's friend. I worked for about three months, then I fell pregnant, so I left employment and started living with my boyfriend. I did not stay long with this man I was living with, we stayed together for a year because his mother was bothersome.

When I left my child's father, I went to work at a shop just out of Chipinge town. The shop was a grocery shop during the day and a bar at night. Most patrons came from Chipinge town. I worked at the shop for a few months and then left because it was out of town. I wanted to live in town. I started living in Chipinge town. My child lives with his paternal grandmother, and I send food when I have. I sell sex for \$2 to \$3 in Chipinge town. Sometimes I go to the bars which are out of town over the weekend as there are more patrons there.

Right now, I am living with other girls who sell sex. We share a room which we pay \$12 per month. We contribute \$4 each. I normally buy a plate of sadza in town when I'm on my way to the bar.

I don't have any fears, I just face life as is and take it a day at a time.

ANALYSIS

This qualitative study explores the everyday experiences of unaccompanied migrant girls from Mozambique who sell sex in Chipinge. The study sought to understand the circumstances that lead girls to migrate across international borders without a primary caregiver and what they did to access their basic needs on an everyday basis. It also sought to explore how the context of migration influences trajectories into selling sex.

Whilst I used feminist standpoint theory, I acknowledged the political nature of research, which makes neutrality a challenge to the researcher due to positionality (Kiguwa, 2019). I considered myself as an ‘insider’ to some extent as I shared a similar native language to the participants. However, I recognized that possible exclusion markers could be greater than the inclusion because of my being an adult, a researcher, who did not sell sex, and who lived in the country in which I was a citizen by descent (Jacobs-Huey, 2002). As stated earlier, I was critically reflexive of how my social positionality, biases towards or against anything associated with my research participants could impact my research outcomes (Jones, 1997).

4.2 Thematic Analysis

The circumstances leading to my research participants migrating unaccompanied, their trajectories into selling sex, and how they met their daily needs are largely similar to those described in existing literature. It is important to note that the family structure played an important role in the decision of the adolescents to migrate unaccompanied, since it affects the household's economic status and the protection of children. Adolescents' trajectories into selling sex were heavily influenced by economic exploitation in other forms of informal livelihoods such as domestic work and shop keeping, as well as social networks. Through their social networks and income earned from selling sex, the participants were able to meet their daily needs. Research findings are discussed in this section, along with similarities and differences between the findings and existing literature. Figure 4, presents the themes and subthemes in this study, which are analysed in this section.

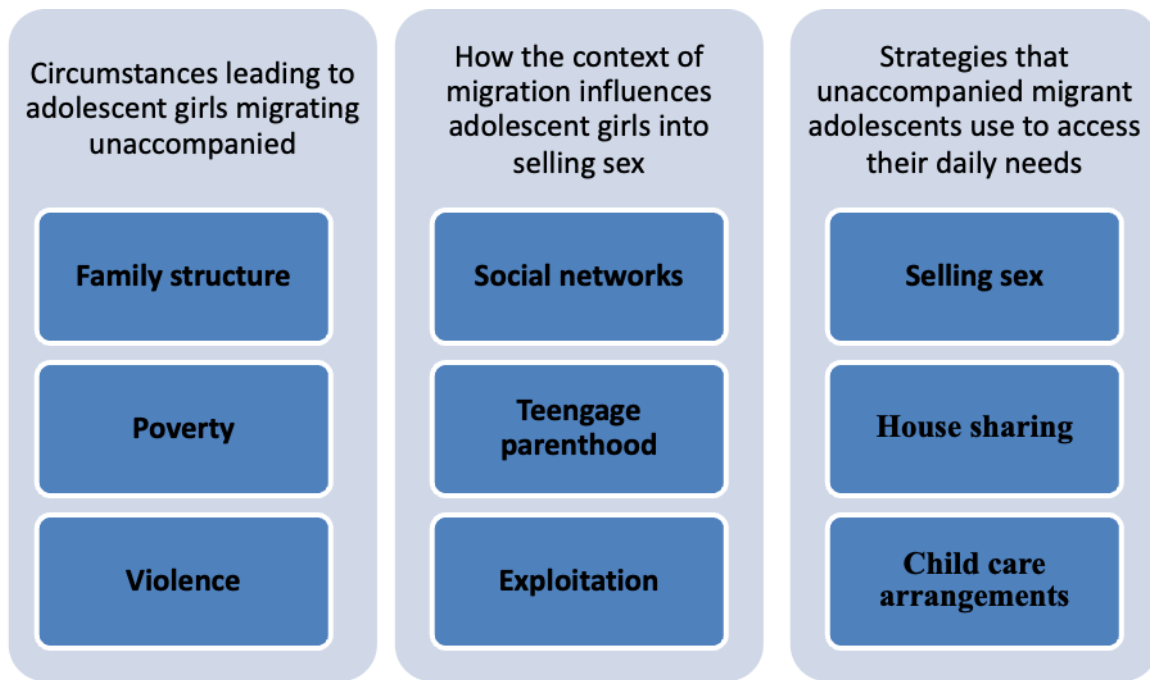


Figure 4: Themes Developed from data collection

4.2.1 Circumstances leading to Adolescent Girls Migrating Unaccompanied

Participants described the circumstances leading them to migrate unaccompanied from Mozambique to Zimbabwe. While the four participants faced different circumstances back in Mozambique that led them to migrate unaccompanied, their circumstances were largely influenced by their family structures. The immediate push factors for unaccompanied migration were poverty and violence, which could be attributed to a family structure that included the death of parents, separation of parents, and aged grandparents heading the household. Throughout this section, I describe the situations that participants identified as triggering unaccompanied migration.

4.2.1.1 Family Structure

An underlying theme in participants' decision to migrate unaccompanied was family structure. Although it was not an immediate trigger factor, family structure can be attributed to the participants' household living circumstances, including poverty and deprivation, as well as violence. Three of the four participants (Millicent, Rudo, and Ngoni) were orphaned in childhood, which affected their living circumstances, particularly poverty for Millicent and Rudo. Millicent lost both of her parents. Her father remarried before he died, leaving Millicent in the care of her stepmother. Rudo lost her father when she was a baby. Her mother

remarried and went away to live with her new husband, leaving Rudo under the care of an elderly grandmother. Ngoni lost her mother. Her father remarried and so Ngoni lived with her father and stepmother. Jane had both parents alive, however they lived apart. Jane lived with her mother and siblings.

Sections 4.2.1.2 and 4.2.1.2 further elaborates how family structure influenced the participants' decisions to migrate unaccompanied.

4.2.1.2 Poverty

In their narratives, Rudo and Jane point to poverty as the primary cause of their unaccompanied migration. Upon her father's death and her mother remarrying, Rudo was taken into the care of her grandmother. Rudo's grandmother, who was the household head, was past retirement age retired, due to old age. According to Rudo's narrative, the family lived in absolute poverty; she dropped out of school and often did not have food or soap. Rudo said, "Life was very difficult back home. My grandmother struggled to take care of us as she was old. We sometimes went without food or soap. I dropped out of school when I was about 11 years old. I decided to leave home to seek a better life. I was 15 years old when I left home" (Rudo, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

Jane lived with her mother, who worked part time in farms. Jane, who had both parents alive despite living apart, indicated her household was poor, hence her decision to migrate unaccompanied. She dropped out of school when she was 13 years old because she did not have the money to attend school. Her father apparently did not contribute to the family's household income, leaving her mother to fend for the family on her own from the piece jobs she got from working on the farms. Jane said, "I moved to Zimbabwe, Chipinge because I was told there are job opportunities. I decided to come to Zimbabwe to look for a job because there was nothing to do back home. ...I went to school up to grade 7 level, when I was 13 years old. There was no money at home to enable me to continue going to school." (Jane, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

Though poverty was not the immediate reason leading to Millicent's unaccompanied migration, her narrative did show that poverty contributed to her migrating unaccompanied. Upon the death of her parents, Millicent dropped out of school because her family could not afford to pay for her education. A year later, Millicent fell pregnant and eloped to live with the man who had impregnated her.

The death of parents, like in Rudo and Millicent's case, is likely to increase the probability of inadequate care, leading to a deterioration in the family's economic status, ultimately resulting in poverty (Cas et al., 2014). There is evidence to support the idea that poverty is a major contributor to unaccompanied migration among adolescents. The Guatamela example mentioned in the literature review section, which indicate that poverty and inequality forced adolescents to migrate to the United States (Lorenzen, 2017), together with the Zimbabwe example of the high poverty levels of up to 95% (ZIMVAC, 2017; Mabvurira et al., 2020) show that poverty is a major push factor for unaccompanied migration amongst adolescents. Further, unaccompanied adolescent migrant girls in Manila, cited family poverty as the main reason why they decided to migrate unaccompanied (Camacho, 1999).

Rudo, whose father died when she was still a baby, and her mother had gone on to remarry lived with her aged grandmother, who was the head of the family. The death of Rudo's father could be considered as a contributing factor to the poverty that Rudo found herself under the care of her grandmother. Evidence exists, which point to grand-parent headed households tending to be poor. The literature suggests that, with age, the propensity for diminished physical health is high amongst aged grandparents, which in turn interferes with their ability to effectively nurture and support children under their care, including diminished ability to provide basic daily needs to the household (Whitley & Fuller-Thomas, 2017). Rudo mentioned deprivation such as, not belong able to continue attending school and the household sometimes going without food.

4.2.1.3 Violence

Millicent and Ngoni described violent experiences they had while at home in Mozambique. The violence prompted the two to migrate unaccompanied. Millicent described how she suffered intimate partner violence perpetrated by her elopement partner. She said, "I fell pregnant when I was 16 years old, and so I eloped. My husband was 25 years old. We stayed together for about 7 months, and I left him just after the birth of my daughter because he used to beat me so much. I decided to leave him, and so I went back home to my stepmother. Both my parents died and so I was left with my stepmother only, whom I lived with back home. I then decided to move to Zimbabwe because the father of my child would come to insult me at home as he wished." (Millicent, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

In Ngoni's account, her father, was violent, and this contributed to her abrupt decision to migrate unaccompanied. She said, “My father beats until you bleed, until your skin comes off. He uses the belt of a grinding mill to beat. ... I thought I better run away with my flesh.” (Ngoni, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

As part of the picture she drew for the places she felt safe and unsafe, Ngoni included her home as unsafe, because she was constantly beaten by her father. The image on page 38, (Figure 2: Ngoni's mapping exercise, November 2022) shows the home as one of the places that Ngoni indicated to have broken her heart because of the violence she experienced.

Millicent suffered intimate partner violence at the hands of the man with whom she had eloped. She said, “I left him just after the birth of my daughter because he used to beat me so much. ... I then decided to move to Zimbabwe because the father of my child would come to insult me at home as he wished.” (Millicent, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

Millicent became highly vulnerable to suffering intimate partner violence because of a multiple of factors, which existing literature point as intersectional vulnerabilities. Millicent was highly vulnerable because of her being an adolescent wife, from a poor family and of a low education status and living in a country with a high prevalence of the intimate partner violence of 21.7% (Wado et al., 2021, UN Women, 2021).

The narratives on violent circumstances in which Ngoni and Millicent lived, which led them to making the decision to migrate unaccompanied are largely similar to one form of violence (domestic) that is in existing literature. Violence in the home is recognized as a push factor for unaccompanied migration by adolescents as they seek self-protection. The literature review section of this report speaks of adolescents from Ethiopia who decided to migrate unaccompanied, in response to domestic violence (Adugna, 2006 in Yaqub, 2009). In addition to the Ethiopian example, the literature section speaks of a research participant from Zimbabwe, who revealed that physical abuse in the home prompted him to migrate unaccompanied from Zimbabwe to South Africa (Mabvurura et al., 2020).

This study found no evidence that violence in the public domain, such as gang violence, had an impact on the decision to migrate unaccompanied by the adolescent girls. This however does not mean that adolescent girls are not triggered to migrate unaccompanied by public violence. This could be because the areas from where the adolescents came from, which were close to Zimbabwe's border were relatively safe from violence in the public space. Had the participants originated from the Northern parts of Mozambique's Cab Delgado Province for example where there currently is conflict, then the adolescents'

narratives could have been different (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2022).

4.2.2 How the Context of Migration Influences Adolescents into selling sex

The trajectory into selling sex of the research participants begins in their places of origin, where circumstances forced them to migrate unaccompanied. According to all four participants' narratives, poverty and violence were the primary factors driving their migration decisions. Neither of the four participants had adequate knowledge nor plans of how they would survive in Zimbabwe. Due to hardships they faced upon arriving in Zimbabwe, the participants began to sell sex for a living.

4.2.2.1 Abuse and Exploitation

Abuse and exploitation formed a key factor in the participants' trajectory into selling sex. Ngoni shared details of how she was economically exploited whilst working at a canteen in Chimanimani. She said, "I got the job and started working at the canteen. It was painful to work at the canteen. The weather was hot, I spent the whole day on the fireplace preparing meals. I worked alone and I did not have time to sit down to rest. Whenever customers wanted drinks or anything else from the shops, I would be the one to go and buy. In addition to all this, I swept and cleaned the place. My daily payment was US\$1.5 (one dollar fifty cents). I worked from 6 am to 10pm, from Sunday to Sunday. I lived with the woman whom I worked for at the canteen, at her lodgings.

I was paid my daily rates during my first week of work. In the second, my employer told me that I was now a child in the household so what the family would eat, I would eat as well. She stopped paying me. ... After the second week, I was being given sadza and green vegetables only, her sons would not allow me to eat meat.

After about three weeks, I got boyfriend who worked in the butchery. He used to give me extra meat whenever I went to buy meat for the canteen, but my employer would take away the meat and use it for the canteen. Whenever I asked about my meat, I would be told we needed to sell it so that we buy soap and other things to use. Since I was not being paid, I became so desperate, but I told myself that what is important is that I have somewhere to stay. Life was really hard for me at the time. I was saying, God, as long as I have somewhere to stay.

One day, my employer went away to visit her boyfriend. I remained at the canteen working. After closing the canteen at 10pm we went home but were locked outside by my employer's son. He sent my friend and I away, calling us prostitutes." (Ngoni, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop) In her picture, which is the image on page 38, (Figure 2: Ngoni's mapping exercise, November 2022) Ngoni indicated Nedziwa as a place that broke her heart, because of how she had to work so hard, yet was exploited and ill-treated by her employer and her sons.

Rudo shared her experience of being underpaid as a domestic worker, upon her arrival in Chipinge. She said, "I worked as a housemaid when I first arrived. I only was paid \$25 yet other housemaids were getting between \$40 and \$60." (Rudo, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

Economic exploitation of unaccompanied migrant adolescents in their host country, for example through unfair pay and long working hours is common, because of the multiple barriers that they face, such as an absence of protective laws and platforms for redress (van de Glind & Kou, 2011, International Labour Organization, 2016). Ngoni's narrative of working for 16 hours a day, seven days a week, on a payment of \$1, 50 per day in the first week of employment with no payment thereafter demonstrates the reality that adolescent girls face, which is also evidenced by literature. Though Ngoni was not employed as a domestic worker, her experience working at the canteen is similar to what existing literature says of gendered vulnerabilities, which go beyond unfair pay, to abuse that is perpetrated by male members of the households they will be working for (Chammartin, 2004).

Rudo's narrative on being underpaid, whilst working as a domestic worker in comparison to other domestic workers in Chipinge is again similar to the plight of adolescent domestic workers that is presented in literature. In Thailand, for example, migrant adolescent girls earned half the monthly salary of local adolescents from domestic work (van de Glind & Anne Kou, 2013).

4.2.2.2 Social Networks

Social networks play a critical role, influencing the livelihood opportunities that incoming migrants are likely to engage in. Existing literature point to migrant networks in destination countries being the main source of information on available opportunities (Garip, 2008). Research participants demonstrated to have made use of social networks, as a part of their trajectories to selling sex, however unlike literature, the networks were with persons of

Zimbabwean origin, and not Mozambique. The friends that Rudo and Millicent had made were the ones who introduced them into selling sex.

Millicent mentioned that she was introduced to selling sex by a friend, whom she met at the time she worked as a shop keeper on the outskirts of Chipinge town. She said, “When I left employment after two months of work, I went to Chipinge town and started living with my friend, whom I had met earlier at ‘gomba’. My friend introduced me selling sex and so we have been working together for some months now.” (Millicent, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

Like Millicent, Rudo was also introduced to selling sex by a friend she had met at the time she arrived in Chipinge. She said, “I saw a woman who became my friend. She said that why don’t we sell sex whilst you look for another job.” (Rudo, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

Literature shows how social networks influence unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls’ into selling sex. For example, a respondent in a study conducted in Ethiopia, who is mentioned in the literature review section, mentioned that she had initially started working as a maid, but the work was very hard and she did not earn any money. The adolescent was then introduced to selling sex by some girls she met (Van Blerk, 2008).

Existing literature focuses on relatives and friends from the country of origin as the social networks that adolescents make use of when they arrive at their destinations. To the contrary, however participants in this study made friends with women of Zimbabwean origin, whom they had met in Zimbabwe. Only one participant (Ngoni) had earlier lived with a friend’s family, who had migrated to Zimbabwe, upon her initial arrival in Zimbabwe.

The social networks that the research participants had made, largely remained a part of their network and contributed to the participants’ access of their daily needs. Millicent, who lived with a friend, who introduced her to selling sex mentioned how this enabled her to meet her shelter needs and childcare. She said, “I live at her house ... she is responsible for paying rent, whilst I buy food. We go out at night, and I leave my child with my friend’s sister.” (Millicent, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop) Rudo, who shared a lodging with a friend, who had also introduced her to selling sex said, “I moved to stay with my friend ... We pay rent of \$10 per month so we pay \$5 each.” (Rudo, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop) Jane shared a lodging with two others, who were also in the practice of selling sex.

4.2.2.3 Teenage Parenthood

Each of the four research participants had a young child under age two. Millicent had a child whilst still in Mozambique when she was 15 years old. Ngoni and Jane had children after they had migrated to Zimbabwe, at a time they had boyfriends with whom they lived. They were 16 and 15 years old, respectively. Rudo had a child at 16 years of age after she had begun selling sex. Obligations for childcare that the research participants had contributed to their trajectory into selling sex.

The three participants who had children before beginning to sell sex mentioned of the need they had to take care of their children.

Ngoni said, “I get the strength to go to work and sell sex out of the desire to take good care of my child.” (Ngoni, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

Millicent said, “What gives me strength is being able to get money from selling sex and be able to take care of my child.” (Millicent, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

Jane said, “My child lives with his paternal grandmother, and I send food when I have.” (Jane, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

There has not been much literature that speaks to unaccompanied migrant girls who have children in their country of destination. However, the little bit of literature identified during literature review did serve to confirm that it is possible, if not likely that there adolescents will have children. The literature focused on care of the children, whereby the adolescents either takes care of their children or send them back home (Busza et al., 2016).

4.2.3 Strategies that Unaccompanied Migrant Adolescents use to Access Daily Needs

Research participants discussed the strategies they use to access their daily needs. Most of these strategies were revealed during the unstructured interviews when further probing was done on the narratives shared during the ABR workshop. The main strategy that research participants employ to access their daily needs was through selling sex. The income they earn from selling sex goes towards their accommodation, food, and childcare needs. Social networks also served as a means of meeting the needs of the participants on a daily basis.

4.2.3.1 Selling Sex

Selling sex is the main form of livelihoods that the four research participants engaged in. A number of factors have contributed to the participants' trajectories into selling sex, including

being economically exploited in other forms of livelihood, being influenced by social networks, as well as child responsibilities.

The research participants indicated that they got varying amounts of income from selling sex. Payment for the sale of sex was per session, with the highest amount being \$6 and the lowest being \$2. Ngoni, who charged the highest amount said, "I charge \$6 per session. In a week I have a minimum of 3 clients." (Ngoni, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop) In addition to selling sex, Ngoni mentioned that she was a bar tender. She said that, when she got employed as a bar tender, she was already selling sex and her prospective employer was happy to employ her as he said that selling sex would enable her to get extra money so she would not be tempted to steal money from the bar. Ngoni attributed her receiving a relatively higher rate of \$6 per session to her job as a bar tender. She said, "I'm glad that I have a job, if I sell sex whilst on a job, I will be valued but if you are not gainfully employed, you can just be paid \$2." (Ngoni, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

Rudo said, "I sell sex for \$5. I get up to 3 clients per day." (Rudo, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

Millicent mentioned that she negotiates with her clients on a range of payment, from \$5 to a minimum of \$3. She said, "I sell sex for \$3 to \$5, depending on what the client has. I normally start off at \$5 but a lot of clients say they don't have money. I normally have an average of 2 clients per day- \$6 to \$9 per day." (Millicent, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

Jane, who charged the least amount mentioned that she had a negotiated rate, from \$3 to \$2. She said, "I sell sex for \$2 to \$3 in Chipinge town. (Jane, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop) Of the four research participants, Jane is the only one who indicated that she sometimes goes out of Chipinge town to sell sex. She said, "Sometimes I go to the bars which are out of town over the weekend as there are more patrons there." (Jane, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

Rudo and Millicent mentioned that selling sex comes with health-related risks, with Rudo adding that there is risk of being murdered and not being paid after providing a service. The two expressed these risks as what they fear from selling sex. Millicent said, "My fear is contracting HIV. I use condoms. There are clients who insist on not using a condom, but I have always used a condom." (Millicent, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop) Rudo mentioned that she feared contracting HIV, being killed, and not being paid by a client. She said, "My fear is coming across a murderer and being killed or not getting paid after being forced to have sex with someone" (Rudo, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop) I am afraid of

contracting HIV. I use a condom and I do not offer sex without a condom as I am afraid of contracting HIV. If the man does not have a condom, I use the female condom. “

Ngoni, Millicent and Rudo mentioned that they insist on condom use when they sell sex. Rudo, however fell pregnant as a result of selling sex and had a six-month-old baby at the time of the research. The contradiction between Rudo’s narrative during the ABR workshop, and the reality that she fell pregnant as a result of selling sex points to a number of possible factors, that as a researcher I reflect on. My initial thought to this was that Rudo was telling me what she thought I wanted to hear. All four participants demonstrated to be knowledgeable on why protected sex is important, and so I took it that Rudo was trying to prove that she knew the importance of consistent condom use.

On the other hand, I thought that Rudo might have known of the importance of consistent use of the condom as she might have learnt. However, her young age, might disenable her from always negotiating condom use with clients. Literature does show that adolescent girls who sell sex are not always in a position to negotiate protected sex with their clients because of reasons including the clients being much older than them and some clients being violent (Onyango et al., 2015).

The risk of contracting HIV that the research participants mentioned are prominent risks that adolescent girls who sell sex face. There is plenty of literature that speaks to the higher risk of contracting HIV amongst adolescent girls who sell sex, in comparison to older women. The Global Network of Sex Workers Policy Brief (2016), for, example states that HIV prevalence among females who sell sex in Kolkata, India, is at 8.4% among women over 20 years old.

The fear of violence that the research participants mentioned corroborated with what is in the existing literature. Adolescents selling sex are shown to be at high risk of suffering violence at the hands of their sexual partners especially, but also law enforcement agents and communities at large. An example, which proves that adolescents who sell sex risk suffering violence at the hands of clients is that of the Canadian study mentioned earlier in the literature review section, where 30% of adolescents who participated in the study mentioned that they experienced some form of violence, which was, allegedly, perpetrated by clients (Shannon et al., 2009). Adult sex workers in Ghana also mentioned that adolescent girls are at risk of suffering violence at the hands of their clients and the adult women could not guarantee safety of these adolescent girls. Some of the women also mentioned of the risk of being killed, by the clients, with several mentioning of their friends who had been murdered by clients (Onyango et al, 2015).

Whilst unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls who sell sex face significant risks associated with selling sex, these adolescents employ coping survival strategies. Ngoni mentioned of her membership to an NGO in Chipinge, from where she access HIV testing and other services. This membership is likely to empower Ngoni to make informed choices, from the learning from the NGO. Millicent and Rudo mentioned of how they often go out to sell sex with the friends with whom they lived. Millicent said she was not afraid walking at night because she would be with her friend. Such strategies, within social networks help the adolescent to feel some level of safety, even in the face of the high risk practice, as indicated by findings in this study.

4.2.3.3 Childcare Arrangements

A critical need that all four research participants mentioned was that of childcare. Rudo, Ngoni and Millicent lived with their young children, who were under two years of age. Jane's child was being taken care of by the baby's maternal grandmother. The four participants had childcare arrangements in place, which were either through family and social networks or on a payment arrangement with a local community member.

Jane's child lived with his paternal grandmother, for which she mentioned that she sent food whenever she could. Millicent, who lived with her friend had childcare arrangements within the household where she stayed. She said, "We go out at night, and I leave my child with my friend's sister." (Millicent, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop) Rudo and Ngoni's childcare arrangements were with community members whom they paid for the childcare services. Rudo said, "I leave my child with a neighbour overnight and I pay her a dollar each morning" (Rudo, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop) Ngoni said, "When I go to work, I leave my child with a woman who lives nearby, and I pay her \$15 per month for childcare." (Ngoni, November 12, 2022, ABR workshop)

As mentioned earlier in the section on teenage parenthood, the research participants had child care arrangements that were acknowledged to be possible in literature. Some adolescents who sell sex do raise their own children, with some sending the children back home. In this case, only one participant (Jane) was not living with her child, as he was living with his paternal grandmother.

The other three participants had child care arrangements that were well planned, to enable them to be able to go out and sell sex, with the comfort that their children were being taken care of. Ngoni mentioned that she left her child under the care of a woman from the

local community, whom she paid \$15 per month. Rudo also mentioned of similar child care arrangements, where she left her child with a neighbour, whom she paid \$1 per day. Millicent had internal arrangements in the house where she lived, whereby she left her child with her friend's sister, who she lived with.

Existing literature point to migrant adolescents fending for their families (Chant & Jones, 2005). The literature however points to the adolescents taking care of their siblings and other family members who are not their own biological children. In this research, however, participants were using taking care of their biological children.

4.4 Conclusion

Unaccompanied migration among research participants was identified in this qualitative study as a direct result of its root causes and immediate consequences. Adolescents migrate unaccompanied for a variety of reasons, including poverty and violence in the home. Other forms of livelihoods which the research participants engaged in before selling sex contributed to their move into selling sex due to exploitation experiences. The social networks that the research participants developed in Chipinge also contributed to their trajectory into selling sex. Selling sex and social networks were the primary means of meeting the participants' daily needs. The everyday lives of the migrant adolescent girls, which they described in their narratives were similar to what is in several pieces of literature, though these participants face some unique challenges, for example their ability to build networks with persons of Zimbabwean origin and not be dependent on networks built with other people from Mozambique.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

This study explored the everyday experiences of unaccompanied migrant girls from Mozambique who sell sex in Chipinge, Zimbabwe. Specifically, the study sought to understand why girls migrated across international borders without primary caregivers and how they met their daily needs. The study also sought to explore how the context of migration influences trajectories into selling sex. Findings from this research study cannot be generalised because I used the feminist standpoint theory, whose key shortcoming is that it

Feminist standpoint theory, adolescent theory, and intersectionality guided this study. I utilized feminist standpoint theory to give my research participants a platform where they could share their stories. In my engagement with the participants, I believed that they have the capacity to govern themselves as individuals based on the adolescents' theory, which acknowledges the agency they possess as individuals. As a result of the intersectionality theory, I engaged with participants from a point of knowledge of their diverse vulnerabilities, beyond the fact that they were unaccompanied migrant adolescents selling sex. Against the backdrop, allowing research participants to share their stories, and documenting them was a way of empowering them (Rolin, 2009).

5.1 Conclusions on Research Findings

The adolescent girls' decision to engage in unaccompanied migration across national borders is heavily influenced by their family structure. The ability of the family to meet basic needs may be severely hampered in a family structure where the parents would have died or separated. Families which are then headed by elderly members, or those with parents earning informal, part-time income, are particularly affected. Adolescent girls are likely to migrate unaccompanied if they live in poverty, which is evidenced by a family's inability to meet its daily food needs.

It is possible for adolescent girls to enter into child marriage arrangements as a result of poverty in their household. As a result of poverty, their young age, and low levels of

education, adolescents in child marriages are at risk of experiencing intimate partner violence perpetrated by their husbands. When intimate partner violence occurs, it can lead to unaccompanied migration as a means of self-protection.

Unaccompanied migration by adolescent girls is influenced by violence against children in the home. The picture produced by one of the research participants showed a co-relationship between the death of a parent and violence in the home. In order to protect themselves, adolescents leave home, and those who live near borders may end up crossing national borders to live in neighbouring countries.

The adolescents' trajectories into selling sex are influenced by the informal livelihoods sector, which carries the risk of economic exploitation. It is common for adolescents to be underpaid, as compared to their hours, to not be paid at all, or to work long hours because income and working conditions are entirely determined by their employers. Teenagers can gain some control over their income and work schedules by selling sex, making it possible for them to decide how much to earn. The adolescents charge between \$2 and \$6 per session, and some clients negotiate within these margins.

The use of social networks by adolescent girls to sell sex plays an important role in their trajectories. The adolescents are either introduced into selling sex by friends as a supposedly temporary measure, whilst they continue to search for other forms of livelihood opportunities or as the livelihood of choice. In both cases, the adolescents would have made friends with those who already sell sex, so either they had come across other females selling sex by chance, or they would have found themselves in area where people who sell sex frequent.

By selling sex, adolescent girls can earn enough money to meet their everyday needs. Housing, food, and childcare costs can be met by the adolescents. Arrangements have been made with members of the local community for overnight childcare, for which the adolescents pay a daily or monthly fee. Adolescents who are parents do take responsibility to provide for and care for their children. One of the research participants described, through her picture how much she dearly loved her son, and she described the child care arrangement she has to make sure her child is taken care of whilst she is away. The other two participants, likewise describe child care arrangements that they have in place to ensure their children are cared for whilst they are away.

Adolescents' social networks in their host country play a crucial role in meeting their daily needs. For example, adolescents share accommodation and contribute to food costs with their friends. As stated earlier, these social networks contribute to the trajectories into selling

sex, as such the adolescents usually are together with their friends as they go to and from work. This contributes to their protection, especially as they go to seek for clients after dark.

Adolescent girls are aware of the risks associated with selling sex, including contracting HIV and violence. To protect themselves, the girls insist on the use of condoms when they are selling sex and walk with their friends to and from bars. Some even go on to seek sexual reproductive health services from relevant non-government service providers. However, the girls are not always in full control of the conditions under which they sell sex, for example, some clients might refuse to use a condom which results in the adolescents falling pregnant and being exposed to the health risk they fear of contracting HIV.

In conclusion, adolescent girls migrate unaccompanied due to immediate domestic circumstances. Adolescents cross country borders with the hope of better lives, but little knowledge of how they will survive once in their new home. As adolescents engage in other forms of informal livelihood, they may face economic exploitation, which may influence their decision to begin selling sex, a form of livelihood that also comes with high risks. Unaccompanied migrant girls find social networks very helpful in their daily lives, especially in terms of sharing costs. Expressions that the research participants made through story telling, including pictures they drew played a significant role in articulation of the everyday experiences of the research participants.

5.2 Recommendations

Below are a table of recommendations, based on research findings. The recommendations are mainly targeting the whole Southern African Development Community (SADC) since these countries are and will continue to be interconnected as people, including adolescents migrate from one country to another.

Issue	Recommendation
Household poverty drives adolescent girls to migrate unaccompanied.	Governments within SADC should provide adequate budgets for required public investment in children, at both SADC level and as individual countries. These governments should provide social assistance, in the form of education assistance and food, to poor households, including those who are marginalized and difficult to reach.

Violence against children and intimate partner violence pushes adolescent girls to migrate unaccompanied for self-protection.	Governments in SADC should ensure that laws that criminalize violence against children, including in the home are enacted and implemented. This includes laws against physical and humiliating punishment. In order to prevent violence in the home, the SADC region, including governments of Mozambique and Zimbabwe should educate communities through local community structures, such as by implementing practical programs on positive discipline every day parenting. Programs against intimate partner violence and violence against children should be based on human centred design approach, to make them appropriate to the local communities.
Adolescent girls migrate unaccompanied without having adequately planned on how they will survive at their destination, in terms of potential livelihood opportunities, which exposes them to exploitation	SADC governments should consider life skills subjects should in school curricula. This will provide learners with information on migration, cross-border migration implications and how they can better protect themselves. In the southern African region, governments should raise awareness among border communities, including children and young people, about safe migration and survival methods.
Unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls who sell sex are at risk of contracting HIV and other STIs because of their limited access to structured services that empower them to make informed choices	SADC should ensure member countries operationalise relevant regional instruments, for example the SADC protocol on Gender and Development, whose purpose is to provide for the empowerment of women, to eliminate discrimination and to achieve gender equality through the development and implementation of gender responsive legislation, policies, programmes and projects.

Unaccompanied migrant adolescent girls are a high risk of suffering violence in the hands of their sexual partners	Non-governmental organizations that provide sexual and reproductive health services to women who sell sex should also provide services to migrant adolescents under 18 but over 16, which is the age of sexual consent. Though adolescents who sell sex face several high risks of harm, including violence, governments should still make deliberate efforts to provide sexual reproductive health services to these adolescents, in addition to providing basic needs, whose lack would normally become the reasons for their migration Child protection mechanisms should be strengthened across the SADC region, to ensure that the adolescents' in general are better protected, but more specifically protection of the adolescents who sell sex. The practice of selling sex but not being able to fully negotiate with one's clients on condom use amongst other things shows that the person selling sex is likely to be in a position of high vulnerability, thus risk being exploited
This research was not able to clearly explore on the following issues; 1. How the actual journey from Mozambique was in terms of whether the adolescents travelled with some people at one point or another, how long their journeys took and how they managed to	Further research to be done, that is narrowed down on the experiences of unaccompanied migrant girls during the actual travel.

access their basics such as food and water whilst travelling 2. How the adolescent girls relate with other unaccompanied migrant girls and boys who had also migrated to Chipinge but not necessarily engaged in selling sex, but other forms of livelihoods	Further research to be conducted, focusing on how unaccompanied migrant girls relate with other unaccompanied adolescent boys and girls in the same destination as them
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CHAPTER 6

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