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Sex in the city : an ethnography of the lives of sex workers in two clubs in Johannesburg.

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ABSTRACT

This is an ethnography of the lives of sex workers in two clubs in Johannesburg. It aimed to explore the intimate lives of sex workers, focusing on how sex workers maintain boundaries between their work and their private lives. Difficulties and issues of time and access meant the research increasingly became one of illuminating the rich texture and social worlds of the two clubs. As it turns out, these women's private lives are intricately linked to their work. The ethnographic research method uncovered the complex and otherwise hidden processes in the clubs, from the regimes of work, to the surveillance, drugs and money. The research revealed the exploitative nature of sex work at the clubs, but also the agency and choice that these women exercised in their work and private lives, challenging the notion of sex workers as mere victims.