Sex in the city: Exploring agency and challenges of street-based sex workers

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Declaration of Paper

I declare that this research proposal is my own work, and that acknowledgements have been made to all sources used throughout the report. I, further, declare that this proposal is my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at any other university.

Sanam Naran

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Abstract

Research into the reasons why sex workers enter and stay in sex work has largely viewed entry from perspectives of either choice or constraint. Choice perspectives attribute entry to reasons such as female agency and empowerment, and social and financial independence. Constraint perspectives attribute entry to reasons such as economic necessity, drug and alcohol abuse, childhood sexual abuse, lack of education and job opportunities, and homelessness and truancy. The study sought to explore how 10 street-based sex workers framed their presence within the sex work industry. It employed a qualitative approach to explore the stories sex workers told about their entry into sex work, their experiences within the industry, and the meanings they made of these experiences. The exploration and analysis of their accounts were informed by thematic analysis. Four broad themes were identified. These included: Poverty, Agency, Challenges, and Competition and Cooperation. The findings suggest that while an overt choice to pursue sex work as a desirable vocation was not commonly reported, participants communicated a sense of agency and choice in the decisions they made to better their circumstances through entering sex work, and the mechanisms they utilised to make meaning of their experiences and cope in their work. The findings suggest support third wave feminists in their contention that it is simplistic to view entry and continuation in sex work from perspectives communicated by either choice/constraint paradigms alone and argue for the necessity to explore the social contexts informing the reported realities of black working class sex workers in South Africa. Policy, policing, and health workers responses to sex work should therefore take these factors into account.

Keywords: *Street-based sex work; agency; constraint; intersectionality; third wave feminism*

List of Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Virus
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
SRHC	Sexual and reproductive healthcare
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR)
SWEAT	Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce
GBV	Gender Based Violence

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Rationale

Research that explores the reasons behind sex workers entering and staying within the sex work industry typically focuses on two binaries; choice and constraints such as attributing degenerate morals and vulnerability to sex workers. The discourses centred on choice, highlight economic and financial independence, women's autonomy over their bodies, and women's empowerment. Those focussed on constraint; consider sexual abuse in childhood, drug and alcohol abuse, poverty and lack of education and jobs. 'Third wave feminism' has criticized this way of thinking, citing that the choice/constraint dichotomy does not correspond with these women's state of being in this world (Ransby, 2000).

Social science researchers have contributed significantly to a body of knowledge on sex work; however, the majority of this literature tends to position sex work as a social problem in need of control and/or eradication (Ransby, 2000). Research on sex work has often portrayed women as deviant, mentally ill, and/or as vectors of disease. More recently, feminists and pro sex work advocates have begun to produce literature that places sex work within labour work; therein, replacing the term "prostitute" with "sex worker". This study contributes to sex work research by exploring the concept of agency through an intersectionality and Afro-feminist theoretical lens. Although some researchers use both terms interchangeably, I exclusively use the term "sex work/sex worker" to describe the occupation of the women in this study.

Currently, the amount of research surrounding sex work in South Africa is limited. The research consists mainly of discussions supporting either continued criminalization or legalization of sex work (Richter, 2000) and the public health issues of condom use for the prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) (Campbell, 2000). Although this study contributes to a growing body of knowledge regarding the theme of sex work in South Africa, the main focus of this study centres on both immigrant and South African sex workers and their sense of agency in relation to their lived experiences and the challenges that they are faced with in inner-city Johannesburg. Specifically, this study evaluates not only the micro-level factors that sex workers are faced with, but also the macro-level factors, which was informed by a community psychology perspective. Since community psychology is driven by the values of working with marginalised communities towards their empowerment, liberation,

conscientisation, and social justice, this study adopted a position of solidarity (Rappaport, 2005; Prilleltensky, 2001) with marginalised street based sex workers.

This study considered the perspectives of ten street-based women sex workers in Johannesburg. By employing a qualitative approach and thematically analysing interview based data, it explored the stories, experiences, possibilities and challenges each woman has had to face, in an effort to develop meaning. The boundaries of sex work are ambiguous with ranges in the formality of the profession, frequency of work, place of practice, rate of pay, and activities undertaken. Sex work can be defined in a multitude of ways including by venue (brothel, hotel, street, or tavern-based) or by frequency (full- or part-time). It can be formal such as a commercial sex worker or informal which includes individuals who may not self-identify as sex workers and who sell sex irregularly. Sex workers can work as independent agents, for an institution (brothel), or a pimp/manager. This study solely explored the experiences of street-based sex workers. Street-based sex workers are located on the streets and walkways of Johannesburg, making their services easily accessible, but also, where they seem to be faced with an array of challenges.

Within the realm of the sex-work industry, women are defined by assumptions about their job description. This obscures the reality and complexity of women sex workers who often lead multifaceted lives. Sex workers may simultaneously perform a range of roles such as being breadwinners, mothers, sisters and partners in intimate relationships, community leaders and neighbours. The stigma associated with being a sex worker, results in much of the public perceiving them according to stereotypes that circulate about the promiscuity and compromised morals of sex workers. This study strove to engage with the sex workers as human beings, with full rights including the right to be heard and have their opinions voiced regarding their work and related experiences.

While every worker has to deal with class, gender and race issues as well as associated power inequalities, a sex worker has to also deal with stigma and dehumanization (Teke, 2016). I choose to focus on sex work because of these reasons. Other issues specifically associated with the sex worker's body in the world include the physical dangers of venereal disease, assault, harassment, and legal challenges as the result of the criminalisation of their work. It is important that we are aware of the intersectionalities of sex workers gendered identities and shift the perspective to understand them as active members of society. I contend that sex workers need to be understood in ways that acknowledge their voices and are sensitive to their

perspectives. Their perception of self and their positioning within society is impacted greatly by the nature of their work and this necessitates a framework that aims to understand it. One must also keep in mind the critiques that precede this, which include Third World Feminism as breaking down women into smaller groups to address the unique qualities and diversity of each individual, may somewhat cause the entire movement of feminism to lose purpose and power. This criticism claims that postcolonial feminism is divisive, arguing that the overall feminist movement will be stronger if women can present a united front. Yet, in line with the feminist standpoint theory and third world feminists consider third world women‘s marginalized social locations as especially propitious for producing less partial and distorted or even objective understanding of the human condition (Harding, 1993). Their marginalized status enables them to have epistemic privilege and to be aware of events and conditions about which more privileged groups are either oblivious or dismissive.

Historically, sex work has been at the centre of public debate without relief. The commercialization of sex has provoked many, and never ceases to evoke strong emotion within different groups and individuals. Sex work, although legal in some countries, remains illegal in South Africa. Previous studies conducted on sex work have reinforced many popular social and cultural constructs; namely Stadler & Delanys' (2008) work on clinical services for sex workers in Hillbrow South Africa, and sex work, reform initiatives and HIV/AIDS in inner-city Johannesburg by Marlise Richte (2008). The present study examines alternative ideas of sex work directly from the sex workers involved and hopes to be incorporated within a contested work of literature that already exists which gives voice to lower income sex workers in the city of Johannesburg.

Research Aims

Responding to the issues outlined above, it is clear that actions need to be undertaken in order to reach this hidden and stigmatised population in order to work with them to improve their wellbeing and social inclusion. There is also a need for more awareness on the nature and dangers involved in street sex work.

The aims of this study were informed by a community psychology value system that seeks to make use of two paradigms. The first, which is the problem-centred approach, would include tackling abuse, police brutality, drug use and stigma, just to name a few. The second comes

from an agentic approach, which centres feminist views on women as possessing control, power and agency over their bodies and their lives. These two paradigms were included in this study as one cannot simply pursue one paradigm as sex workers live their lives between those perspectives. This study aimed to achieve a holistic view on sex work that is grounded in the realities of sex workers. This allows for the exploration of sex workers daily realities.

Furthermore, this study employed two key research aims. The first research aim was to increase awareness on the challenges of sex work in Johannesburg. The second research aim was to engage with the accounts of sex workers in the city of Johannesburg in determining their levels of agency.

Embedded in an interpretivist framework, the study used semi-structured interviews to collect data and analysed the data using thematic analysis. Sex workers were recruited for participation in the project using a snowball sampling technique. The interviews were transcribed, and analysed using thematic analysis as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006).

To this end, the following research questions were formulated:

- What agency do sex workers demonstrate in their stories of working in the city?
- What do the accounts of sex workers tell us about the challenges of working in the city?
- How do sex workers relate their life stories to their jobs as sex workers?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Through a review of contemporary literature on sex work, it is apparent that a large amount of research has been focussed on studying the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases like HIV and AIDS (Barnard, 1993; Campbell, Mzaidume, & Williams, 1998; Fick, 2005; Gysels et al., 2002; Leggett, 1998, 1999, 2001; Pyett & Warr, 1999; Stadler & Delaney, 2006; Wojcicki & Malala, 2001), encounters with police brutality and several forms of discrimination (Fick, 2005; Gysels et al., 2002; Hartley, 2005; Maher, 1997; Pyett & Warr, 1999), and feminist agency regarding sex workers (Fick, 2005; Lopez-Jones, 1998; Lucas, 2005). These studies have generally tended to polarise the argument into one that looks at the sex workers entrance into the industry as either choice or constraint and does not consider other factors.

Based on my assessment of the existing research, I have categorised the literature review into intrapsychic factors and macro factors for sex work. The intrapsychic factors can be said to have an individualising effect as it tends to focus on intrapsychic explanations for why people engage in sex work, while the macro factors can be located within a community perspective and tend to consider social factors as more important than the intra-psychic. The macro-factors perspective offers a dynamic approach, insisting that people are understood in terms of what happens in their lives, their challenges within their system, and how they confront such problems. Its purpose is to understand human behaviour through social relationships or social ties that they form. The theory that has been utilised in this study, adopts a social view rather than an intra-psychic view, thus, working against the pathologizing nature of theories around sex work.

Intrapsychic Factors:

Childhood Trauma

Research has shown that children, who have encountered sexual and physical abuse or molestation during childhood, may be more compelled to enter into this industry as sex has been part of their self-concept (Chesney-Lind & Rodriguez, 1983; James & Meyerding, 1977; Silbert & Pines, 1981). Halland (2010) used qualitative measures to discover causes or

motivations for entering into sex work. Her study suggests that over half of her sample had some form of sexual abuse in their childhoods. She stated that the childhood trauma played a role in their choice of work. Similarly, she contends that sex workers experienced some form of parental attachment difficulties, molestation, poverty, truancy, and less education opportunities whilst in childhood and adolescence. Childhood neglect may have taken the form of negligence on the part of the caregiver, where the participant did not receive adequate or appropriate care and was not provided with the necessary technical or educational skills to find work.

Teke (2016) conducted a study on female sex workers in Durban, South Africa. The study used three life history interviews to explore the experiences of sex workers in South Africa. She found that participants had experienced sexual violence while they were still young. Women reported that they had been raped during childhood, with some having experienced several sexual assaults while they were children and adolescents. The study also found that sex workers experienced early pregnancy, with women having reported that they fell pregnant during their teenage years (Teke, 2016). It was also found that most women reported that they got married during their teenage years (Teke, 2016). Some participants reported that they experienced loss of parents during their childhood, and therefore it reinforced the experiences they had during a later stage (Teke, 2016). It was also found that sex workers had experienced living in poverty from an early stage (childhood), therefore, some of them had to drop out of school (Teke, 2016). However, it is important to note that not all sex workers had such childhood experiences; with one of the participants from Teke (2016) having reported that she had did not have difficult experiences during her childhood. Therefore, even though most sex workers do experience certain childhood experiences, not all experiences are the same.

Furthermore, Gysels (2002) conducted a study on life histories of women who engage with sex work so as to explore the experiences of sex workers. From the life stories women told, it was found that like Teke's (2016) study, women had experienced sexual violence during their childhood (Gysels, 2002). The study explored the life stories of three sex workers, and two of them reported that they were raped during their early teenage life. Another pattern that was found from the study was that all the women who participated in the study got married while they were teenagers (Gysels, 2002). The study also found that they fell pregnant while they were still very young (age 14, 15 and 17). And like Teke (2016), Geysels (2002) found that all the women interviewed in the study experienced early marriages, and several (often more than

two) failed marriages. One out of the three participants also reported that she lost her parents during her childhood, and therefore had to live in poverty (Geysels, 2002).

Pretorius and Bricker (2001) also conducted a study on the experiences of sex workers. The study explored the life stories of five women. One of the themes that was found from the study was that participants had experienced pervasive abuse and neglect during childhood (Pretorius & Bricker, 2011). The study found that participants experienced emotional abuse during childhood. In addition, they reported that they did not receive love and support from their parents (Pretorius & Brivker, 2011). Most participants reported that they were neglected by their parents (mostly mothers) while growing up (Pretorius & Bricker, 2011). It was found that participants had experienced sexual abuse during childhood; they reported that that had been raped while still young. Some of participants reported that they had also been physically abused by their parents (Pretorius & Bricker, 2011). The studies discussed above show that there are certain common experiences that sex workers experience during their childhood. Most sex workers appear to have experienced sexual violence, poverty, emotional and physical abuse, early marriages, and pregnancy during an early age. However, it is important to note that not all sex workers have these experiences. Many of the studies reviewed here tended to have fairly small samples that were not meant to generalise the experiences of sex workers.

Much of the research on child sexual abuse and sex work has been conducted with primarily street-based adult and adolescent female sex workers. Some of these studies (Bagley & Young, 1987; Silbert & Pines, 1983) have reported a prevalence of child sexual abuse that is often two to three times higher than estimated rates in the general population. These rates range between 20% and 40% for females depending on the study (Bolen & Scannapieco, 1999; Vogeltanz et al., 1999). Furthermore, many studies (Foti, 1995; Potter et al., 1999; Simmons, 2000; Widom & Kuhns, 1996) that have incorporated a comparison group have found that child sexual abuse significantly distinguished sex workers from their non-sex worker counterparts. Conversely, some researchers (Nadon, Koverola, & Schludermann, 1998; Potterat, Phillips, Rothernberg, & Darrow, 1985) have found that child sexual abuse is not prevalent in their samples of sex workers. Bagley and Young (1987) conducted a study of 45 female ex-sex workers and 36 non-sex workers controls from a community sample. In comparison to 28% of the control group, 73% of the ex-sex workers reported being sexually victimized as children. Furthermore, more than half of the ex-sex workers indicated that the sexual abuse heavily influenced their decision to enter into sex work. In terms of their sexual history prior to entering into sex work, the ex-sex workers engaged in consensual sexual activity at a young age (46.7% began having

intercourse between the ages of 14 and 15), nearly one-third had 20 or more sexual partners, and more than half had begun sex work before the age of 16.

Although the prevalence of child sexual abuse was a distinguishing factor, in Bagley and Young's (1987) study, ex-sex workers differed from control participants along other dimensions as well. The ex-sex worker group was also comprised of more ethnic minorities, was less educated, grew up in larger families, and was more likely to come from inner cities. Similarly, Silbert and Pines (1983) reported a 60% prevalence rate of child sexual abuse among their sample of 200 current and former female adult and adolescent street sex workers. Moreover, 70% of the respondents reported that the sexual victimization influenced their decision to enter into prostitution. However, the authors of this study and the Bagley and Young (1987) study did not elaborate on how the abuse specifically influenced this decision. It must also be taken into consideration that this is a fairly old study, where class dimensions; inequality and race-based discrimination are not drawn out in the analysis.

Potter, Martin, and Romans (1999) compared 29 female sex workers to 680 non-sex worker controls on demographics and the prevalence of child sexual abuse. The control group was chosen from an ongoing study on child sexual abuse among a community sample of women. Findings indicate that the sex worker group was significantly more likely than the control group to have experienced penetrative sexual abuse in childhood. The sex workers also differed from controls in that they had completed less education, came from lower SES backgrounds, were more likely to have left home at an early age, and were more likely to have been pregnant before their 19th birthday.

In another study, Foti (1995) examined the link between child sexual abuse and sex work among a sample of 1,240 female detainees in a jail setting. Results indicated that the detainees who had been sexually victimized in childhood engaged in sex work more than twice as often as non-abused detainees did. A similar study conducted by Simmons (2000) on 122 women who were either living in halfway houses or were incarcerated also examined the relationship between child sexual abuse and involvement in sex work. Findings from the study indicated that women who had been involved in sex work were significantly more likely to have been sexually abused in childhood than women who had never engaged in sex work. As mentioned, a couple of studies resulted in contrasting findings to the above-described studies. For example,

Nadon et al. (1998) compared adolescent sex workers to non-sex worker youth across several different variables, including the prevalence of child sexual abuse.

The relevance and contribution of the Nadon et al. (1998) study in particular, is its inclusion of a control group that is demographically similar to the target group. The total sample was comprised of 45 female sex workers and 37 female control participants who were recruited from the same geographic locations. Results indicated no significant differences in the prevalence of child sexual abuse between the two groups. Similarly, a study conducted by Potterat and colleagues (1985) compared a sample of 14 female sex workers to 15 female controls on various characteristics and life experiences. All had been previously infected or were presently infected with gonorrhoea. The objective of the study was to examine how the groups differed and how these differences would impact the way in which sex workers were approached in the future about preventing the spread of STIs. Out of the 14 sex work, only one had been sexually abused in childhood, and in the control group 2 of the 15 participants reported the same. There were, however, some noteworthy differences in this study in comparison to other sex work studies. Not only was the sample size much smaller in this study than in others, but almost all of the participants were white (i.e., 13/14 sex workers and 13/15 controls), whereas most of the samples employed in sex work studies tend to be more ethnically diverse or predominantly comprised of minorities. Also, the overall finding in this study was that sex workers and non-sex workers were more similar than different.

Although much can be learned about the relationship between child sexual abuse and sex work from the studies described in this review, several limitations and methodological shortcomings should be noted when considering their findings. What these studies collectively suggest is that although sexual abuse is common among female sex workers, it is not evident that these individuals have chosen prostitution as a result of being sexualized at a young age. Rather, this research seems to suggest that these individuals are attempting to flee from chaotic family circumstances and are utilizing sex work for financial livelihood.

In addition to childhood neglect, childhood abuse took the form of physical and/or sexual violation of the individual's body and basic human rights. Childhood neglect and abuse was seen to be significant in the individual's decision to enter sex work when technical/educational inexperience (the result of childhood neglect/abuse) was mentioned as an important reason for why individuals had chosen to enter sex work (Halland, 2010). It was also discovered that

leaving home without informing anyone was more indicative as a precursor to a women's entry into the industry than was sexual abuse. However, this may be the case for some sex workers. It is important not to assume that all sex workers have experienced turbulent childhoods and may have entered the industry for several other reasons such as a need for income, lack of other opportunities, a desire for independence or an expression of sexuality. Underlying these seemingly individual reasons, is patriarchy and its relationship to socio-economic marginalisation. Importantly, given the high rate of sexual assault in South Africa (Teke, 2016), if there was a strong correlation between sexual violation and sex work, there would be many more sex workers than there are currently are.

Stigma and Lack of Agency

Sociologist Erving Goffman (1963) defined stigma as a social attribute or mark that separates people from others based on socially given judgments. Stigmas are deeply discrediting and reduce the bearer from a complete and accepted person to a tainted and discounted one. Stigmas have been shown to have a negative impact on self-concept and identity formation, resulting in degrees of social exclusion that range from difficulty to engage in 'normal' social interactions because of secrecy or shame to complete discrediting or exclusion by others (Link & Phelan, 2006). Stigmatized people are also subjected to a range of penalizing actions, from shunning and avoidance to restraint, physical abuse, and assault. The consequences of stigmatization are far-reaching. It is negatively associated with quality-of-life measures, such as social isolation, employment, and income (Link & Phelan, 2001); is linked to an array of physical and mental health problems (Green, Davis, Karshmer, Marsh, & Straight, 2005), as well as a reluctance to use health services (Link & Phelan, 2001). As Hatzenbuehler, Phelan, and Link (2013) note, "The accumulated literature makes a compelling case that stigma represents an added burden that affects people above and beyond any impairments or deficits they may have" (p. 814). Stigmas sometimes have totalizing properties, so that any sign of stigmatized attributes or behaviours renders such persons wholly damaged and becomes their "master status," eclipsing all other characteristics to organize interpersonal interactions (Goffman, 1963). Link and Phelan (2014) used the term stigma power to describe the resources others draw on to keep the stigmatized down, in, or away. The authors noted that "stigma is entirely dependent on social, economic, and political power—it takes power to stigmatise" (Link & Phelan, 2001, p. 375).

The concept of stigma power shifts conventional understandings of stigma as an individual psychological process toward a more complex conceptualization of stigma as a set of internal and external social processes, affecting "multiple domains of people's lives" (Link & Phelan, 2001, p. 363). Recognizing stigmas beyond the personal level—in other words, as a "personal tragedy" or form of individual "deviance"—allows for exposure of the powerful structural mechanisms of social control underlying cultural norms of shame and blame and is vital to understanding how they play out in the daily lives of those who are stigmatized (Scambler, 2009). Such knowledge is crucial to the development of evidence-based destigmatization policies and programs at meso, macro, and micro levels (Scambler, 2009). Stigmatization processes also impact the social interactions between those who are stigmatized in sex work jobs and other social actors they come in contact with—a process known as "courtesy stigma" or "stigma by association," involving public disapproval evoked as a consequence of mingling with a stigmatized individual or group (Scambler, 2009). This ranges from actors in social institutions such as protective and health care services to intimate partners, friends, and family (Green, 2003).

In sum, this nuance highlights the varied experience of stigma and consequential stigma management strategies within the gender diverse sex worker population. Sex workers often accept the disparaging discourses about them and apply negative beliefs to themselves and their work (Green, 2003). This sets up a situation of "stereotype threat" found in studies of racial minorities (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2013) and people with mental illness which involves a self-confirming belief that they will conform to societally assigned stereotypes about their group. Undignified assumptions about people involved in sex work jobs come to appear as justified and adopted as being true representations of the self (Scambler, 2009). Sex workers also come to believe that the violence and discrimination they experience is deserved and "comes with the territory" (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2013).

Stigma and stereotype threat create formidable barriers to accessing appropriate and comprehensive services from police and health care providers, or may lead to accepting poor treatment when accessing these types of services. Internalization of stigma is also linked to lower self-esteem and to feelings of disempowerment (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2013). The few existing studies that compare sex workers to workers in other low-prestige occupations indicate that perceived stigma is significantly more pronounced among those who work in the sex industry. These studies indicate comparatively higher positive associations between depression and sex work, as well as between discrimination and depression (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2013),

and demonstrate that courtesy stigma experienced by those who provide outreach services to sex workers is a major social determinant of workplace health.

This cyclical nature of stigmatization also plays a role in fostering an environment where disrespect, devaluation, and even violence are acceptable responses to those who are stigmatized (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2013). It is these types of narratives that are often drawn upon when forming policy, thus entrenching them in public discourse and knowledge. As a result, sex workers often face inappropriate, ineffective, or outright harmful policy choices based on stigmatizing notions that negatively impact their working conditions, experiences, and well-being (Scambler, 2009). While we know a fair amount about the negative outcomes of sex work stigma for sex workers and their families and others in their social networks, we know much less about its sources. We next turn to this issue by reviewing studies focused on contemporary sources of sex work stigma.

The concept of stigma is connected to what society deems socially acceptable. For sex workers stigma is a mark of disgrace, a social discrediting, or a spoiled identity. Stigma is socially isolating. It reduces the options for sex workers to turn to for support and is recognised as a critical barrier to accessing health care, human rights, and justice (Tomura, 2009). The negative stigma attached to sex workers is extraordinarily high because a large portion of society views sex workers as immoral and unprincipled (Vanwesenbeeck, 2013). A considerable amount of sex workers consider themselves as entrepreneurs or as people that are simply making a living. A number of these would describe their work as emancipatory in some way, however, there are some sex workers residing in South Africa who reportedly considered their work as "rape for money" (Caulfield, 2000). This standpoint indicates that the occupation could be seen as disempowering (Leggett, 2001). A study that was done comparing sex workers across five different countries concluded that 75 percent of their sample population have been raped by their customers (Farely, Baral, Kiremire & Sezgin, 1998). This is indicative of the vulnerability and compromised agency of sex workers. In addition, this can be correlated to the exceptionally high rate of gender-based violence in South Africa (Moffett, 2006).

Ideally, sex workers should have complete agency over all decisions affecting their bodies. They are however, often requested to engage in unprotected intercourse by their clients (Stadler & Delany, 2006) and are often pressurised into performing sexual acts that they are not necessarily comfortable with (Gould & Fick, 2008). The repercussions of a worker denying a client's demands can be as innocent as the client accepting the sex workers limits, or as

detrimental as for the client to take their business elsewhere or even resort to violence towards the sex worker (El-Bassel, Witte, Wada, Gilbert, & Wallace, 2001)

According to Phrasisombath, Faxelid, Sychareun & Thomsen (2012), the shame and stigma attached to the sex work industry in Africa causes many to hide their profession from their families and friends. In some cases, when the truth is revealed, the sex workers often face rejection from loved ones. Sex workers are faced with the fear of involving themselves in romantic relationships as past experiences have shown that non-paying partners may view them as damaged goods (El-Bassel, Witte, Wada, Gilbert & Wallace, 2001).

Gender stereotypes along with expectations are some of the key factors that maintain the negative stigma attached to women sex workers. The patriarchal social construct expects women to be sexually submissive and virtuous (Gqola, 2015). However, sex work goes against the above beliefs (Hook, Mkhize, Kiguwa, Collins, Burman, & Parker, 2004). The drive to take initiative and provide for their families can be seen as liberating to the sex workers. However, these things can be seen as inconsequential when viewed against the construction of what society deems acceptable (El-Bassel, Witte, Wada, Gilbert & Wallace, 2001).

Sex Work as Agency

In order to provide background and context for the discussions on women sex-workers and agency, I begin by offering a view of agency which I define here, in keeping with Abercrombie et al.'s (1994) definition, as the capacity to act independently, despite social constraints. Notions of "agency" and individual "choice" were a key focus of sociological debate during the early and mid-1990s. Giddens (1992), Beck (1992) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) proclaimed the rise of a new individualism (or what Swan (2010) terms the project of the self) in which people were seen to have new freedoms, or "agency" to make work-life changes in terms of personal relationships and careers (Gatrell, 2005). Giddens, in particular, argues that social structure and human agency are interdependent. In his view, individuals can interpret the meanings of social rules in different ways and may take purposeful steps to transform or re-make the "rules" (Giddens, 1979). In *The Transformation of Intimacy,* Giddens (1992) reflects on a changing society in which traditional ideas about marriage or co-habitation as "permanent" arrangements have undergone a transformation, whereby personal work-life satisfaction is seen as an entitlement. Giddens observes how late modern individuals have agency to move on from

unsatisfactory relationships, transforming their lives with new life partners and, by implication, job changes.

In relation to family practices and paid work, feminist sociologists have begun to challenge the notion of "agency" as a neutral concept, equally available to all in society. Scott (1999), for example, has critiqued the concept of agency, and supposed choices, with regard to family practices and paid work. Scott (1999, p. 86) suggests that men are the main beneficiaries of the supposedly "new individualism" which allows people to actively construct their lives. This study builds on Scott's observation, contending that the concept of "agency" is gendered. This is because women's labour market situation is often hard to disentangle from their personal relationships (Gatrell, 2005) and women's choices are thus limited in comparison to those open to men. Below, for example, the research shows how the experience of being a mother limits women's options in relation to paid work and personal relationships because mothers are generally required to prioritize children's needs above their own. They tend to seek paid work which accommodates childcare and often remain in unsatisfactory relationships if this appears beneficial for children.

Looking at discourses concerned with constraint as antecedents of choice in entering into the sex work industry, most conclude that it goes against constraint discourses of motivation of entering the industry as it serves as an empowering act and a form of agency. Economic empowerment continues to show up as the main reason why people enter into sex work (Gysels et al., 2002; Maher, 1997; Pyett &Warr, 1999; Stadler & Delany, 2006). Mackay (1997) argued that entering into this industry it is not always consistent with poverty. The above mentioned duality is justified by the idea of middle-class women that are provided by some form of acceptance and fulfilment. It is also said that some middle-class women are attempting to make a statement by proving that they hold agency over their lives (Lucas, 2005). It can be explained by choice feminism, where women are asserting themselves by making a political statement in a patriarchal society where cultural roles are often dictated (Gysels et al., 2002; Lucas, 2005). When considering these studies one must always take into consideration the contexts they have been located in.

Lucas (2005) studied the various motivations and experiences of 30 indoor sex workers with a focus on their beliefs and experiences of sex work in North America. Sex workers fell into three major categories according to Lucas. She identified that there was a group of sex workers who viewed their work as a way of gaining bare necessities like food and shelter, a group that

was dedicated to their work and enjoyed it, and finally a group who saw their industry as a successful and bustling industry where investments can be made. She also discovered that many sex workers stated that they felt more in control of their bodies whilst being involved in sex work as opposed to other jobs traditionally associated with women. They were less likely to fall victim to sexual harassment than if they worked in other industries. They could set boundaries and clear rules regarding what they deemed acceptable and what they did not. Sex work allowed them the freedom of being in control and a form of agency that they did not encounter in other parts of their life. Other women, who were involved in abusive relationships in the past, reported that being in the industry gave them a sense of freedom and power that they had never felt before. The act of receiving money from men gave them a sense of agency after each sexual act and restored a sense of authority over their bodies which they had lacked in their previous abusive relationships.

The notion of women sex-workers as agents credits sex-workers with making measured and logical (if sometimes constrained) choices to commodify their bodies through entering and/or remaining in the sex trade. The woman "sex-worker as agent" may be seen as demonstrating a reasoned determination not to accept the limited alternatives offered within the formal or "legitimate" labour market (often low paid, exploitative jobs). In other words, she "chooses" sex-work as a means of earning a living in preference to other, less attractive, forms of employment. Supporters of the "sex-worker as agent" argument resist classifying sex-work as "prostitution". This is because the labelling of women sex-workers as "prostitutes" locates them as both criminals and victims, and divides them from workers in formal labour markets. The criminalization of "prostitution" facilitates the social exclusion of women sex-workers from social and legal entitlements which are available to other citizens (Sanders, 2005b; Jeffrey and MacDonald, 2006). If "prostitution" were to be re-positioned as a form of paid work "chosen" by rational, agentic "sex-workers", in preference to other options within formal labour markets, governments might find it harder to criminalize sex-workers. Supporters of the sex-workers-as-agents stance thus "overwhelmingly view sex-work as a job" and assert that sex-work is: "social and political resistance [on the part of sex-workers] to being constructed as 'cheap labour'" (Jeffrey and MacDonald, 2006, p. 314).

Some scholars advance the idea of sex-worker as agent by arguing that sex work may be regarded positively as an expression of personal freedom. This description has echoes of the notion of "agency" as described by Giddens (1992). Brewis and Linstead (2000), for example,

write about sex work in affirmative terms, suggesting that in certain situations, women sex-workers may be offered sexual and financial release from the constraints of conventional monogamous relationships and employment. Brewis and Linstead (2000) ascribe to sex work the same status as any other job within the formal labour market. They show how sex workers may be adept at managing emotional boundaries, separating their personal lives from their identities as sex workers. Brewis and Linstead regard sexuality and power as closely intertwined. Sex workers may set the financial agenda and, in emotionally disengaging themselves from clients, may be seen to be invested with a share of client/sex worker power.

In terms of improving the prospects for sex workers to be treated on an equal basis with workers in the formal labour market, there are potential benefits to the notion of regarding, and treating, sex workers as "agents". For example, a sex worker who believes herself to be agentic may be in a better position to access social and health services than if she is treated as a powerless victim. Sex workers have demonstrated agentic qualities by joining forces to protect themselves as a community (Hubbard, 2004; Sanders, 2005); establishing and maintaining rules about how clients may access their bodies (Sanders, 2005) and, according to Ditmore (2007), assisting the escape of women "trafficked" unwillingly into the sex industry. Such notions of sex-workers as agentic and capable are seen as crucial in shifting the conventional understanding of sex-workers as criminals and victims (Jeffrey and MacDonald, 2006).

Pro-sex work Human Rights Discourse

One of the most important features of the argument in favour of sex-work is renaming or conceptualising sex work as a form of labour. The term 'sex work' has been coined by sex workers themselves to frame sex work as an income-generating form of employment for women, and not simply a social class of women. It is also believed that not viewing sex work as a form of labour, gives way to exploitation of sex workers by their clients and the government. If sex work is seen as labour rather than as an illegal activity, the law would be obliged to protect sex workers as they do for other employees. Bell (2009) argues that all human beings have control over their bodies and that society's belief of what is moral or immoral should not be imposed on sex workers who have joined the industry for reasons such as earning an income, expressing their sexuality or exploring their sexual desires.

Pro-sex work debates advocate for the decriminalisation of sex work as they believe it would pave the way for regulations to be put in place where these sex workers would have the same rights as other workers. This would then prevent forced sex work and trafficking. Moreover, this would lead to the voluntary use of one's body, where he or she has control and agency in their lives and in the industry. Research has shown that decriminalisation is the best way to decrease violence against sex workers, help them obtain labour rights and reduce HIV transmission (Mossmann, 2008).

Many would argue that sex work is entrenched in a patriarchal societal order, where men have control over women's bodies (Kheler, 2001). This statement is problematic as one can argue that these women have control over which clients they choose to see and furthermore, are still being remunerated for their time and work. This also assumes that sex workers are always 'available' to men, when in actual fact, these sex workers give consent to their sexual acts, and have a choice in who they refuse.

To conclude, it is presumptuous to allude that sex workers partake in this industry due to oppression, childhood sexual abuse or lack of opportunities, which further assumes that all sex workers lack autonomy in their lives and bodies. It cannot be ignored that some women freely choose to become sex workers not because of oppression, but because of their love for sex and desire for power. Furthermore, sex work allows women a sense of independence, free from relying on a partner or spouse for income. Society coerces women to hide their sexuality and be ashamed of it, whereas sex work allows for women to express their sexuality freely. Liberal feminists do not consider sex workers to be victims of any sort. Instead, they consider sex workers actions to be liberating and providing them with a sense of control (Weitzer, 2012). Furthermore, it is also imperative to keep in mind the discourses against sex work and being aware that sex workers are often victims of the system as well as, independent beings. These dualities in society must always be accounted for when carrying out a study of this nature.

Macro Level:

Violence

According to Colman (2009, pg. 723), abuse is defined as "any form of physical or mental exploitation or cruelty towards a person and causing significant harm to that person normally

referred to as a victim". During 2002 it was announced that South Africa is facing a serious problem with gender based violence. Each year subsequent to this statement has seen the levels of violence towards women increase (Gqola, 2015). According to Rountree (2012), females that are born South Africa hold a higher possibility of encountering rape than attaining the opportunity to learn how to read and write. Rape statistics have shown that the prevalence of rape is almost four times higher than it was almost ten years ago, and this is as a result of the culture of rape that exists within the country. A wide range of women have lost their lives to gang rape, from 17 year old Anene Booysen who endured a gang rape to 82 year old elderly women living in South Africa (Munusamy, 2013). Street-based sex workers are at a higher risk of encountering a rape than those that work in the confinements of a brothel (Gould & Fick, 2008).

Studies on sex work have shown that sex workers experience violence from the police, the clients, pimps, brothel owners and people around where they work. Gould and Fick (2009) conducted a study on sex workers in Cape Town. The study aimed to understand the broad experiences of women who sell sex in Cape Town. It was found from the study that sex workers experience violence from police. Gould and Fick's (2008) study revealed that 47% of street sex workers have been threatened by the police, 12% have been raped, 19% have slept with the police as an exchange of arrest, and 63% have been sworn at by the police (Gould & Fick, 2008). Most of the women interviewed in the study reported that they have experienced sexual and physical abuse from police (Gould & Fick, 2008). Participants also reported that police sometimes financially abuse them by taking their money instead of arresting them; this shows that sex workers experience several kinds of violence from police. Gould and Fick's (2008) study also found that sex workers experiences violence from their clients.

Gould and Fick's (2008) study found that 37% of sex workers reported that they have been abused by clients, 72% have had clients refuse to pay, and 34% have been raped. Some sex workers reported that they have also had clients forcing them to pay back their money. Sex workers from the study also reported that they have been threatened by clients; with one sex worker having mentioned that she was once stabbed by a client (Gould & Fick, 2008). Brothel-based sex workers also experience violence from brothel-owners and most sex workers reported that some owners threatened to expose them when they wanted to leave the industry.

A recent study showed that as many as one third of the sex workers interviewed reported having been raped within the six months prior to the research (RHRU, 2002, cited in Richter, 2008b). This is a serious aggravating factor in sexual and reproductive health (SRH) complications (Blue, 2001). Childhood abuse, forced first intercourse and adult sexual assault by non-partners are all correlated to an increase in risky sexual behaviour and entry into the profession (Dunkle et al, 2004; Baral et al, 2009). Exposure to high levels of crime and violence increase levels of stress and mood disorders in people, while leaving a low sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1996; Campbell, 2000; Wojcicki & Malala, 2001). The resultant psychosocial factors serve to hinder access to sexual and reproductive healthcare (SRHC) through increased levels of depression, psychological distress, low self-efficacy and self-esteem (Wojcicki & Malala, 2001; Rekart, 2005). Whether directly or indirectly, violence is a breach of human-rights and can prevent access to healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health-care.

Male violence against female sex workers is a common occurrence. Both physical and sexual violence is frequently perpetrated by clients, law-enforcement or establishment owners and controllers. This is compounded by the generally higher crime rates in the communities in which sex work is undertaken (Leggett, 1999; Campbell, 2000; Wojcicki & Malala, 2001; Karandikar & Prospero, 2010; UNAIDS, 2009b). While violence can occur both during and after termination of sex worker services (Campbell, 2000; Wojcicki & Malala, 2001; Stadler & Delaney, 2006), it occurs predominantly at the hands of partners (Stadler & Delaney, 2006). It can be triggered by a number of factors and typically takes the form of robbery, rape, beatings and sometimes murder (Campbell, 2000; Wojcicki & Malala, 2001; Stadler & Delaney, 2006).

The location for soliciting sex is considered an important determinant of violence. Some studies have found that outdoor sex workers are more prone to high levels of physical violence, while indoor sex workers experience less frequent but more severe incidents of violence (Stadler & Delaney, 2006; Karandikar & Prospero, 2010). Street-based sex workers face an increased level of police and community harassment, leading them to work in poorly lit areas, thereby increasing their vulnerability to violence (Leggett, 1999).

Such experiences of violence are indicative of the needs of the sex worker population, who frequently require post-exposure care. The frequent victimisation, intensely negative focus upon this population and resultant discrimination in both legislative frameworks and healthcare initiatives alienates and displaces sex workers from much-needed SRHC. The inability of sex

workers to access basic services during times of immense need, such as after a rape, further estranges this population from basic human rights. This intense disconnection is then indiscriminately applied to all aspects of sex worker access, reinforcing their misalignment to a human rights-based framework. This report positions the need for broader SRHC for sex workers as paramount to their overall wellbeing and to the uptake of specialised services through repositioning the women as deserving of the full range of human rights.

Drug Abuse and Condom Usage

Here, I engage the issues of drug and condom usage, and particularly how this affects street-based sex workers. There are studies that show a strong relationship between sex workers and the usage of substances. An example of this is Maher's (1997) qualitative study looking at the experiences of street-based sex workers. This study argued there are two reasons as to why sex workers use drugs. The first is that they enter into the sex work industry to pay for their drug habit and secondly, they use drugs to help cope with the conditions of their work (Maher, 1997). Further research (e.g. Leggett, 2001) has challenged the hypothesis that substance usage is linked to sex work by showing that white sex workers, working in urban areas with a larger clientele pool were more likely use drugs, than poorer black women sex workers, located in rural areas. He also reported that wealthier Indian and Coloured sex workers, working in the city were more likely to use drugs than those residing in poorer areas. This confirmed how imperative of the intersections of geographical location, class and 'race' are in predicting the connection that drug use has with sex work. In a study conducted by Williamson and Folaron (2003), the authors concluded that in order to cope with the stressful existence, that is life in the sex trade, many employ protective strategies to meet the demands of their environment. These include ritualistic behaviour, intuitive assessment of the customer, carrying a small weapon while working, and dissociation. Additionally, this study found that women increase recreational drug use to the point of addiction after entry into sex work. Women involved in the sex trade use drugs and alcohol to deal with the overwhelming emotions of their daily lives. Similarly, an emotional response like dissociation may protect the women as they use it as a defence to painful feelings Williamson and Folaron (2003).

Women across Southern Africa are frequently found to be relatively powerless to negotiate safer sexual practices. Their low socioeconomic status and resultant dependence upon men

contribute to this dilemma (Wojcicki & Malala, 2001). Amongst a sex worker population in Carletonville, only 10 percent of sexual encounters involved condom usage. According to Campbell (2000), the focus on the act of sex during client-sex worker interactions offers little opportunity for such negotiations.

Condoms are often regarded as unnecessary in stable relationships or once trust is established between a sex worker and her partner or regular client. Clients are more frequently requested to use condoms, and higher prices are demanded for unprotected sex. However, this does not always translate into safer sex, with reports of men puncturing holes in condoms to ensure a fluid exchange being common (Stadler & Delaney, 2006). Traditional power differentials ensure that whether through violence or the withdrawing of funds, the client dictates the outcome (Campbell, 2000). In the context of South Africa's patriarchal society, the lack of power to negotiate safer sexual practices places sex workers at increased risk of SRH complications from pregnancy to recurring sexually transmitted infections (STI's). This makes the need for a broad range of SRHC services critical in addressing not only their needs, but the gender inequalities pervasive in the country.

In addition, condom usage appears to be affected by the opportunity for financial gain, because, as indicted above, higher prices are demanded for unprotected sex. In a study conducted by the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Research Unit (2006), the use of male or female condoms by drug users and sex workers was found to be only 43% and 2% respectively. While such practices are both associated with risky sexual behaviour and increased violence, the dependence on a financial exchange acts to hinder condom usage. In countries where condom usage is being enforced in brothels, an 80% decline in STI incidents has been recorded (Stadler & Delaney, 2006). In such cases, it is industry regulation which enables safer sexual practices (Baral et al., 2009). Under the present legislative framework in South Africa, however, such regulatory structures do not exist and this, in combination with other factors such as violence, discrimination and low socioeconomic status, may hamper the uptake of condom usage. Evidence is required to identify and elaborate these potential causal pathways.

Wojcicki and Malala (2001) pose an alternate explanation for the lack of condom usage. They suggest that condom negotiation is an exertion of power on the part of the sex worker rather than an indication of complete helplessness. They argue that while condom negotiation accounts for the various inequalities and difficulties sex workers encounter, the sex workers'

sense of agency in ensuring a degree of economic sustainability is evoked. In the case of "unsafe sex", the outcome itself is a contributor to risk factors. STI transmission is a combination of both unprotected sex and one partner's being infected. The infection of one partner is as dependent on the population prevalence as on the risky behaviour itself and individual susceptibility (Johnson et al., 2007). If sex workers are unable to safely negotiate condom usage (Richter, 2008a), their risk is significantly increased. A clearer understanding of the role which condoms play in the accessing of SRHC in relation to the present approach to HIV/STI management may offer new and innovative ways in addressing specific, as well as broader, SRH concerns and access issues. Where condoms are central to preventing various SRH concerns, drug and alcohol can be a compounding factor (Rekart, 2005).

Socio-economic Status

Black women remain the poorest and most disadvantaged social group within South Africa (Wojcicki & Malala, 2001). For example, they are most affected by unemployment as 34.2% of this population are unemployed (StatsSA, 2019). This can be attributed to an ongoing history of patriarchy and racism, unequal access to education and employment, increasing numbers of female-headed households as well as financial insecurity. These factors result in gender inequalities remaining pervasive. In this context, sex has become a currency for survival and the majority of sex workers are women (Campbell, 2000; Wojcicki & Malala, 2001; Cwikel et al., 2008; Baral et al., 2009; UNAIDS, 2009b). Whilst education is a vital component of access to healthcare, gender inequality serves as a barrier to attaining both.

Sex workers have varying levels of education, appearing to range from no education at all to Grade 12 (Leggett, 1999; Campbell, 2000; Wojcicki & Malala, 2001). While there is a strong negative correlation between literacy levels and risk of disease, a positive correlation exists between literacy and the access to healthcare (Wojcicki & Malala, 2011). Thus, poorly educated women are at greater risk for health complications, and are also less likely to be able to access effective treatment.

In order to decrease stigma, discrimination and reduce poverty while also eliminating gender inequalities and reducing risky behaviours, sex worker education is vital (UNAIDS, 2009b; Kristof & Wudunn, 2010; Adamczyk & Greif, 2011). Therefore, when implementing any healthcare initiative, it is of the utmost importance to consider the role of education. The

complexity of how education interacts with other factors such as socio-economic disadvantage, necessitates attention. It is imperative that adequate and appropriate steps are taken to remedy the impact, a lack of education on effective access to health care.

Migrants and Sex Work

Migration for work is commonplace in the South, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (Englund 2002; Townsend 1997; van Blerk & Ansell 2006). In many rural contexts, young people frequently engage in migration for work purposes, which is synonymous with transitions to adulthood as young people take on responsibilities of providing for themselves and their families from as young as 13 or 14 years old (Punch 2002). However, the connection between rural-urban migration and access to employment is rather simplistic and requires greater contextualisation. Research has demonstrated the importance of context for understanding migration decisions. There have been calls for migration research to be socially and culturally informed (Findlay and Li 1999; Lawson 2000), particularly as the context of young people's migration varies widely across cultures and situations. In the South, young people often make their own migration decisions and may engage in migration alone (Camacho 1999; Lauby and Stark 1998; Silvey 2001).

Research has confirmed that children's migration is more often related to negative impacts on community and family life such as a lack of resources, war and the effects of the AIDS pandemic (Young 2004; van Blerk & Ansell, 2006). Given that poverty underlies many of these migration decisions, it is not surprising that this is one avenue through which young people enter the labour market. In addition, dissatisfaction with traditional rural ways of life through access to global youth cultures (Massey, 1998), and the impact of neoliberal and social reform policies on the ability to sustain rural livelihoods (Jeffery & McDowell 2004), has added to migration as one aspect of transition. The transitions from childhood to adulthood, encompassing employment and independent family life, are particularly problematic for those living in situations of poverty where limited access to education and resources results in reduced opportunities. In many instances this is accelerating the speed at which young people move rapidly into employment or out of the parental home (Ansell, 2004).

Therefore, the opportunities available to young people seeking to establish autonomy and provide support for their families can be extremely limited (Punch, 2002). This is particularly problematic for girls. For example, in South-East Asia, Camacho (1999) and Lauby and Stark (1998) both highlight that teenage girls migrate to cities seeking low-paid domestic or factory work. Despite the low wages earned, such migrations are considered to be successful transitions to adulthood, as young people are able to provide support to family members remaining in the rural areas.

However, Silvey (2001) demonstrates that this is a precarious balance as girls who sought employment in Indonesia's factories found themselves unemployed due to the critical impact of wider economic processes on the collapse of factory employment. This mainly resulted in rural-return migration and can be viewed as failed transitions. Some of Silvey's participants chose to engage in sex work rather than return to the village - which could also be considered a failed transition. However, in this research, I argue that instead of seeing sex work, and similar unconventional approaches to transition, as failure, they can demonstrate aspects of successful transition to adulthood despite their problematic, and sometimes exploitative nature.

The Context of Johannesburg

Although universal definitions of 'urban' and 'urbanization' continue to be disputed, "it is generally accepted that urbanization is the process of becoming urban, and it reflects aggregate population growth in cities, be it through natural population or migration" (Cohen, 2004. pg, 325). In other words, urbanization is the migration of high numbers of people into urban areas. This includes circular migration, rural-to-urban migration, and cross border migration by those seeking asylum and employment.. According to the World Health Organization, the global urban population will reach 60% by the year 2030 (World Health Organization in Mathers et. al, 2005). In developing countries as a whole, 40 percent of the population currently lives in urban areas (Cohen, 2004). The United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) statistics reveals that approximately 50 percent of refugees live in cities (UNHCR, 2009).

According to the 2011 South African Census, more than half of South Africa's population live and work in urban areas (StatsSA, 2011). Urban growth in South Africa is taking place at a faster rate than in any other African country. Almost 60 percent of the South African population

is already urban (Kok & Collinson, 2006). As population density in urban centres increases, so too does the demand to understand the intricacies and realities of those who live in these spaces. Gilbert (2002. pg, 4) asks the following question: "How can conditions improve for the growing millions of urban residents?" He continues with the observation that meeting the challenges posed by rapid urbanization will be as important to the future as addressing rapid population growth itself has been in the past half century. As urban growth increases, the need to support this growth via provision of education, employment, social services, health and housing are imperative to the well-being of a city, nation, and globe.

In order to understand what the needs of the people in a given space are, it is imperative to build a framework based on voices articulated by the people (Landau, 2009). Since the city itself is in a relatively new transition period, - apartheid to post-apartheid, the historical trajectories of the demographics of Johannesburg require us to examine the issue of space and identity/representation (Landau, 2009). During apartheid, black people were not allowed to live inside Johannesburg; hence, migration flows into the city were restricted without a pass/permit. However, since the end of apartheid, significant numbers of migrants (both internal and cross border) began to arrive in Johannesburg. Research has shown that despite the protective policies present in South Africa in relation to migrants, working-class international migrants are found to experience limited access to required social service assistance; i.e. health, economic, social and physical opportunities (Landau, 2009).

Identity and individual autonomy are often in disaccord with one another, especially in areas where high numbers of migrants are seen. Pressure from the local public to keep migrants out of South Africa, coupled with the demonizing attitudes towards these migrants by both national and local leaders, have left many to grapple with how to serve, fund and reduce continued animosity towards cross-border migrants (Landau, 2009). In Johannesburg, many migrants have been forced to remain labelled as 'outsiders', 'non South Africans', but they are also actively engaged in the idea of being as 'foreigner' as a means to distance themselves from the negative and unwanted qualities of what they perceive South Africans to represent (Landau, 2009). Several studies have revealed "invisibility" as a strategy used by many migrants worldwide as a security enhancement in hostile host communities. Similarly, there tends to be some discord between the migrant and local sex workers, however the opposite was found in this study. Social capital, specifically, in the sex trade becomes important in their daily lives,

where they are able to network and form supportive bonds in order to survive in this industry (Putman, 1995).

Research has shown that migrants living in inner-cities live in conditions significantly worse than those in their home countries (Campbell, 2006; Davies et. al, 2010; Dryden-Peterson, 2006; Grabska, 2006; Zetter et. al, 2010). Urban displacement is characterized by overcrowding, and lack of access to clean water and sanitation. Although migrants, both men and women, face similar challenges of security and safety, areas of vulnerability between the two differ significantly. Even though data helps to reveal some of the demographic realities of movement within the continent, migration scholars continue to point out the challenges inherit in accurate data collection in relation to migration. "Much of the migration on the continent occurs outside state-regulated frameworks, making migrants bureaucratically invisible and almost impossible to track or capture in data" (Kihato, 2007. pg, 35). Despite the possible flaws in data, recent data indicates that at least 10 percent of migration occurs in Africa and between its urban hubs (UNDESA, 2004).

Migration within Sub-Saharan Africa is not a new phenomenon. However, movement beyond Sub-Saharan Africa into South Africa is relatively new (Landau, 2005, 2006a, 2006b; Kihato, 2007, 2010a, 2010b; Vearey, 2010a, 2010b; Vearey et al. 2010). According to Landau, 6.2 percent of Johannesburg is home to international migrants (Balbo & Marconi, 2005, pg, 3 in Landau, 2009); Legget's survey (2003) found that almost 25 percent of residents in Johannesburg were foreign born (Legget in Landau, 2009b). Vearey et al. (2010) state, "data suggests that in certain inner-city neighbourhoods, over half of the residents are cross-border migrants" (p.14). Migration into Johannesburg, the "city of migrants" (Crush, 2005. pg, 113) can also be attributed to past and current political armed conflicts on the continent. Countries such as Angola, Somalia Sudan and Zimbabwe, among others, have produced migrants that come to South Africa seeking refuge from strife in their home countries. The increase of refugees is believed to have contributed to xenophobic violence and anti-foreigner sentiments (Landau, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Landau et. al, 2009a, 2009b; Vearey et al. 2010).

As a consequence of xenophobia and the desire for "invisibility" many urban migrants are highly mobile within the city. Their mobility has implications for how they identify with their space and home. Many migrants in Johannesburg do not consider the city their home regardless of how long they have lived in the city (Landau, 2009). According to Landau (2009), "As

Johannesburg's South African and non-national residents address their respective 'deficits of belonging', tensions have emerged between rooting and rootless idioms of membership, between those in the process of belonging (i.e., citizens) or becoming (foreigners)" (p. 202).

Migrant mobility, the desire to remain invisible, and tensions between migrants and local community push us to examine the implications this has had on migrants' relationship to their communities and their investment in the city. "In environments as unstable as Johannesburg's inner city - where neighbourhoods exchange their populations in months and years - observers must presume neither the forms of solidarity that exist within them or the forms of belonging desired by those who live there" (Landau, 2009). Migrant sex workers have settled in Johannesburg to earn some form of an income as Johannesburg represents a place where jobs are created. However, these sex workers still face the challenges mentioned about, creating deeper levels of their identity and having to bear the inequalities of these.

Conclusion

The division of intrapsychic and macro level factors, shed light into aspects that affect sex workers on an individualised basis and a community perspective which is influenced more by social factors and seeks to work against pathologizing theories of sex work. The intrapsychic factors are categorised by childhood trauma, stigma and lack of agency, sex work as agency and pro-sex work human rights discourse. The macro level factors are categorized by violence, drug abuse and condom usage, socio-economic status, migrants and ends off with placing sex work into the context of Johannesburg. These several categories affords one the opportunity to fully understand what sex workers are faced with daily and how this has played a part in them entering into this work. Although literature on sex workers in Johannesburg does exist (e.g. Wojcicki & Malala's (2001) study on commercial sex workers), a largely deficit approach is taken in studies regarding street-based sex workers. This study seeks to contribute to the existing literature of sex workers based in Johannesburg, by offering nuanced experiences of street-based sex workers through an Intersectionality and Afro-feminist lens.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

The theories adopted in this study are deliberately non-intrapsychic and favour a social understanding of people and their behaviour. The framework aligns to the values of community psychology that aspires towards enhancing social justice rather than blame victims of social inequality for their oppression.

Intersectionality

The current study utilized intersectionality as a theoretical framework. The theory of intersectionality was initially formulated by Kimberly Crenshaw as a way of explaining various social identities, explaining that they do not exist alone, but rather through multiple dimensions (Crenshaw, 1991). In South Africa, social identities must be understood in relation to apartheid as this has been the dominant lens through which identity formation occurred. In this context then, black women experience socio economic marginalisation through the prism of gender, race, class and factors such as national identity status, sexual orientation and disability status. Sex workers experience social marginalisation through race, gender, class and sexuality. Each category is distinct, yet they overlap and are constitutive of one another. This is to suggest that the class status of people cannot be understood apart from their gender position. In order to understand the oppression and discrimination sex workers face on a daily basis, one must consider the different categories of identities that they hold. For example, the class position of sex workers is a major explanation for why they are street based rather than operating from a middle class 'brothel' in the northern suburbs. White feminism did not consider black women and the vast range of experiences that they are faced with and thus, the theory of intersectionality was born. This theory considered the history of African American women in particular and spoke more directly to their experiences in the United States.

The theory has subsequently been applied to consider the experiences of women of colour in other parts of the world. For instance, a sex worker in inner-city Johannesburg may be discriminated against as she may be Black, female and a sex worker, not to mention she may also be an immigrant. Crenshaw (1991, pg. 1299) believed that "different vectors of

relationality produce different forms and functions of power; hence, intersectionality is vital for understanding the mobilization of power in the reproduction/production of masculinities".

Collins (1990) is interested in the opportunities and shortcomings associated with the combination of gender, race and class, which allows for an examination of differences among women or males exclusively, rather than between males and women. Collins (1990) refers to the possible intersections of social inequality as the "matrix of domination" and describes how people are socially positioned based on their differences from one another. This refers to how the differences among people, such as their race, class, age and gender, serve as additional oppressive processes. For instance, while street based sex workers may have many challenges in common, those from outside of South Africa may experience further harassment by the police.

The idea of the matrix of domination focuses on two designs. The first explains how any social structure has a particular association of intersecting systems of oppression. The second asserts that intersecting systems of oppression are specifically organized through four interrelated domains of power: structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal (Collins, 1998), these are ruling or dominant in a political or social context. Specifically, Collins (1998) explains intersectionality as an "analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization". These features help shape women's experiences and, in turn, are shaped by women. Collins (1998) is especially interested in the way intersectionality can reveal various types of lived experiences and social realities. Therefore, she believes that thinking about social phenomena through intersectionality can make new forms of inequalities and notions of power visible.

To extend this idea, Collins (1998) suggests that intersectionality "provides an interpretive framework for thinking through how intersections of race and class, or race and gender, or sexuality and class, for example, shape any group's experience across specific social contexts" (pg. 122). In relation to this, Collins (1998) notes the importance of developing an appropriate and specific analysis of each group with a view to speculate about the hierarchies of intersectionality, such that some types of oppression are not believed to be equivalent. More recently, Collins (2015) examines intersectionality as a knowledge project, whose purpose of existence lies in its "attentiveness to power relations and social inequalities" (pg. 124). In this, she finds herself concerned with three interdependent elements and attempts to define intersectionality through providing navigational and conceptual tools to provide context.

These elements are concerned with the fact that intersectionality is positioned within the power relations that it studies, while being used as an analytical strategy to outline new directions of social phenomena. In addition, intersectionality can also be viewed as a critical process that informs social justice projects. Collins (2015) states that academic work using intersectionality most often focuses on identities rather than on social inequities and social justice, which stems from critique of feminist scholarship through its failure to acknowledge multiple social contexts to appear as universal, but in truth only, reflect the thought of the academics in their explicit social context. In heeding Collins' caution, this study is particularly attuned to the place within which sex workers operate.

It is concluded that an intersectional framework seems to best suit the current study in order to fully understand sex workers and the multiple forms of vulnerability they face and to get a holistic picture of the challenges they face from a community perspective.

Afro-Feminist and Standpoint Theory

While there is a general consensus on the fact that there is no such thing as a feminist method of enquiry (Letherby 2003), and the existence of a feminist epistemology or methodology is debated, there is 'feminist research practice' that can be distinguished from traditional research (Letherby, 2003). This study is informed by an Afro-feminist epistemology that centres the experiences and realities of African women.

Any discussion of black feminist consciousness must begin with some sort of definition based on the literature derived from the ideas and experiences of black women. Having to bear the burdens of prejudice that challenge people of colour, in addition to the various forms of subjugation that hinder women, African women are disadvantaged doubly in the social, economic, global, and political systems of South Africa. Black women occupy the lower stratum of the social hierarchy, are predominately found in clerical and service jobs and are most likely to be single heads of households (Letherby, 2003). They constitute the highest number among the unemployed (StatsSA, 2017). Black women also lag behind other race-sex groups on practically every measure of socioeconomic well-being, income, employment, and education (Canham & Langa, 2017). As a result, they are subject to multiple burdens: joblessness and domestic violence, teenage pregnancy and illiteracy, poverty and malnutrition.

These define their cumulative experience in relation to race and gender oppression in the South Africa.

First, black feminist scholars have focused on the concept of intersectionality. It is the notion that "race, class, gender, and sexuality are co-dependent variables that cannot be separated or ranked in scholarship, political practice, or in lived experience", when classism and heterosexism constitute twin barriers linked with racism and sexism that uphold and sustain each other (Ransby, 2000, p. 389). For this reason, Ransby reminds us that African women "don't have the luxury of choosing to fight only one battle" because they contend with multiple burdens (Ransby, 2000). Similarly, Blue (2001) argues that the reality of layered experiences cannot be treated as separate or distinct parts. Collins (2000) saw the concern of black feminism as resisting oppression through empowerment, which entails understanding the intersection of racism and sexism. Black feminist thought insists "that both the changed consciousness of individuals and the social transformation of political and economic institutions constitute essential ingredients for social change" (Collins, 1991, p. 221). Black women face social practices within a historical context that represent a "unique matrix of domination characterized by intersecting oppressions" (Collins, 2000, p. 23). Second, black feminist scholars have addressed the issue of gender inequality within the black community (Collins, 2000; Harris, 1999; hooks, 1984). During the civil rights movement, black women were not recognized for their numerous political activities, such as behind the scenes organizing, mobilizing, and fundraising.

Furthermore, Standpoint feminism is a theory that feminist social science should be practiced from the standpoint of women or particular groups of women, as some scholars say that they are better equipped to understand some aspects of the world. In short, black feminism benefits the struggle for black liberation rather than divides members into factions because the fight against economic exploitation, gender subordination, racial discrimination, and heterosexism are intimately related to the pursuit of social justice (Ransby, 2000).

The contradiction inherent in Standpoint Theory is, has its basis in materialist thinking and the need to exclude normative producers of knowledge from the alternative production of knowledge. As hooks (1990, p. 33) argues, "The standpoint of women denies the Cartesian knower as constitutive of knowledge." In other words, the standpoint of women has to be constructed in opposition to the standpoint of knowers who deny that they are embodied

subjects. While this might make sense in the context of differences based on bodily experiences between men and women, the resulting boundaries between groups are problematic. Such boundaries are problematic because they inevitably exclude certain categories of women (based on race, class, and gender) and bodies that exist outside of the male-female binary. As Blue (2001) points out, agency becomes possible only when the category of women no longer signifies a fixed social location.

Movements of feminism address the misrepresentation or lack of representation of women in society (Blue, 2001). It provides a forum and legitimacy for the expression of women's voices (hooks, 1986). The aim is to adequately represent women and challenge that which subverts women's positions in society; politically, culturally and otherwise (Williams, 2001). bell hooks defines feminism as "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (hooks, 2000 as cited in Lamothe 2005, pg. 2267). Feminism sees the need for women to heal from the "psychological wounds" resulting from this subjugation (hooks, 1995). These conceptualisations also underpinned in this study.

Feminism is against the patriarchal subjugation of women, with the purpose of showing, through critical consciousness, that "patriarchy promotes pathological behaviour in both genders and our wounded psyches (have) to be attended to" (hooks, 1995, pg. 265). Blue (2001) further asserts that in order to achieve these goals it is imperative not only to represent women but also to critique how the very category of "women" and the produced "subject" or position of women is perpetuated. The subject-position of women is defined, legitimised and perpetuated through discourse transmitted through a society's language and politics. A critical stance is necessary to critique these mechanisms and this leads to the emancipation of women from them (Blue, 2001).

In the field of psychology, the voice of black women has been lost in white and patriarchal perspectives. Feminism in the past has not accounted for the varying forms of prejudice that divide women and thus, has not fully grappled with the experiences of black women (hooks, 1986). The movement failed to critique white privilege in its one-dimensional focus on patriarchy. On the other hand, Afro-centric paradigms have failed to sufficiently critique male privilege, and here the factor of gender oppression has been largely omitted (Blue, 2001). Masculinity continues to be privileged in the production of knowledge and specifically in academia. Moreover the African university has been described as a "deeply subversive symbol

of the colonial-era" that prizes a certain kind of masculinity (Blue, 2001, p. 8). The importance of evaluating how gender and race categories intersect was thus also raised as crucial for the liberation of black women (Blue, 2001). hooks (2000) argued that the direction of feminist thought was shifted by a paradigm interlocking gender, race category and class. The importance of evaluating how gender and race categories intersect is raised as crucial for the liberation of black women (Blue, 2001). Through black feminism, an activist perspective is brought to bear on research that seeks knowledge - organically from the black women themselves as experts of their experience, with consciousness in gaining understanding of this experience and empowerment being a driver for social change (Few, Stephens & Rouse-Arnett, 2003).

In identity inquisitions the understanding of the intersectionality of race, class, gender and other constructs is significant. Black women in particular have been silenced by a "triple oppression"; on the grounds of race, gender as well as class (Kiguwa, 2001; Mama, 1995). Shedding light on their experiences, therefore, served to challenge the forces of capitalism, racism and sexism in South Africa "so that a new social order can emerge" (hooks, 1986, p. 126). The experiences of black women in society at large have remained an unexplored area (Williams, 2001) particularly with regards to African and South African working class women. The dearth in literature was further evident in that much of the literature on the experience of black women was based on African-American women. The experience of African women, given the widely differing contexts and socio-historical factors, continues to need more attention (Mama, 1995) as this scarcity of knowledge of their experiences has further served to oppress the African woman.

The importance of research and theoretical models that incorporate the intersectionality of race, class and gender is significant for research into the experience of black women. This has been endorsed by many black feminists (e.g. Motsemme, 2003). Black women being of the "second sex" and the "last race" are at the bottom of the totem pole of society from each angle of social categorisation and thus, each aspect of their identity (Blue, 2001). It is in this matrix of multiple forms of oppression and subjugation that black women must find their senses of self. Within this, black women must negotiate the various "isms" faced, such as racism and sexism; being jeopardised for their race as well as their gender (Williams, 2001).

Black women have been subjected to racial as well as sexist subjugation and thus have experienced the discrimination and deprivation on both grounds. Furthermore, women are

generally not seen to independently occupy class positions, but rather that this is dependent on the structures, relations and men around them (Payne & Abbott, 1990). The intersection of these multiple forms of oppression adds a particular element to a black woman's identity. An acknowledgement of the diversity within gender in the movement of feminism and that within race categories in the anti-racist movement is foregrounded through illuminating the various forms of oppression within the subject-position of a black women in society. Transcendence beyond the bounds of this position in society, for example through the liberation in education, is thus a distinct process for women with significant implications for subjectivity.

In the stance of black feminism the dearth of literature on the experience of black women should be addressed in seeking emancipation from "triple oppression" (Kiguwa, 2001, Mama, 1995). Black women's experiences of racism, therefore, ought to be acknowledged along with their experiences of sexism and poverty. These constructs are intricately related and that ought to be examined in an inquisition into identity, rather than separating one from another (Blue, 2001).

Identification for black women is a particularly arduous process as the "prevailing discourses in society" to which their identification is connected (Hill & Thomas, 2000, p. 194), as well as the groups to which they belong, have elements of marginalisation and inferiority (Few, Stephens, Rouse-Arnett, 2003). Identity construction for black women subjectivity is thus inclusive of a process of a "struggle" as finding the self is within in a matrix of multiple positions of oppression and subjugation.

Oppression is an element that cannot not be addressed when looking into black identity and moreover, specifically when looking into black women's identity. For a black woman in particular, the position in society is significantly intricate because she is of the "bottom and the last" (Kiguwa, 2001; Mama, 1995). How she experiences the world as a woman, and how she experiences the world as black is both within the bounds of subjugation and subordination. It is cardinal for black identity research in general to acknowledge the lingering effects of oppression, even post liberation (Durrheim & Mtose, 2006). For one, as is the case in South Africa, we see that structurally racist practices continue institutionally despite democratic reform (King, 2001 & Asmal, 2003 as cited in Walker, 2005), and secondly because at the level of identity the oppressed sense of self persists trans-generationally (Durrheim & Mtose, 2006).

Conclusion

Feminist theory and intersectionality embarks on an understanding of the effects of class, race, as well as gender (King, 1988, as cited in Davis, 2008). Looking at these seats of identity enhances an appreciation of the vulnerability, marginalisation and subordination of black women with the advent of each of them. A move is required towards a view that the interaction of class, race and gender, in the "social and material realities of women's lives" produces particular power relations (Hill, 2000, p. 71) that cannot be ignored. "Black women, who are oppressed on all sides of those equations, are left without the luxury to ignore any one aspect of race, class, gender, or sexuality in favour for another" (Blue, 2001, p. 121). These street-based sex workers are faced with a harsh reality of having to bear the burden of multiple oppressed identities. Some of which have lead them into sex work. One cannot fully understand their lived realities without understanding their several identities and how they intersect with each other. Marginalisation through patriarchy, race, class and nationality, surround the lives of most of these participants.

Chapter 4

Methodology

In order to bring together a marginalised group and a normative society, a qualitative research design will be implemented through obtaining information that does not create a boundary or a form of moral distance between the researcher and the participants. Qualitative research is primarily exploratory. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses. Ontology and epistemology are both important elements of research and of knowledge production. If they often overlap, they have clear distinction: epistemology is about the way we know things when ontology is about what things are (Pathak, 2013).

Much of feminist theory is critical of the unequal power exchange that occurs between the researcher (deemed by theorists as the "expert" or "knower") and the participants (the "known") (Oakley, 1998, p. 710). This argument originates from the idea that, when a researcher attempts to study a particular population, they may experience discomfort in stepping into the participants realities and therefore, do not get to the crux of their stories in order to fully understand their realities (Elshtain, 1981; Reinharz, 1984). Elshtain (1981) argues that it is not possible to study people without getting into their shoes and working through their narratives with them. Research should enable the participant to direct their stories in whichever way they wish to, while at the same time seeking to maintain an equal relationship between researcher and participant. However, this is not to disregard quantitative research and make claims about its limitations. Instead, qualitative is just simply better suited to this study as it enables an engagement with exploratory questions and a thick exposition of sex workers experiences articulated through their own voices.

Sample

I began by contacting a sex worker advocacy group. I was however unsuccessful in this attempt as my correspondence received no response. Through a family business in the city centre, I was able to make contact with some street-based sex workers that worked nearby. I utilized the snowballing technique to obtain the sample. Snowball sampling is a nonprobability sampling technique where existing participants recruit or suggest future subjects from among their

acquaintances. Thus the sample group is said to grow like a rolling snowball (Heckathorn, 2002).

Since sex work is criminalised in South Africa, sex workers are loath to easy identification to non-clients. This made sourcing participants daunting and similarly challenging. Moreover, in keeping with their practise of charging for their time, some of the sex workers wanted to be remunerated for their time with me. I was not in the position to pay them for an interview and so the entire process of data collection took longer than I had expected, as I had to attempt to find sex workers that would speak to me without compensation.

The participants

The following table summarises the basic descriptive information pertaining to the participant's 'profile'. The table provides the reader with an overview of the people that were interviewed. It tabulates the participants interviewed, their ages, gender and length of time working in the sex work industry at the time of the interview. The table shows that the average age of participants was 30. The youngest participants were 24 years old and the eldest was 37 years old. The average amount of time that participants had worked as sex workers was 9.4 years. The longest period that some had worked was 14 years and the shortest period was 4 years. In order to protect the identities of individual participants, pseudonyms are used in the table below and throughout the report. This summary will assist to contextualize the extracts by interviewees.

Name	Age	Country of Origin	Years as a Sex Worker
Dudu	37	South Africa	14
Lebo	28	Lesotho	11
Lerato	24	South Africa	4
Lindiwe	33	South Africa	12
Neo	27	Zimbabwe	13
Nokuthula	34	South Africa	14
Patricia	33	South Africa	7
Sbongile	26	Zimbabwe	6
Thuli	30	Zimbabwe	4
Zihle	35	South Africa	9

Table 1: Demographic table of participants

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten women street-based sex workers. All participants identified as black. Four were African migrant sex workers from other countries in the continent and six South African sex workers. Interviews averaged 40 minutes in length and took place in a quiet corner of a fast food shop which is located in the city. Interviews were recorded using an audio recording device and transcribed by myself.

At the beginning of each interview I explained the nature of the research by reading through the participant information sheet and I explained the concept of informed with the aid of the consent form. The consent form (see Appendix A, B and C) assured the participant's anonymity, requested to record the interview and take additional notes if necessary, and explained that interviews would be transcribed and used in this research project. Each interview began with an open-ended question inviting participants to tell me about themselves. This served to elicit an open response from the participants thus allowing the interview to commence at the point at which they chose. From this initial response, I then asked additional questions in order to solicit explanations and further development of accounts that were given. Three questions, reflective of my three particular research interests, developed through the course of

the research and were phrased to the participants when I judged the questions appropriate to the context of what the participant was talking about, provided they had not addressed them already. These questions had no formal wording or structure. They however sought to elicit responses that might inform me of the context of their entry into sex work, their experiences of working as sex workers, and the meanings they had made of their experiences as sex workers. At the end of each interview I asked the participants to give me feedback about how they had felt in the interview and how they had felt speaking about their experiences. During this time I provided participants with any additional information they required about the study and provided them with the necessary information needed for contacting a counsellor if they so desired.

Data Analysis

In analysing the data, thematic analysis was utilized. Thematic analysis is used in qualitative research and focuses on examining themes that emerge from within data. This method emphasizes organization and rich description of the data set. Thematic analysis goes beyond simply counting phrases or words in a text and is interested in identifying implicit and explicit ideas within the data. Coding is the primary process for developing themes within the raw data. Coding occurs when the researcher recognizes important moments in the data and encoding it prior to full interpretation. Where there are many codes, it is useful to create categories of common codes. The categories then inform the building of themes on the premise that similar categories are clustered together to create a common theme (Saldana, 2009). In the steps prior to determining themes, the interpretation of codes can include comparing their frequencies, identifying theme co-occurrence, and graphically displaying relationships between different codes and categories towards building themes (Saldana, 2009).

In analysing the interview transcripts, I first traced a timeline of the sex workers experiences. This entailed recording the significant events that occurred before their entry and during their time working within the sex work industry. Significant dates and events were recorded and marked as significant when they came to impact the sex workers decision to enter, stay or leave sex work. I then identified the contextual issues surrounding their decision to enter sex work and the story of their first experience. Experiences were then traced, particularly those that were influential in maintaining their presence within the industry. Finally, I gleaned through

the transcripts and identified the meanings participants made of their experiences, including how their experiences were spoken about, interpreted, and reflected upon. A compilation of themes was then created from each transcript, identifying the main thematic material unique to each interview according to the overarching divisions of context, experiences and meaning. Significant sub themes within context, experiences and meaning, shared commonly across transcripts, were derived and explored. In determining the final themes, I settled on the thematic concerns that appeared common to most participants. Braun and Clark's (2006) advice on the value of reading and re-reading the transcripts was quite valuable in informing my own approach to reading and working with the data.

Reflexivity

I believe that in a qualitative study of this kind, especially one that includes a participatory aspect and unstructured interviews, the role of the research is particularly important; "The validity and reliability of qualitative data depend to a great extent on the methodological skill, sensitivity, and integrity of the researcher" (Oakley, 1998, p. 710). In qualitative research, Oakley declares the researcher herself to be the "instrument" (Oakley, 1998, p. 711).

Self-reflexivity denotes the importance of self-awareness within the research process; this often requires the researcher to be conscious of the, often inherent, discourses and ideologies that are perpetuated during the course of the research (Oakley, 1998). This is a fundamental process as it enables the researcher to engage with and reflect upon the experiences that occurred within the role as a researcher and within a different context. This self-reflexivity allows the researcher to utilise their own voice in understanding their interaction within the process, and provides the researcher with an opportunity to express their authentic experiences encountered during the research process (Oakley, 1998), and in relation to the interpretation this arises through the data analysis. This is particularly crucial to the current research as the contextual considerations are not only a fundamental component of the research in relation to the meaning the sex workers' construct from their experiences (Oakley, 1998), but also a crucial element in understanding the interactions that occurred during the interviews.

I have always had an interest in sex workers and the predisposing factors to what leads to one entering into this profession. I have had a penchant for what society deems as taboo and sex

work falls under that. I would describe myself as non-conforming and non-binary or fixed in the way that I view the world. I take a political position of solidarity with street-based sex workers who make a living under difficult conditions and often against social norms, harassment and judgement. Gaining access to the participants proved challenging at first. My attempts at sourcing participants from an organization seemed to be unsuccessful but not unexpected. This is because street-based sex workers are less organised than those that work with organisations. I decided to approach sex workers that worked nearby a local family business. This was difficult for me as most of the sex workers were weary of me and my intentions. I had to build rapport and trust before getting them to agree to be interviewed.
I had entered into their work area and in many respects this led to the participants having constructed me in a manner that presented me as an outsider. This was beneficial in some senses, as the participants felt more at ease discussing their difficulties and the influence of the contextual factors within their personal and work environment. However, it simultaneously set up a power dynamic that became difficult to shift. This power dynamic seemed to place me in the position of an 'expert' and treated me as someone who could alter the current status within their work environment. Although the nature of the research and myself, as the researcher, tried to foster the importance of local knowledge these power dynamics were still indicative within the interaction. This also included the social constructions of 'race' as a dividing factor. My positionality within this research, specifically when I was conducting the interviews, was immensely important to constantly be aware of.

As women who have primarily been faced with poverty and oppression in their early lives, I was in a relatively privileged position in relation to the women. I experienced feelings of guilt regarding my access to resources, level of education and economic opportunities. As an Indian woman, interviewing black women, there were both opportunities and challenges presented by my subjectivity. It appeared that some seemed to be more comfortable in becoming vulnerable and forthcoming with information as I am perceived as an outsider and detached in some way, from their realities, thus, not being judged for engaging in forms of work where they are easily criticized and looked down upon. Alternatively, there seemed to be some participants who saw me as an outsider and in turn, may have experienced it as challenging to relate. For example, interviews were conducted in English rather than in the first languages of participants. Similarly, my age also appeared to be a dividing and unifying factor for some. For the participants that were in their twenties, it seemed as if they felt more easily understood, as opposed to the older participants. As an Indian, middle-class woman in her twenties, I would

never completely understand their lived realities and their marginalised multiple identities that they are faced with. This is why the theoretical framework becomes important, so that one can begin to understand what they experience.

Representing someone is a way of silencing her. While my hope is to amplify migrant sex workers' voices in the discussion about them and trafficking discourses, I am still silencing them in a way by mediating their voices through this report. This self-reflexivity also fosters the process of flexibility, being aware of my own influence, biases and perceptions that were being perpetuated allowed me to reassess several components within the research. Through these experiences and the awareness of the process, self-reflexivity enabled me to integrate my understanding of the research within the context from which the research arose. This self-reflexivity also fosters the process of flexibility, being aware of my own influence, biases and perceptions that were being perpetuated allowed me to reassess several components within the research. Through these experiences and the awareness of the process, self-reflexivity enabled me to integrate my understanding of the research within the context from which the research arose.

Ethical considerations

After getting ethical clearance from the University of the Witwatersrand's Ethics Committee (MACC/18/008 IH) I proceeded to conduct field work for the study. There was somewhat, of a reluctance to participate in this study because of the marginalisation and stigma that is attached to this industry and the possible violence that it attracts. Research also suggests that interviews may elicit emotional responses and uneasiness when retelling traumatic or difficult events that may have occurred in the past. However, participants were constantly made to feel comfortable and secure in the environment. This was done by ensuring that they were in charge of the direction that the interview took. I also reminded them of informed consent and confidentiality. I sought to regularly check in with them through the process and made sure they were well and comfortable to continue. It is also important to note that this study does not view sex workers as part of a vulnerable population in South Africa, thus it was not considered an ethical dilemma. The sample is understood to consist of grown women with a sense of their worth and the agency to decide on their participation in the study, however, they are considered as marginalised.

I introduced myself at the onset of the interview and meeting the participant. I then explained the study to them and my affiliation with the university. I provided them with the consent form and explained it to them in detail, taking any question that they may have. The consent form informed them of what the study entails and the rights that they have throughout the process. They were informed that they could refrain from answering any question they found uncomfortable, they could stop the interview or withdraw from this study if they wished to at any time. I invited them to use an alias if they wished and informed them that everything would be kept highly confidential and anonymous. I then informed them that their interviews would be recorded and transcribed. I assured them that all transcripts and recordings would be safely stored on a password protected computer at all times. Finally, I explained to the participants that they could contact the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (011 234 4837) or the Emthonjeni Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand (011 717 4513) should they have wished to speak to someone for free counselling at the conclusion of the interview or in the future. Once they understood the consent form and what the study entailed, they were asked to sign with their real or pseudonym.

As mentioned in the consent form, anonymity and confidentiality is of high importance in this study. Participants were given pseudonyms in order to protect their identities. Any other information that may lead the reader to identify them was removed from the study. While it is not possible to assure anonymity because of the face to face interviews, all data was reported in a manner that concealed the identities of individual participants. The participants of the research were protected in the research process, and they are protected within the report. The participants were ensured confidentiality when approached. Absolute confidentiality in descriptions has been maintained to ensure participants' identities are not revealed.

The issue of trustworthiness is crucial to reliability and is at the core of qualitative research and is achieved by ensuring that the research is of high quality because in increasing the quality of one's study this also increases the likelihood that the results are reliable. There are various strategies and techniques that can be used to increase trustworthiness some of which include using tactics to ensure honesty among participants, peer scrutiny of research and the use of reflecting on the researcher's own opinions and any personal biases he/she may possess about the subject matters in the research (Shenton, 2004). I attempted to attain the participants trust by being transparent about my intentions of the research. Moreover, sharing parts of myself with the participants, in the hopes of them feeling somewhat relatable towards me. It was also

important to build rapport upon meeting the participants, to ensure they feel comfortable to disclose their experiences to me.

After the interviews were concluded, feedback from the participants was asked and they were given the opportunity to talk about their experience of this study. They were informed that if they wished to share more information at a later stage, they may contact me for an extension of the interview.

Conclusion

This chapter on methods provided the research questions and the practical components of the research, such as the participants involved in the research, and the procedure involved in obtaining both the data and the participants. It also explained the manner in which data was obtained and the reasons supporting the choice of methods. It provided an understanding of the framework in which the research was conducted, as well as the self-reflexivity of the researcher. It also provides an overview of the ethical implications and the safeguards in relation to the participants within the research. The chapter to follow provides the results from the thematic content analysis discussed above.

Chapter 5

Findings and Discussion

The primary themes that emerged are tabulated below.

The theme of poverty refers to the experiences the participants had that were centred on a background of poverty, lack of resources and means to gain technical and educational skills. It explores the reasons and events that are mentioned by the participants as influential in their decision to enter sex work, and the background and development of such reasons and/or events. Agency is tabulated as another theme. It speaks the amount of power these sex workers may or may not have had in becoming sex workers. The theme of challenges explores some of the risks that these participants face in Johannesburg, while competition and cooperation, sheds light on the interactions between local and immigrant sex workers.

Primary Themes
Poverty
Sex Workers as Agential Beings
Sex Workers Challenges
Competition and Cooperation between Sex Workers

"I'm selling my body so I can look after my children": Poverty

In this study, it was found that entry into sex work was associated with poverty in childhood. In some ways, this refutes the dominant view that abuse/neglect was a precursor for entry into sex work for a number of participants. Childhood neglect that may come from poverty, however, can also come in the form of negligence on the part of the caregiver, where the participant did not receive adequate or appropriate care and was not provided with the necessary technical or educational skills to find work. In the context of South Africa, a large number of people still live in poverty and are thus, unable to attain education. Consider the

excerpt below. The participant provides a snippet into her life of extreme poverty, where she was only able to realise the extent of it, once she had left home and been exposed to other parts of the country.

"I come from an extremely poor family. But when you are in a poor surrounding, you don't see how poor you are because everybody is the same. So it's only when you go out that you realise that, damn, the situation is really bad." (Lerato)

The below excerpt by the same participant, provides an understanding of the difficulty in attaining employment despite having completed Grade 12, but not possessing practical experience. This sheds light into a divergence in interviews as Lerato appears to be belonging to a minority within this specific sample population as she is the only participant that has completed school:

"I completed my matric in Orange Farm and I did some short courses which was sponsored by government. But I struggled to find permanent employment because you can find that permanent employment they need experience. And the jobs are scarce to begin with. There are not enough jobs to go around. So when I moved to Joburg I moved to gain experience because there are more opportunities this side and I thought that I would get I would meet the right people, the right connection. Well did I meet the right connection my dear?? You understand? I was 20 years old when I come to Joburg. I can say 21 even. In between it was just do a short course here. Volunteer there. Get a piece job there. Nothing permanent, nothing concrete." (Lerato)

Poverty was seen to be significant in the individual's decision to enter sex work when technical/educational inexperience was mentioned as an important reason for why individuals had chosen to enter sex work which was directly linked to poverty the inability to afford an education, as illustrated by Lerato's quote introducing the present theme. Poverty was constructed as significant in an individual's entry into sex work because it came to affect her ability to gain technical/educational skills needed for finding alternative work. For these individuals, sex work was seen as an alternative way to make money and gain one's independence and in this way provided an ideal opportunity for those who did not have the necessary vocational skills to make a living. Consider the excerpt below, indicating a desire to attain an education; however a lack of access to funds had made this impossible. Zihle had lost

her mother at a young age and was forced to seek employment when she left school. Sex work seemed to be only option to financial freedom.

"KZN is not small it's big but when I am a small child I'm suffering. I'm not working. I don't have a mother. That's why I'm going this side. I was 20 something like that when I come here. I did Grade 11 when I was in KZN but no money for school to finish." (Zihle)

In drawing a relationship between poverty, technical/educational inexperience, and entry into sex work, popular assumptions, and previous research findings (James & Meyerding, 1977; Potter, et al., 1999; Silbert & Pines, 1981, 1983) testifying to the relationship between poverty and entry into sex work, are supported. One can question the intent behind incorporating experiences into one's narrative: through framing one's presence in the sex work industry from a perspective of constraint owing to educational/technical inexperience and poverty. Participants may have framed their decision to enter sex work from one owing to difficult life circumstances, hinting at a lack of agency in their entry. Alternatively, individuals may have clung to agency and volition in entering sex work, while acknowledging the presence and impact that poverty may have had on their decision to enter sex work. In the following excerpt, Lindiwe explains that she was responsible for the income in her family after her father passed away due to illness. Leaving formal schooling to seek employment was not a choice, but rather something she felt compelled to do in order to sustain her family. Selling shoes in Johannesburg, did not prove to be successful, although entering sex work seemed promising.

"The other thing I'm the breadwinner at home. I'm the one I'm looking after all the family in the house. I didn't finish school because sometimes I go school hungry when I come back home there's no food to eat. I came with my friend to JHB he said we going to come sell shoes, but it didn't work out to sell shoes. I decide to do this job to make money for myself." (Lindiwe)

To summarise then, a number of participants attributed entry into sex work to the effects of poverty experienced in childhood which highlights a convergence across interviews. They maintained that adequate technical/educational skills to find alternative work were not acquired in childhood and it became necessary to look towards sex work in order to survive. In such cases, a decision to enter sex work was constructed from a perspective lacking agency. This may have served to lessen feelings of guilt and shame associated with entering sex work on a personal level, or may have served to present a story that they wished me, as their audience, to hear. The majority of women come from disadvantaged backgrounds, with incomplete or no

schooling. Unfortunately, there are not many opportunities available for unskilled and uneducated women. They are therefore unable to find work. Selling sex is one of the few options available to them for obtaining an income (James et al., 1977). Lack of skills, no education and little or no work experience, compounded by issues of extreme poverty, make sex work seem like their only choice. The traditional narrative as reported by research, that recognised an association between poverty and entry into sex work, was at most times, supported. Poverty is a breeding ground for many highly stigmatized behaviours, including street level sex work. It has long been established that financial motives are the main reasons for many women resorting to street sex work.

Structural racism, classism, and sexism refer to institutionalized forms of oppression through institutions in a society that subordinates people based on their race, class and sex classifications, respectively (Williams, 2001). Many feminist theorists agree that structural inequalities in South Africa are significant factors that can lead to sex work. Anti-sex work feminists nonetheless differ in their viewpoints on what structural aspects of a society facilitate a woman's entrance into sex work. A broad, but brief, description of select perspectives highlighting these differences is included here. Anti-sex work feminists contend that street-based sex work is the result of a three prong oppressive infrastructure that is racist, classist and sexist (Williams, 2001). The Marxist feminists blame sex work on factors related to the corruption of wage labour in a capitalistic society. The socialist feminists also blame oppressive capitalistic processes for why women enter into street-based sex work, but they also consider the impact of psychological and social processes on one's sex and race. The radical feminists blame sex work on a patriarchal society. However, feminist theories broadly suggest that street-based sex work among black women is primarily the result of racism and socio-economic inequality in South Africa more than it is the result of classism or sexism although they all work together to maintain oppression (Williams, 2001).

Discourse on sex work laws and policy rarely confronts the reality that people of colour encounter. Taking into consideration South Africa's oppressive past, local realities can be said to have caused a myriad of societal problems, including poverty and a lack of resources and opportunities. Being a woman can have even more implications to it and gaining access to opportunities becomes more challenging.

The theme of poverty highlights the idea of the participant's decision to enter into sex work and their journeys from home to Johannesburg. There emerged trajectories by migrant sex workers and South African sex workers and the differences that were noticed. Some women chose not to highlight their trajectories into sex work. Other participants left out their migration to Johannesburg and their journeys from their hometown to where they are now, as sex workers. Finally, some chose to address their trajectories into sex work and leave their migration stories out.

According to Akhtar (1995) immigration from one country to another is a complex psychosocial process with lasting effects on a person's identity. The dynamic shifts, resulting from an admixture of "culture shock" and mourning over the losses inherent in migration, gradually give way to psycho structural change and the emergence of a hybrid identity (p.1). Akhtar further argues that there are four interlinked factors that impact the identity of immigrants: dimensions of drive and affects, interpersonal and psychic space, temporality, and social affiliation. Although Akhtar focuses his work on cross border migrants, I argue that migration from rural areas to urban areas also requires migrants to face these factors. Sex workers may experience difficulties of stigma, and therefore, may have struggles to return home. It is however also important to recognise that cross border migrants such as those from Malawi leave behind indigenous languages, customs and traditions. In addition, xenophobic violence in South Africa requires that we acknowledge that a drastic difference exists between the two groups of migrants due to internal politics (Landau, 2007).

Consider the excerpts below from Sbongile and Dudu. They explain the difficulties they faced in their childhood which pertained to poverty. This led them to look for work in Johannesburg as it seemed to be easier to access jobs, as opposed to, in Zimbabwe. However, being an illegal immigrant made it even more challenging to find employment and thus, entered into sex work. This further highlights a convergence in interviews of the migrant sex workers, as they have all emphasised prospects of finding employment in Johannesburg being easier, as opposed to finding employment in their country.

"When I was a child, it was difficult. You know at first my life started to be difficult at first. And still difficult even now. But I come to Joburg to look for work when I was 19 and I finished form 3 of school. After that I was just staying home and then my sister take me to South Africa

to look for job. But didn't find job because don't have papers to work here. Then I had a friend that was staying next door to me who say to me she has a nice job for me." (Sbongile)

"I was staying with my siblings and my grandmother. So life was difficult, so that's why I decided to come here in South Africa. I have four siblings which I still see them but my parents are dead now. I was 18 when they died, then my grandmother looked after me. I attended school and finished grade 10. After that I was just trying to look for a job so I didn't find it, so I started to be a sex worker. I did not know I was going to become a sex worker when I come here, I was just looking for a job. I have a connection with other one of my friends who, she's the one who took me there." (Dudu)

Understanding the discourse around sex work also aids in the process of unpacking representation among migrant women sex workers. The West dominates a significant amount of research centred on sex work. Women are either portrayed as heroines that are defying a misogynistic system by using their bodies as a way to empower themselves, or they are seen as inherently immoral (Agustin, 2006). This didactic stance does not take into account the specific realities that migrant women sex workers in Africa must navigate (Nyangairi, 2010). The view that a woman who entered sex work is inherently "abnormal," must be further examined and addressed. Studies conducted in the West tend to focus on sex workers as victims of drug abuse, sex abuse, and broken homes (McKinnon, 1979). The trafficking discourse claims that all sex workers are victims of trafficking; thus, removing agency away from those who choose to enter sex work voluntarily (Palmary & Nyangairi, 2010). Furthermore, being an illegal foreigner adds onto part of the woman's identity. This then results in society perpetuating oppression and inequality with black women. Having to navigate their life as an immigrant, a black woman and one that is involved in sex work.

During the course of this study, none of the women stated that their involvement in sex work was due to coercion and/or manipulation. In fact, all of the women shared the reasons why they chose to enter sex work. These reasons negated the dominant trafficking discourse that has come to be associated with sex work which highlights a convergence in interviews. Instead, my findings highlighted a diversity of experiences that explained the various trajectories into sex work. One of the most interesting observations that I made during this study was the intentional separation that occurred as women talked about their entry points into sex work.

This separation involved splitting their childhood from their present life or being unable to marry the two different times of their life.

"So some other girl come to me, said this life, you don't have money for rent, for food money for support your baby so let's go to JHB there is some work. So I ask her what work is it? She told me the truth what work it was. So I came here to JHB. First time I find money. Like I was suffered a lot. I get money. I get money and I work I support my child." (Thuli)

The excerpt above explains how Thuli was desperate to gain an income so that she could support her child. A friend approached her and promised her that she could gain some financial freedom if she went to Johannesburg. She explained that this was true as it was the first time that she was able to earn an income. It was evident that Johannesburg is seen as a place where dreams come true and several opportunities are presented. This applies to whether the person is a migrant or even if they are from South Africa. The migrant sex workers seldom spoke about their journey to Johannesburg and their experiences along the way. Similarly, it was noticed that they would not openly speak about their childhood or life before sex work, unless they were probed. The following two excerpts by Zinhle and Patricia depict their hesitation in revealing too much detail about their childhoods.

Interviewer: Ok. Tell me a little bit about your life in KZN.

Zihle: Excuse me?

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit about your life in KZN, when you were small. How was your life?

Zihle: KZN is not small it's big but when I am a small child I'm suffering. I'm not working. I don't have a mother. That's why I'm going this side. I was 20 something like that when I come here. I did Grade 11 when I was in KZN but no money for school to finish.

Interviewer: And then tell me little bit when you were small. How was your life?

Patricia: Life was better, not good but it was better. I liked work. If I get the wage I'm working. If the work is finish I'm going back to be a prostitute to support my family.

'Splitting' or 'dissociation' is a defence mechanism utilised by the psyche to protect it from realizing a damaging and harmful experience that would threaten the individual's sense of self (Rose, 1999). It allows for the splitting or doubling of the self into a part that experiences the trauma and a part that, figuratively speaking, does not, and enables individuals to feel a sense

of temporary transcendence in traumatic experiences that enables them to survive (Delbo, 1990; Langer, 1991; Rose, 1999). It also allows individuals to fulfil different roles and separate these roles from their sense of self in order to achieve different life requirements. Participants communicated that dissociation in sex work was at times necessary for fulfilling the role of the sex worker and coping in adverse experiences. Below is an excerpt from Neo as she speaks about her inability to wake up in the morning as she has to face her difficult life, but knows that nevertheless, she still has to wake up to make ends meet.

"Oh sometimes I don't want to wake up. If I'm thinking about this I don't even want to wake up. But because it's what I have to do." (Neo)

Dissociation was at times achieved through the use of substances and imagination, and through processes of splitting that enabled individuals to fulfil the identities of different roles. Dissociation involved not only the sense of strength achieved in working, but, through processes of splitting, created a distancing of the self from the role, identity, and stigma embedded in the sex worker construct. The theme of *dissociation* refers not only to the psychic processes utilised by sex workers in dealing with traumatic experiences, but also includes the ways in which they were able to 'split' or 'dissociate' themselves into different personalities and identities necessary for fulfilling a number of different roles (Williamson & Folaron, 2003).

The following quote from Lerato's interview, indicates several coping mechanisms that the sex workers use in order to deal with their harsh realities. Some, have also consulted with traditional healers as they experience depression, anxiety and paranoia.

"Paranoia, anxiety, depression. Mental illness is very real. That's why you find that sometimes alcoholism starts to creep in. Drug habits start to creep in. Because you just trying to deal with that, you know, mental illness. I have people that have admitted to me that they consult sangomas' and sangoma give them muti, that muti must attract customers but I personally have not used that." (Lerato)

In reviewing dissociation as a coping mechanism in sex work, it appeared that psychological processes of splitting were relatively effective in helping individuals achieve a sense of temporary transcendence in their experiences and the requirements of fulfilling a number of different roles. This was aided by the use of substances when the playing of different roles was

reported to have affected the individual. However, the use of substances has been considered a dangerous coping mechanism utilised by sex workers because it exposes them to increased vulnerability to violence and abuse in impairing their vigilance to danger, and enables sexual compromise (Brener & Pauw, 1998). While dissociation can be said to be effective in helping individuals separate themselves from their working selves and maintain a sense of respectability or distance in their work, it is both harmful in the numbing effect it induces and in the tools it employed to help bring about distance (such as the use of substances) as indicated in the above quote by Lerato.

The fulfilling of different roles was a complex experience shared by participants. They emphasized the difficulty of fulfilling public and private roles and living two different lives. Publicly they were the mothers, sisters, daughters, providers, and aunts in their communities, while privately they fulfilled the role of the 'sex worker'. Participants communicated that it was necessary to keep the "home life" (public) and the "work life" (private) separate. Consider the following quotation, which juxtaposes these two roles:

"I'm scared. I didn't tell my family. When they call me, I send the money. Every month I send the money. Even the card of my account is staying there at home. This work is helping me too much." (Patricia)

"Ja, nobody in my family knows and what I do is that I sell products. I sell perfumes and lotions I sell this and that accessories. So I used to sell and send home. So that business doesn't make me any profit at all. But it helps because it's a cover. When somebody asks you where do you get the money from, how do you survive you just say I sell this." (Lerato)

Patricia and Lerato explain that they have not disclosed to their families what work they are involved in. However, when their families require the money, they are able to provide it and that is all that matters to them. This furthermore, speaks to their identities and their roles which make up their identities. Being a black woman, stemming from a childhood of excessive poverty due to inequality, whilst not being given the opportunity to access an education through structural oppression, and then having to bear the brunt of being a sex worker in a patriarchal society and still having to support their families.

"I like to work. I like being a sex worker because I support my children": Accounts of Agency

The study of sex-work is central to debates around the gendered nature of agency in relation to women's work. Views on the social role and position of sex workers tend to be sharply divided between those which locate sex workers as agents who "opt" for sex work as an appropriate form of employment for their circumstances, and those which view sex workers as ill-used victims of a patriarchal society. The notion of women sex workers as agents credits sex workers with making measured and logical (if sometimes constrained) choices to commodify their bodies through entering and/or remaining in the sex trade. The woman "sex worker as agent" may be seen as demonstrating a reasoned determination not to accept the limited alternatives offered within the formal, or "legitimate" labour market (often low paid, exploitative jobs). In other words, she "chooses" sex work as a means of earning a living in preference to other, less attractive, forms of employment. Supporters of the "sex worker as agent" argument resist classifying sex-work as "prostitution". This is because the labelling of women sex workers as "prostitutes" locates them as both criminals and victims, and divides them from workers in formal labour markets.

According to Nencel (2010), the words "consent" and "choice" are commonly used to describe agency, which is the ability of a person to make choices and take action under the social and economic constraints that impede these choices (p.125). A sex worker who performs sexual services does so as her chosen form of employment, serving her economic needs and demands. The woman acts autonomously and chooses sex work as a form of employment in which she is the beneficiary of the profits of the sexual contact. Women choose to become sex workers because sex work is a viable economic option. The process by which a woman chooses sex work involves her individual experience. Some women choose to migrate to a particular geographical location to become sex workers. The story of Nokuthula reflects the elements of agency within the decision to become a sex worker:

"It was 2005/2006. It was not easy. Nobody bring me on the streets. I just decided that myself. I used to see girls on the street at night and I decided let me go and check what is happening there. Then I go it was around seven, I go out from the house and I walk. Then there by Nugget Street I find another lady there, was waiting there, was standing. And I ask her how do they work? She told me. That time it was R30 or R20. I ask her she explain to me how it's happening.

And when I was standing with her I find a client the same time. It was Friday. I go with the client inside, I was so scared, he told me "do you have a condom and a tissue" I say ja, I got those thing. I went inside with the client and then after that is continue, continue, the same day. The following day it was hard, but not that hard. And then the police they were arresting that time. I was so scared. But I managed."

Nencel (2010) argues that the gender-morale of sexuality is perpetuated by a misogynistic social value system; thereby, negating the idea that women can make a choice to be sex workers. Nokuthula reaffirmed this notion during an interview where she stated, "I chose sex work because it pays the bills better than other work right now". Sanders (2009) describes agency as a woman's choice and free will to decide how she wants to use her body. The controversial philosophical argument is whether or not "choice" and "free will" truly exist. Sanders (2009) acknowledges that there are challenges in this statement, especially when referring to a group of people that have a limited skill set. Many sex workers have limited educational, economic and social conditions; however, this does not necessarily negate the choice to enter sex work.

Lerato confirms the preceding assertion when she states:
"Let's say that the jobs for the shop owned by all foreigner, no thank you. And I have gotten the offers before, I am not going to lie to you, and then they tell you, you can come to work here we pay R1500 or R1800 per month and I'm like, no thank you. I mean my rent is R2100. I mean how am going to pay the rent of R2100 when I'm making R1800?"

Many of the women referred to other employment options available to them as less desirable. It seems that sex work is able to allow for more of an income to be collected as opposed to other kinds of work. Illegal immigrants are often exploited by shop-keepers. They are unable to challenge this as they feel they have no rights within South Africa. Their living expenses far exceed the amount local and foreign shop-keepers are willing to pay foreign nationals to work.

Agustin (2006) coined "conundrum of agency" as a phrase to describe the debate between 'choice' and 'force'. Agustin argues that although many sex workers will not state that they did not have another choice or that they were "forced" to enter sex work, a fine line exists between the decision to enter and being "forced" due to life circumstances. I argue that the majority of people working do so because life circumstances require them to work. I appreciate

this level of analysis by Agustin, applying this discussion to sex work infers that there is a middle ground and refutes and either-or circumstance.

Often times when the topic of sex work is brought up, whether in academic or social circles, the conversations tend to take on a tone of "poor them". It would be reckless to pretend as though sex work does not have inherent dangers and risks; however, danger and risk is not unique to sex work. For example, underground mining has a high-risk for fatalities. What is unique is that sex work is illegal in many countries, including South Africa. Therefore, access to medical care, protection and social dignity are not readily available to sex workers. The consequences of this are enormous and will be discussed in a later section.

Regardless of personal moral views of sex work, it is important to resist the temptation to further stigmatize a group of people that are mostly, except in the cases of trafficking victims, making a choice to work as they do. Below are excerpts that highlight the reasons and experiences that women shared about their work.

"Because once you find that person who helps you, you go back to milk him until you see I can't get anything anymore. You put a story. "I got a problem". "I don't have money for rent". "My father doesn't have this, this, this". I need to buy new phone and once you get the money are you sure you going to use it as you said you going to use it? You use it as you please." (Lerato)

Above, Lerato provides an inside view of her world as she explains how she would often tell her clients about her life and how she is suffering, coercing them into giving her more money or other valuables. This sheds light on how Lerato has used her agency in her everyday negotiations.

"It depends how is the business. Sometimes I can have 30 clients sometimes 5 clients, it depends. But it is very busy on the weekend. We are having the place there to work. We are using the safe place there. I don't wish to go out with clients cos it's not safe." (Lebo)

As we see above, there is a spectrum of experiences and feelings about sex work. What is important to take note of is that these are the women speaking. Although danger is alluded to and at times, the women shared that they would rather be doing something else for work, it is important to hear what they are saying and refrain from reductive explanation that ultimately

ignores their voice. This highlights the issue patriarchy. Lerato engages with this when she describes a moment when a client offered to marry and support her financially. Her response to his offer sheds light on the view that men can to save women, and that women want to be saved. Lerato rejects the clients offer by stating:

"It's going to get complicated because you going to say "I'm in love with you come stay with me" but he can't make the equivalent of my earnings. If he doesn't make equivalent of my earnings, it means I must terminate all contact. For me I just terminate all contact with him from there. I even tell him please delete my number."

Another example of Nencel's (2010) argument that sexuality is perpetuated by a gender-morale was seen during the interviews when I asked the women if they had female clients. All of the women stated that they only slept with men, Lerato simply stated, "All of them they are black men." Here we see an internalized explanation of who is a socially 'acceptable' client. Nencel (2010) argues that patriarchal belief systems promote/perpetuate ontological views of sexuality. Therefore, although sex workers navigate their 'sex worker identities' to attract clients, notions of who is an acceptable client is defined within an internalized gender-morale paradigm. However, this is also based on the clientele that seek out their services.

The emphasis which feminists place on a gendered analysis of the sex industry makes visible some of the power mechanisms which operate both within and on the sex industry. Feminist approaches can, therefore, be used to identify and address some of the power structures that sex workers are subject to and to explain why these are unjust. While sex work is usually defined in gender-neutral terms, as the sale of sexual services for money or material gain, this is an approach that specifically disavows the gendered nature of the sex worker industry. The vast majority of sex workers are women while the consumers of sex work services are almost wholly men (Nencel, 2010).

Independence: Making it Work

A common thread running throughout the narratives of all 10 participants was the connection between a desire for money and the participants' entry into sex work. This desire for money was at times described as being the result of not being able to find work and needing to support oneself and a number of dependants, and at times coupled with a desire for independence.

For a number of participants, a desperate need for money was indicated in situations where they did not have the necessary educational/technical experience to find alternative work this was sometimes related to poverty in childhood and participants did not want to be heavily reliant upon a male supporter. Their frustrated dependence upon others for financial and/or material support was constructed as the antecedent that led to their pursuit of financial income by means of sex work. Participants described themselves as being in a position of having no income and with no alternative means of finding that income:

"No is the life difficult. It's the life difficult. I'm coming with friend here by Johannesburg. Now is better because of me I'm trying. I'm trying. It's better now. Too much. It's better." (Patricia)

"And when I was here I find someone, the boyfriend, something like that. So I have baby with him. So after 2 years he leave me. When my baby was 6 months old. So I was nowhere to go, no what to do don't have money. I was alone. I tried to find a job but I didn't find a job cos I was having a baby, nobody to take my baby to crèche. So some other girl come to me, said this life, you don't have money for rent, for food money for support your baby, so let's go to JHB there is some work." (Thuli)

The participants often alluded to a feeling of powerlessness that were centred on a desperate financial need. One is able to see the development of a story through the extract taken from the beginning of Sbongile's narrative cited below. Sbongile recalled that she entered sex work because she needed money and had no job. She explained the broader circumstantial constraints surrounding her lack of finances, saying:

"The father of my kid ran away so my life is still in that condition so I'm working hard to improve my life. That's why I'm working as a sex worker, it's not good. But I'm doing because of the situation". (Sbongile)

There seemed to be a relationship between a severe financial need (when a male provider became absent in some way) and entry into sex work. It appeared that it was due to this dependence that the women found themselves ill-equipped and unable to provide for themselves in their partners absence, and sex work was seen as a viable option to provide

support without the requirement of educational or technical skills. The lack of a male provider was constructed as a reason for why individuals had entered sex work, as well as the presence of a past of childhood poverty which had impacted their ability to gain educational and technical skills. Consider the following excerpt:

"My family were not good. My father was pass away when I'm in high school. I'm left with my mum and she is not working. I got 3 children. I have 1 brother and 2 sisters. I went to school but I didn't finish school. I completed grade 10 only and came to Joburg in 2008. I just came here for the funeral, not for this work. When we are here we stay here for maybe 2 months. Another friend she take us to be sex workers." (Thuli)

Sex work was at times constructed by individuals as a path taken because there was no other option, and at times constructed as an explicit decision made by individuals to better their circumstances. This can be seen when one considers the words of Dudu and Lebo cited below:

"The thing about this that I am doing it's not right actually but there's nothing I can do cos I am alive. I get a living from there. It helps me to pay rent, to look after my son, and I must buy things I must look like everybody." (Dudu)

"I like to work. I like being a sex worker because I support my children, my mum. I have 3 children." (Lebo)

"But we are not rich, we are not millionaires but at least we have the dignity to be at the same level as other people, you understand what I mean." (Lerato)

While participants such as Dudu framed their entry into sex work from a place of moral judgement, others framed their entry into sex work from one of agency. For individuals such as Lebo, entry into sex work was commonly constructed as a choice that was made because of poverty and unemployment, and was described as being the means of providing for one's dependents in a manner that would not require educational/technical skill.

On other occasions, the women reported entering sex work when they were earning an income that was insufficient to cater for their needs and those of their dependants.

Sex work was chosen as an alternative vocation in order to provide them with more money than they have earned elsewhere and provide them with the means of becoming more independent. Consider the case of Lerato, who constructs her desire for money and entry into sex work as due to her recent unemployment, the single support of her children, and demands of extended family. She saw sex work as a quick way to earn an income. Even though she had done well at school, employment prospects were insufficient. *"At school, I was very good at school. I passed well enough. I passed matric with exemption."* (Lerato)

Entry into sex work was thus constructed as an escape from financial and relational dependence for some participants. It was spoken about as an empowering decision that sex workers made in order to become more independent. Although the two forms of independence cannot be easily separated, this independence was desired above dependence on another for money, and at times, the desire to enter sex work was related more to an individual's desire for independence than to their desire for money.

"I'm staying alone. I pay my own rent. I pay R1500 a month. I also send money home. Sometimes it's R3000 sometimes it's R2000." (Lindiwe)

This observation is supported by the findings of Gysels et al. (2002) and Stadler and Delany (2006), who observed that while most of the sex workers they interviewed were from low economic backgrounds, their entry may have been more related to a desire for economic and social independence than as a means of survival. Gould and Fick (2006) also note that 76% of the sex workers they interviewed reported entering the industry for economic reasons and continued to work because they were able to generate more money than they would in other forms of employment. For the participants in the current study, technical/educational inexperience was therefore not constructed as the primary reason for entry, which was shown to be present in the lives of a number of other participants.

Some scholars take further the idea of sex-worker as agent, by arguing that sex-work may be regarded positively as an expression of personal freedom. This description has echoes of the notion of "agency" as described by Giddens (1992). For example, Brewis and Linstead (2000) write about sex work in affirmative terms. They suggest that in certain situations, women sex workers may be offered sexual and financial release from the constraints of conventional monogamous relationships and employment. Brewis and Linstead (2000) ascribe the same

status to sex work as any other job within the formal labour market. They show how sex workers may be adept at managing emotional boundaries, separating their personal lives from their identities as sex workers. Brewis and Linstead regard sexuality and power as closely intertwined. Sex workers may set the financial agenda and, in emotionally disengaging themselves from clients, may be seen to be invested with a share of client/sex worker power. This was evident when the sex-worker cited earlier, discontinued her liaison with a client after he proposed marriage to her.

In terms of improving the prospects that sex-workers may be treated on an equal basis with workers in the formal labour market, there are potential benefits to treating, sex workers as "agents". For example, a sex worker who believes herself to be agential may be in a better position to access social and health services than if she is treated as a powerless victim. Sex workers have demonstrated agentic qualities by joining forces to protect themselves as a community which is demonstrated later on this study (Hubbard, 2004; Sanders, 2005); establishing and maintaining rules about how clients may access their bodies (Sanders, 2005) and, according to Ditmore (2007), assisting the escape of women "trafficked" unwillingly into the sex industry. Such understandings of sex workers as agentic and capable are seen as crucial in shifting the conventional understanding of sex workers as criminals and victims (Jeffrey and MacDonald, 2006).

These excerpts from an interviews with Lebo and Nokuthula, explain how they willingly entered into sex work.

"Another friend she tell me about sex workers. She told us that here in Johannesburg there are workers like this. There is no use to fuck around with a man with no money so I started to make money like this." (Lebo)

"After that I was having a baby. A boy now he is 18 years. So I had to move. He needed to survive. I also needed to survive. So no one told me about this job. I'm the one who came to the street to work." (Nokuthula).

This excerpt demonstrated that no one had informed Nokuthula about sex work or invited her to become part of a sex work community, however, she independently decided to enter into sex work.

It is also evident that the sex workers portray their agency through their negotiations with their clients and how they choose to use their bodies. The excerpts from interviews with Lerato and Sbongile illustrate this point.

"The problem is if somebody is drunk, you must remember that there is going to be a misunderstanding somewhere. But if somebody doesn't do drugs, doesn't drink, you are more likely to know. So even if there is a misunderstanding you can sort it out, you understand what I mean. Even if you don't agree you can walk away or chase them away. Or if you work in an environment where there's security, you can ask for a third party to intervene… It has never happened to me that I get abused. But I'm very cautious also, I've never put myself in a situation that I'm not sure of."(Lerato)

"I stand by Durbanville court every day. That's where I'm working. I approach a client and then I tell him lets go. And then you explain how much and then you can go if you are interested. Sometimes I see six or seven people in one day. If its busy time you have 12 or 15. I am working at night also." (Sbongile)

Lindiwe makes mention of her interactions and relationships with the other sex workers in her area: *"…we working there together. I'm already get my friends when I have problem inside, I just scream sometimes they come run and help me."*

Participants exercised power through the decisions they made, often in relation to the logistics of the sex work encounter and in their conduct whilst working. They may have demonstrated choice and volition in deciding not to drink or take drugs, and whether to work indoors in the brothel-context or outdoors on the street or truck-stop. For people working outdoors, the street was chosen as a means of taking an active role in gaining the business of clients and not being subjected to the selection process characterising indoor sex work. This observation is supported by the findings of Wojcicki and Malala (2001, p. 101), who contend that sex workers exercised power and agency through the "micro decision-making" they utilised in sex work. They maintained that although individuals typically framed their presence in sex work from a perspective of powerlessness, they exercised choice and control on a micro level. Choice and power (through agency) was exercised by sex workers both in the macro decision to enter sex work in order to provide for their families, and on a micro level when individuals made everyday choices regarding client preference, location of work, sex work conduct, and safety precautions. The authors (Wojcicki & Malala, 2001) recognise these processes as important to the demonstration of power and action, and assert that while individuals may view their

position in sex work from one of constraint, they are making micro choices that assert their agency to some degree.

Lastly, it was asserted that power was achieved through charging men for sex. Lucas (2005, p. 520) cites the words of a "prostitutes' rights activist". This suggests that through charging men for sex, women are empowered because they are receiving financial benefit from an act they are socially expected to provide. She asserts, "For some women to get paid for what all women are expected to do for free is a source of power for all women to refuse *any* free sex" (Lopez-Jones, 1998, cited in Lucas, 2005, p. 520). Consider the following quote from Dudu as she explains how she negotiates for more money, should the client require additional time: *"We teach the new comer when she go inside with the client the client mustn't play with her and he mustn't take longer than five minutes. If he want to take longer to be satisfied he must take out maybe R50 on top R50, to be R100."*

It became apparent through the other interviews that these women demonstrate agency in the way that they interact with their clients and the other sex workers. Their day-to-day negotiations involve a sense of agency. Women as a whole are oppressed, specifically black women, and within this group, each women has different life circumstances and a different history leading to the choices she has made. Instead of taking away their ability to make their own choices by blaming sex work, we need to empower this group of women by acknowledging their agency no matter how limited. Through this, stereotypes are broken, creating a path for progress in terms of gender equity (Mama, 2011).

"I can surrender my life as a sex worker": Challenges of Street-based Sex Workers

While the preceding section has illustrated the possibilities enabled by sex work, the majority of participants also communicated that sex work was difficult and undesirable as a form of work. Incidents of danger and discrimination that at times resulted in deep experiences of trauma were the main contributors of this perception. Participants emphasized their dislike of drunk and rude clients, the stress of poverty and illness, and the feelings of depression and anxiety that ensued as a result of working and fearing that they would be seen by family and friends. Individuals emphasized that they were only working to make ends meet and provide

for their dependents. Some suggested that sex work was at times, constructed as a life that was far from the ideal they had envisioned growing up: *"Oh sometimes I don't want to wake up. If I'm thinking about this I don't even want to wake up. But because it's what I have to do."* (Neo)

"It's like when they find you there, their first instinct is not to judge you. Their first instinct is you cry for help. Why are you here? Sometimes you get that "oh they not going to love me anymore, somebody saw me. Is the person I know? I don't know him." So paranoia, anxiety that your secret might come out at any time." (Lerato)

Sex workers suggested that sex work was difficult work that compromised mental health and was characterized by depression, anxiety, guilt and shame for a number of them. Depression was related to the negative events and difficulty of circumstances experienced by sex workers. The anxiety and guilt experienced whilst working resulted in feelings of distrust and shame, and enabled a life of secrecy. Experiences of depression and low self-esteem amongst sex workers have been reported in studies such as Chesney-Lind and Rodriguez (1983), Chudakov et al. (2002), Pyett and Warr (1999) and Wojcicki and Malala (2001). A sense of depression was characteristically associated with a sense of powerlessness and compromised choice for participants. This finding corresponds to those of Wojcicki and Malala (2001, pg. 107), who noted that "psychological problems" associated with feelings of powerlessness and having no choice but to continue in sex work. This may be due to reasons such as technical/educational inexperience, lack of education, economic dependence, and abusive family members or boyfriends. While they indicated a desire to stop working, or at least to take a break from sex work for a while, they constructed their position as one where they were financially tied to the work as a result of hand-to-mouth living and having to support their dependents as conveyed in the following excerpt by Neo: *"Like you see what I'm doing now, I don't like it so if I can find money to deposit my studies it's going to be better. But for now, I have to take care of my son."*

Another challenge that sex workers face is the susceptibility to danger, as well as, disease. Experiences of danger and discrimination were rife in the lives of the women I interviewed and form a substantial theme within stories of their experiences. Each woman came with her own story of violence (experienced directly or indirectly). This was often because of the prejudice and discrimination expressed towards sex workers by clients and police. Stories involved deep accounts of trauma experienced by the participants. Some participants were quick to recall

episodes and experiences of violence and danger while others did not appear to be comfortable in giving account of their experiences. The manner of narration may have been determined by the degree to which individuals had managed to work through these adverse situations and whether they were able to articulate their experiences of trauma. Violence and abuse exercised by clients and police often produced feelings of powerlessness and helplessness in participants. Below is an excerpt from the interview with Thuli which provides a chilling account of violence that she experienced with one of her clients.

"When you work late, someone is going to take you with his car, go somewhere in his place or somewhere. Other guys are not good. Someone take from here in JHB said must go to Booysen, you know Booysens? That side. When I was there in Booysen he took all of my money, my phone and then he was trying to kill me. He press my, I don't know what is it, my neck and then he rape me, he dump me there. It was 2o'clock in the night. I stay there, I wasn't know that place it was I was there. I tried to hike to come back no one was ready to help me cos it was at night. And I was not wearing; I was wearing a mini skirt. At the night they are afraid. Ooh I suffered a lot there." (Thuli)

There has been extensive research in South Africa that has showed that the majority of sex workers work in poor and dangerous conditions (Manoek, 2012). This has not only been because of the criminalised status of their work but also as a consequence to the complex nature of the unequal power relations between workers and clients that characterise this type of sexualised labour. The condition of the South African labour market with low literacy rates, high rates of unemployment, and low rates of education leave women with few options to make enough money to survive.

Women sex workers experience high levels of abuse from clients, the general public and law enforcers (Rangasami, 2015; Women's Legal Centre, 2012). The level of abuse of women sex workers by clients is very high (Fick, 2005). This is due to the fact that perpetrators, mainly clients know that sex workers are not protected by law in South Africa. These vivid examples below indicate how women sex workers are abused by clients.

"It's difficult to sleep with a man who doesn't bath. Even someone is dirty because of money you are going to sleep with him. Even other one without the money you sleep with them. It's difficult. Sometimes they don't want to pay when they are finished and you can't do anything.

Someone they hit you. Maybe three or four a day. Sometimes. Maybe the other client is drunk. It happened to me. But not every day, maybe twice or three times." (Patricia)

"It was February with a client at Rosebank and then when I go there to Rosebank I get to his house and then after that he don't want to pay me and then he beat me until I get hurt at the back. So after that he drop me at the bush in Dobsonville, it was around 2'oclock at night. There was no one there. I walk alone, I find someone. I don't know what is that place when that man picked me up." (Sbongile)

These are examples of how gender based violence (GBV) is rife among female sex workers because perpetrators take advantage that the violence they commit against sex workers will never be heard in court as sex work is illegal. This physical abuse often leaves physical scars that remind clients about dangers associated with sex work. Those scars act as a reminder for sex workers to take precautionary measures where necessary in order to save their lives. Violence against women is a form of discrimination as women are disproportionately affected on the basis of their gender. Gender violence is the physical manifestation of gendered attitudes and a representation of societal views of women. The objectification of women and allowing women's sexuality to be bought and sold as commodities in the sex industry is not a new phenomenon, but is rather an escalation of oppressive sociocultural attitudes and practices (Blue, 2001).

A source of distress perhaps greater than experiences of violence and trauma, was the frustration participants felt in not being able to report rape or client assaults because of the illegality of their work, as well as in the negative treatment they received at police stations. It has been argued that experiences of trauma are heightened when individuals feel unable to report violence to the police and feel that their experiences of trauma have been negated (Wojcicki & Malala, 2001). This is supported by the words of a sex worker quoted in Wojcicki and Malala's (2001, p. 105) study who said, 'They'll ask you questions that will traumatize you even more like "Did you enjoy it (the rape)?"' The concept of being re-traumatized through the negation of a traumatic event was addressed by Zihle: "*He take advantage even I you go to police they can't help you. She laughing. All police station they laughing. Sometimes you arrested and then if you want to go out you pay R300. Maybe if they take you Friday maybe, Monday late you come out. Even now every Friday they coming all the streets."*

The endurance and interference of trauma in an individual's life can be better explained when one views trauma in relation to the literature. According to Smelser (2004), trauma or the experiencing of trauma in a traumatic event, refers to a process whereby the individual is placed under a large degree of psychological stress, such that the individual feels overwhelmed by the experience and unable to cope with it. Earliest conceptualisations of trauma referred to it as being "a foreign body which long after its entry must continue to be regarded as an agent that is still at work" (Freud & Breuer, 1955, cited in Smelser, 2004, p. 33). Trauma is regarded as foreign in that it is not easily integrated into the individual's self-concept and overall life narrative, and consequently reappears and interferes in the lives of those it affects. It is argued that trauma endures as an unintegrated experience because, "Trauma survivors live not with memories of the past, but with an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion...and therefore...continues in the present" (Laub, 1992, cited in Rose, 1999, p. 161).

While the majority of participants were able to verbalise their experiences of violence and danger, those who had encountered deep levels of trauma articulated their experiences through the physical demonstrations of wounds, scars and tears. It has been argued that in cases of severe trauma, language fails to represent the experience and emotion of events that cannot be communicated linguistically (Schnell, 2000). Here, gestures and providing physical evidence of trauma provide better testimony than that which can be contained in words. This may explain the need for some participants to show, by demonstration of their scars, evidence of their wounds and traumas. In asking Patricia whether clients had been violent with her on many occasions, she replied: *"Here is my scar, this is where he bit me."*

It has been reported that sex workers experience violence by policemen on a regular basis and police brutality is rife in Johannesburg (Gould and Fick, 2009). However, the police did not play much of a role in the participants' stories. It was noted that the police do not harass sex workers as they did before. While few of the participant's spoke directly of trouble with the police, it seemed as if the police have been protecting them in exchange for sex, however, this was not clear. Sex workers would endure police brutality, however that does not seem like the case anymore, as seen by the following excerpts: *"Before the police was chasing us, now they don't. We are working with them. Like at night they protect us at night, the police. And the police are also the clients." (Sbongile)*

"Now there is no more police. They used to take you and go and lock insides the cells. Sometimes they beat you but now they don't do it anymore." (Neo)

"Also the police they were supporting us cos sometimes when we have the problem then we call them. Is not like before, I think it was 2009, 2010, 2011 they were beating us in the street but now they are not after us." (Lebo)

When asked about their experiences with clients, participants reported that they had experienced violence from clients. This violence included being raped, refused payment, stabbed by clients, and some clients have refused to wear a condom. It has been concluded from studies that sex workers are found to be more vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections as most clients refuse to use protection. Pettifor, Beksinska and Rees' (2002) Johannesburg based study found that clients are reluctant to use condoms and this makes sex workers vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases. Participants reported that they have experienced abuse from clients for refusing to have unprotected sex (Pettifor et al, 2000). Women reported that many clients will offer more money for sex without a condom, or will go to another woman who is willing to have sex without a condom, or will try to force them to have sex without a condom (Pettifor et al, 2000). Like Pettifor et al (2000), this study found that women have had experiences with clients who refuse to use protection and thus exposing them to sexual diseases. Below is an excerpt from an interview with Dudu where she recalls a traumatic incident with a client.

"*The bad thing about this is we sleeping with a client after that sometimes the client he don't give you the money. You can see how I look I don't have one teeth, it was the client was hitting me. You just going to leave when they don't want to pay because you can't go to the cops to report. You don't even know the client. The others want to sleep with us without the condoms, they want to force us. When they force sometimes you agree with that because he show you he can stab you or kill you."*

In addition to experiences of danger and discrimination, participants spoke about their experiences of illness, poverty, and homelessness in their work. The experience (directly or indirectly) of illness, was central to a number of participants' narratives. Illness took the form of having HIV/AIDS and/or the experience of regular check-ups and lifestyle changes associated with preventing infection and protecting oneself. Seven of the participants reported

having HIV, and a large part of the narratives of most participants included details of the routine check-ups and preventative measures they took to prevent themselves from being infected. A study by Wojcicki & Malala, (2011) indicates that due to the illegality of sex work, sex workers encounter difficulties accessing healthcare, specifically migrant sex workers. However, this study refutes this claim, as sex workers are able to access free healthcare services at Esselen Clinic in Hillbrow. This provides a new perspective on experiences of accessing healthcare services in Johannesburg and possibility of further research.

Consider the two excerpts below by Lindiwe and Neo, shedding light on their experiences with infections and accessing healthcare services:
"I'm taking the tablets for HIV. I start eating the AIDS tablets from 2014. When I go to clinic they check me. They found out my CD4 count is low I have to start. But I don't buy it, it is free. I take my treatment from the clinic every month. Albert Street. Everybody for this sickness is free the tablets. Its clinic for government." (Lindiwe)

"Because we are using condoms there but sometimes they bust so you can be pregnant or get HIV. I can't do anything if it happens. I just have to clean myself but you can't clean inside. At least maybe the pregnancy you can remove it but STD and HIV you can't. When you got it you got it. Sometimes I go to Esselen clinic because it is free for us. It is a mobile clinic. They just like normal clinic. You go inside and then you tell them the problem you have. If the condom bust you tell them that so they give you treatment. They are nice to us because they are the sex worker from before. They also give us counselling if something happens..." (Neo)

Research has indicated that HIV and STIs are high amongst the sex worker population because "sex workers, on average, by the nature of their profession, are making many more sexual decisions (i.e. different partners, etc) on a daily basis than their non-sex-worker counterparts" (Wojcicki & Malala, 2001, p. 101). Experiences of violence and danger were often coupled with those of illness due to the sexual compromises made in order to survive and protect oneself from further violence. Sexual compromises were made when sex workers were desperate for money, or were threatened by their client.

For some participants, sexual compromise was dealt with in fairly routine ways of preventing illness that involved going to the clinic and taking tablets to "clean" themselves, and for others,

it was expressed as an anxiety-provoking thought, as they were often offered more money to have sex without a condom.

"Right now I checked my HIV status two years back I was negative, but now I'm scared to take it again. Honestly I'm scared. They don't force to not use a condom but they offer you more money." (Lerato)

Campbell et al. (1998, pg. 51) argue that "Health-promoting sexual behaviours such as condom use are also determined by peoples' negotiated social and sexual identities". They maintain that in order for safe sexual behaviour to be promoted, it is necessary to address the social, cultural and communal contexts in which peoples' sexual identities are constructed and rooted. The authors argue that knowledge about the health risks involved in unprotected sex form but a part of the driving force involved when individuals make sexual decisions. They assert that "health-promoting sexual behaviours" are also determined by: the extent to which people feel empowered and are in control of their lives in general which determines the likelihood that they will feel they are in control of their sexual health; the extent to which the organisation of peoples' living and working conditions enables and supports the use of condoms (Campbell et al., 1998, p. 51).

For the most part, sex workers demonstrated an educated awareness about the risks involved in having unprotected sex. However, Campbell et al. (1998) contend that health-promoting sexual behaviour is perhaps even more influenced by the contexts in which individuals' sexual identities are constructed and reinforced. For people to express an educated awareness about the risks involved in having unprotected sex, they may have wished to construct their image and work from a perspective of respectability countering popular notions of engaging in careless and irresponsible sexual behaviour.

"No fighting, we all just friends": Competition and Cooperation

Due to the criminalization of sex work in South Africa, the role of social capital for women becomes more important. Putman (1995, p. 664) defines "social capital as features of social life, networks, norms and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives." Findings suggest that the migrant women were generally assisted by a friend or relative - someone already in South Africa in their migratory journey. These

networks included friends and relatives who were already settled in Johannesburg first. These provided the first point of call for women coming from other countries in Africa.

Migration has also allowed women to recreate a different identity and remake their story for family and friends back in their home country. Women reported that they tell their families and friends that they work as waitresses or domestic workers while they are in fact involved in sex work. One can see that even though distance offers women the opportunity to manage information received at home, they still grapple with the discourses of good and bad ways of earning money. While society values responsible parents who take care of their children, the same society condemns ways of earning money such as sex work as unacceptable. The sex work standpoint was formed as a way to support women's rights to autonomy and choice to enter any profession. According to feminist theory, the freedom to choose to enter sex work is as a human right and women have the right to do with their bodies whatever they choose (Blue, 2001).

It is also important to consider the intersectionality of race, class and foreign status that these sex workers face and how this has had an influence in their decisions to enter into sex work. Their lived realities are of having to face forms of discrimination because they are not from South Africa and being treated badly by men through a patriarchal lens. Women's body parts are seen as commodities, targeted and valued only for their ability to bring sexual fulfilment to men. Sexual objectification denies a woman her humanity by no longer recognizing her as a living, breathing human being. Feminist theory considers the sexual objectification of women as the cultural approval of violence against women. Sexual objectification is a form of gender oppression and women involved in sex work, experience this in a greater magnitude (Blue, 2001). Shame and fear are dominant emotions that sex workers have to live with especially in relation to their families.

"But now my third baby is here is visiting me for the winter but they don't know what work I do. They will hate me if they find out. Because even if I'm home they use to talk about the sex workers but they don't know I'm doing this job." (Lebo)

The preceding passage then works to explain Lebo's involvement in sex work as she emphasizes that she has a child and other relatives to take care of, so what can she do? The statement "but I have to take care of my child…." serves to justify actions and also highlights

the complexities experienced by women involved in sex work as they negotiate the notion of good mothers who take care of their children in ways that have been stigmatized by society.

Findings suggest that migration and the migratory process have empowered women in sex work. Piper (2005) shows that migration can be empowering for women, as they are able to carry out mothering roles across borders through instructions on how the money they have sent should be used and redistributed. They are also able to participate in decisions on family matters from far as they are consulted through telecommunications. The excerpt below explains how Lebo is able to earn an income in Johannesburg and send that money back home (Zimbabwe) to pay for her children's school fees.

"I'm working on the street. Sometimes when I wake up I was feeling very, very tired but there is nothing I can do I have to go work. Like each and every day I pay something like a Stokvel so that you can get the more money like, like R2500.00 each and every Friday. If I'm staying at home I can't get that money so I can send my children at home and they are all in school which I am paying for." (Lebo)

Literature on gender and migration such as the studies conducted by Ansell (2004) and Silvey (2001) suggest that migration is both a cause and consequence of women's empowerment. Women have been able to beat the economic crisis in the country and their families have survived the crisis through remittances they send home. Some women have also been able to acquire assets and property such as land and consumer durables such as cars they would otherwise not afford had they remained in their country or home province.

Landau and Monson point out that local South Africans often blame migrants for "the country's most visible social pathologies- crime, HIV/AIDS and unemployment" (2008, pg. 322). Wojcicki and Malala found that South African sex workers in Hillbrow thought that non-nationals charged clients less and drove down prices. Because of the competition, one South African sex worker in their study said of the foreign sex workers: "We hate each other in fact. Not even a fight, we hate each other" (Wojcicki & Malala 2001, pg. 13). The South African sex workers in that study admitted to making derogatory comments to foreign sex workers and about them to clients and even to assaulting them physically (Wojcicki & Malala 2001). However, the present study observed a sense of solidarity and ambivalence that appeared when interviewing the participants, offering a new trajectory and richer insight into the experiences

of sex workers, which has not been fully explored in prior literature. For instance, Dudu contends that relationships between immigrant and South African sex workers are civil. *"No we just friends. No fighting we all just friends. We thinking together about AIDS. We got our own clinic. We go to go check most of the time by Esselen clinic."* (Dudu)

On the other hand, Nokuthula's response suggests ambivalence. This feeling however, does not convey a sense of heightened tension between the two groups.

No there is no competition because we work together. But some people they say foreigners they take small money this and that. They are the one who spoiling clients. But if it's busy maybe I see more than 10 clients. These days it's not busy. If you get maybe five. Sometimes you go home without a client. I'm stay the whole day. But most of the people they are jealous. So don't support each other. I can't lie. For some if they know the client is dangerous, they can leave you to go with the client like that. (Nokuthula)

"I don't think there's a fight between South African women or foreigners. I think the fight is for customers. Even two Zimbabweans they can fight for the same customer. And friendship doesn't develop according to countries. It develops according to personalities. If you alcoholics then you will go with alcoholics. But South African's are more likely to be alcoholics. If you are a fashion star you will end up with other fashion stars, so I wouldn't say it's about South African or Zimbabwean or Lesotho or Xhosa it's about the fight you are fighting at that time." (Lerato)

In general, society adopts a moral and discriminatory attitude toward sex work (Mayhew & Mossman, 2007). In severe cases, it is believed that sex work is morally contagious. Sex workers are therefore treated as societal outcasts. Intersectional identities of sex workers and their various other identities, such as being female, black, impoverished and some possibly being illegal migrants, they face a deep sense of social exclusion and oppression. As a result, they lack the recognition associated with being an active and respected member of the wider community. According to Mayhew and Mossman (2007), in their research, the participants spoke of their desire to feel included in the community. Rejection by society forces the women to seek comfort and support elsewhere, which they find amongst each other. Sex workers gain a deep sense of comfort when they are surrounded by their 'own' in a family like environment (Mayhew & Mossman, 2007). We can see this solidarity demonstrated by Lindiwe:

"We working there together with Zimbabwean ladies. I'm already get my friends when I have problem inside, I just scream sometimes they come run and help me. Sometimes when I call the client he is not going to choose them he is just going to go inside with me straight. But the other client they come and choose. The other client he like fat the other one he like medium, the other one he like small body. But I like a client the one I can see that this one he did go school and can see when just look at him that this one is clever. I like client like that."

This implies that the community of sex workers hold unspoken values about the trust, behaviour and communication that should prevail within the group. They therefore establish their own community, consisting exclusively of sex workers. This fosters the sense of an 'us' versus 'them' mentality; sex workers versus society. Sex workers are aware of the general rejection by wider society and they form protective ways of working together.

Conclusion

The study sought to explore the ways in which sex workers told their stories of entry, agency, and challenges in sex work in order to gain a better understanding of how sex workers perceive their work and frame their presence in the sex work industry. It was particularly interested in the ways in which these stories incorporated expressions of choice and whether these paradigms were adequate in representing the reality of their lives. It sought to provide sex workers with the opportunity to voice their own experiences and thoughts on sex work, and contribute towards knowledge of sex work contained outside of numerical interpretations. It employed a qualitative approach to data collection in order to allow individuals the freedom to bring their own information to the interview setting, and so allow for the gap between the "researcher" and the "researched" to be lessened. A thematic analysis was used in exploring the various constructions and representations made by sex workers in talking about their stories of entry and experience, and the meanings they ascribed to their work and presence in the industry.

Four broad themes, representative of the main research interests, were developed over the course of the research report. They categorised the content of the accounts into themes of

Poverty, Agency, Challenges, and Competition and Cooperation. Stories of poverty were reported by a number of participants. They were constructed as an important reason for entry into sex work because they affected the women's ability to gain educational and technical skills. The construction of an alternative narrative highlighted the ability and freedom of sex workers to determine which experiences they constructed as significant or insignificant to their entry and the possible reasons for why they may have presented this view to the researcher. They also communicated a strong sense of choice in entering the industry and may have presented this view because they wanted to project a positive image of sex work.

The first sex work experience was spoken of with ambivalence. A number of participants communicated a mental conflict in their decision to continue working in sex work after a negative first experience was reported. The narrative of 'victimhood' or 'active agent' (entry and continuation in sex work owing to constraint or choice respectively) was not observed in its entirety. While the first experience as a sex worker was typically described as unpleasant and bad, it provided relief in the financial support it supplied. A continuation in sex work was then constructed as being necessary to the participant's survival, yet something which they were not necessary happy to do. While participants may have demonstrated constraint in their circumstances and feelings of entrapment, they demonstrated agency in entering and continuing sex work as a means to reduce this sense of victimhood. This did not, however, mean that entry and continuation in sex work was perceived from a perspective entirely of choice.

While the majority of participants communicated a dislike of sex work that was related to negative experiences, inconsistent income, violence, anxiety and depression and feelings of powerlessness, they communicated that enjoyment of sex work was related to being treated well by clients, feeling accepted, and playing an active role in bettering one's circumstances. Entry into sex work was not constructed as a preferred choice, but as a way of living by some participants. Lucas' (2005) asserted that sex work was an expression of women's agency and empowerment. However, there were also women that perceived sex work as a means of bettering their life circumstances. Thus, taking an active role to reduce their feelings of powerlessness.

Some challenges that were mentioned pertained to contracting HIV and being abused by clients. Although, this has become their everyday reality, they have found comfort in Esselen

Clinic which offers free services to them. However, there are no guarantees to their safety. Forming relationships with other sex workers that work at the same street corner or the same building has become imperative for their well-being and safety. It seems like they have grown a sense of community with other sex workers and are able to rely on them for support and safety during their day. Some of these sex workers happen to be immigrants, and while this may cause conflict for some local sex workers, as noted in the study conducted by Putman (1995), the participants in this study have portrayed a sense of support between migrant and local sex worker groups. Despite their migrant status, these sex workers seem to have formed solidarity and protective friendships with each other. This has been surfaced through this study and not found in prior literature, thus, provides possibility for further research into this area.

The participants in this study did not shed much light on their views of decriminalization and therefore it was not made a prominent theme, however, it was concluded that the decriminalization of sex work in South Africa was not a real concern for them. The immigrant sex workers in this study did not find much benefit in potential decriminalization as they do not have the proper documentation to be in South Africa. While it has been argued that criminalisation is not an appropriate response to sex work as it achieves neither the cessation nor prevention of sex work and prevents sex workers from reporting experiences of violence due to its illegal nature, I question whether the decriminalisation of sex work would be a more appropriate response. While it would challenge the stigma of sex work as an illegal activity and ideally reduce the level of discrimination and violence it attracts, it would not in itself address the contextual issues such as poverty that serve as important antecedents for women's entry into and continuation in sex work (as represented within the current study). This may be an important starting point to consider in the creation and implementation of intervention strategies exercised by outreach programmes in making contact and building relationships with individuals within this marginalised and exploited group of the population.

The theoretical framework of this study is what lends it its uniqueness and contribution to other bodies of literature. It adopts a more social view of human beings and thus seeks to work against pathologizing sex work that would come from a more intrapsychic view. Moreover, the deconstruction of the choice/constraint binary transforms the identities of sex workers from subjects into agents. This change allows for the identities of sex workers to be understood as fluid, rather than static, thus offering a more accurate depiction of how their meanings are constructed. The documentation of the experiences of sex workers is also limited by the

questions that the researcher asks and attempts to answer. However, I believe that my methodology and reflections on interviewing these sex workers, were integral in my understanding of their realities and can be linked directly to intersectionality. It may have been beneficial in my methodology of this study, if I had partook in an ethnography approach, thus being able to gain the participants trust over time. This could have allowed the participants to feel comfortable to delve into their childhoods, thus, gaining richer data. I also acknowledge a possibility that language and cultural barriers inhibit certain stories to be illuminated about the experiences of sex workers. Overcoming language and cultural barriers in conjunction with the impossibility of recounting the experiences of every sex worker on the planet makes it difficult to create an accurate depiction of sex workers. Many factors such as language and culture influence the stories that are already published. In addition to the influence of language and culture in the construction of knowledge, the diversity of stories and standpoints complicate how any truth can be written.

Feminist theory can be used to complicate the discourse about the root of oppression and the causes of sex work. The many debates within feminism about sex work both support and challenge the argument that women who engage in sex work fit into an agent/victim dichotomy. Due to a culture that has allowed men to believe they have a right to control women's sexuality, feminists agree that whether sex work is considered chosen or voluntary, the practice itself perpetuates a patriarchal structure that is harmful to women (hooks, 2000). Patriarchal notions rooted in the gendered organization of society erase the possibility of agency within sex work. The evidence of agency on behalf of women who chose to enter into sex work as well as the stories told by women in this study, the voices of sex workers, prove that there is agency as well as empowerment in sex work. Feminist theory also calls for the inclusion of the voices of sex workers. The voices of sex workers contribute to the exploration of how meaning is made, how women and work are defined, and how sex workers see and define themselves. The deconstruction of the agency/victim binary transforms the identities of sex workers from agents into subjects. This change allows for the identities of sex workers to be understood as fluid, rather than static, thus offering a more accurate depiction of how their meaning is constructed. Therefore, whilst feminist theory recognizes sex workers as agential beings, we cannot ignore that some of the participants have depicted stories of poverty which has lead them into sex work, which has created the agency/victim binary.

Intersectionality has been important in articulating the fact that multiple identities combine to bring about different experiences for women in both their everyday and professional lives. Hence where more than one category of identity is oppressed or discriminated against, "the simultaneous experiences of all the (different) identities result in different meanings and experiences than what could be captured by consideration (of a single category alone)" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1299). Within feminist studies, intersectionality has encouraged the study of women's experiences to consider the "multiple identities" of women in terms of race, gender, social class and sexual orientation as the main categories of identity (Ransby, 2000). The advocates of intersectionality have rightly argued that considering one element of a woman's identity will lead to a partial understanding of the total picture, which, while true, will also be incomplete. For example, a black female sex worker will have experiences that are informed by gender, race, class and sexual orientation, as well as the environment she works in. A white woman sex worker will not experience issues related to race even though she may face gender-related issues. A black female migrant sex worker, will experience gender-related issues, race and class issues, as well as a foreign status. The intersectional lens adopted in this study helped to consider the experiences of a black woman from a gender, race, local or migrancy status, and class perspective simultaneously as part of the total experience and not the different individual categories.

Recommendations

On a practical level, having heard the stories of these women and the immense amount of violence and trauma they are exposed to, I can only but stress the need for more services aimed at caring for and providing the necessary counselling and support for sex workers who are trying to rebuild their lives after experiencing the shattering effects of trauma. The majority of sex workers voiced that they would prefer to engage in alternative forms of work, but without the provision of employment, such preferences will not be realised. A community-based 'story-telling' forum, may therefore be suggested as useful in allowing for solidarity and support between women and the traumas experienced by sex workers to be documented, represented and expressed, in order for healing and effective intervention strategies to ensue. Intervention strategies aimed at helping sex workers ought to take a holistic approach to providing care and

support, so that the individual's economic, social, physical, spiritual, and psychological needs are addressed, and not treated in isolation of one another. Patriarchy and poverty are central problems in sex workers lives. These need to be centred in order ultimately address the plight of sex workers. Moreover, the experiences of street based sex workers and those based in more high end 'brothels' may be significantly different. It is therefore important to disaggregate the experiences of sex workers in order to craft appropriate interventions. Future research should keep this nuance in mind.

Limitations of the study

Qualitative research often draws on information gathered from small samples. This means that findings cannot be generalised to the larger population. Looking at the individual narratives of 10 street based participants was not expected to shed light on the experiences and perceptions of all sex workers in Johannesburg. It did however, shed insight on the ways in which street based sex workers constructed their experiences and interpreted their realities, as well as provided a canvas for studying processes of story-telling and change, and the influence of social, political, and cultural contexts on the development of individual scripts. It allowed 10 sex workers to voice their experiences of sex work and contribute towards the growing body of research that seeks to bridge the gap between the 'knower' and the 'known', and draw those on the margin into the process of creating knowledge (Wahab, 2003).

Interviews became more focused when the three specific research interests of my study were identified, and research questions, reflecting those interests, were developed. Similarly, thematic analysis tends to neglect the exploration of the impact of the local context on a story's narration. This may lead readers to perceive the narrative as an uninterrupted account of an individual's experiences and view the narrative as an individually constructed account. The perhaps unnatural requirement for individuals to promptly narrate their personal stories to a stranger (especially given the highly stigmatized nature of the topic) can also be seen as a limitation of the approach. Murray (2003), suggests that to ameliorate this challenge, it is better to meet with participants on several occasions. This may reduce the anxiety associated with sharing one's narrative with a stranger. While this may help modify the approach's limitations, it is important to note that it may not be feasible as a practical and realistic option, as often (and

in the case of this study) participants do not have the time and/or will to participate in a prolonged research process, and the researcher may not have the financial support to fund such processes. Having acknowledged this potential limitation of the interview approach, I have been aware of the possible influence I had on the participant during the interview, in terms of how the participant may have perceived me as an Indian student and told her experiences and meanings, accordingly.

Riessman (2008) warns that during data analysis, the researcher needs to be aware of how they have constructed a particular story from a participant's narrative. Furthermore, Parker (2005) cautions the researcher against interpreting an individual's narrative as 'truth' or searching for underlying meanings that are not necessarily communicated. The aim of research should not be to seek out the 'truth' but to rather explore the ways in which individuals construct and define their life stories in order to examine the ways their experiences become true to them (Parker, 2005). With this in mind, a focus on how experiences and meanings were constructed and described was made.

Lastly, the data that was collected during interviews, could have been richer, should biographical information have been attained. Even though, the questions in the interview addressed aspects of biography, it appeared that participants were unwilling to provide detail into their childhoods and background. This may highlight possible trauma that they may have experienced and avoidance of the feelings that may be elicited when providing accounts of these experiences. Furthermore, this reluctance may underpin a sense of fear of the consequences that may ensue, should their illegal migration status be discovered.

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APPENDIX A

Information Sheet

I am Sanam Naran, and I am currently conducting research in order to obtain a Master's Degree in Community-Based Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. The aim of this research is to study some aspects of the lives of ten sex workers in Johannesburg and explore the challenges they might face.

This project will be run under the supervision of Prof Hugo Canham and we would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Should you agree to participate in this study, we request your availability for an interview at a time that suits you. The interviews will take place at a location near your workplace. The interview will likely last one hour. If you agree, I will record the interview and take notes through the process. This will also ensure that everything said during the interview is analysed with accuracy. Under no circumstances shall any identifying information be included in this report, and everything that you say will be kept under the utmost confidentiality.

It is imperative that you understand that you are not forced to participate in this study and should you choose to not be a part of this study, there will be no negative implications for you.

Participation is completely voluntary. Should you wish to participate, you are also not obliged to answer any questions that you are not comfortable to answer. At any point during the research and or interview, you may withdraw your participation by informing me that you are

unwilling to continue. You are at complete liberty to decide how much information to share with me and my aim is to ensure your ease and comfort at all times. In all publications and reports I will not refer to you by your real name but will make use of a pseudonym. Tape recordings and transcripts will only be accessible to me and my supervisor. These interviews constitute a large part of this study and are regarded as essential data. Both the recordings and subsequent transcriptions will be safe as they will be kept on a password protected computer.

There should be no harm nor risks attached to this study. However, should you wish, after speaking with me that you would like to consult with a counsellor to discuss some of the issues which you might have brought up, a service is available free of charge from the Emthonjeni Centre on Jan Smuts Avenue, Braamfontein. It is just inside the Wits university campus. You can call them on (011) 717 4513. If you would prefer to talk to a counsellor over the telephone, these are some numbers you may call: Lifeline 0861 322 322; South African Depression and Anxiety Group (011) 234 4837; People Opposing Woman Abuse (011) 642 4345.

Should you choose to participate in the study, please kindly complete this form. For any further questions or concerns please feel free to call or email me on 0769024042 or sanam.naran@gmail.com or my supervisor, Prof Hugo Canham on 0117174516 or hugo.canham@wits.ac.za

Kindest regards,
Sanam Naran

I have read and understood the Information Sheet

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX B

Participant Consent Form

I, _____, consent to being interviewed by Sanam Naran, for her study exploring the stories of sex workers in inner-city Johannesburg. Please tick relevant boxes. I understand that:

- Participation in this study is voluntary. ☐
- I may refrain from answering any questions. ☐
- I may withdraw my participation and/or my responses from the study at any time before the research report is examined. ☐
- There are no risks or benefits associated with participation in this study. ☐
- All information provided will remain confidential, although I may be quoted in the research report. ☐
-If I am quoted, a pseudonym (Participant A, Respondent B etc.) will be used. ☐
- None of my identifiable information will be included in the research report. ☐
- I am aware that the results of the study will be communicated in the form of a research report or journal articles. ☐
- The research may also be presented at a local/international conference and published in a journal and/or book chapter. ☐

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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PSYCHOLOGY
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

APPENDIX C

Recording and Quotation Consent Form

I, _____ give my consent for my interview with Sanam Naran, to be audio recorded for their study. Please tick the relevant boxes. I understand that:

- The audio-recordings and transcripts will not be seen or heard by anyone other than the researchers and/or their research assistants. ☐

- The audio-recordings and transcripts will be kept in a password protected computer. ☐

- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report. ☐

- Although direct quotes from my interview may be used in the research report, I will be referred to by a pseudonym. ☐

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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APPENDIX D

Interview Schedule

Part one:

Building rapport:

- As the participant is taking time out of her daily life, she will be thanked for agreeing to be a part of this project.
- A short briefing will ensue. The participant will be informed about her rights within the study and interview process. I will explain who I am and what my intentions are. (I am a 24 year old, M1 student, currently studying at the University of the Witwatersrand. I have an interest towards sex workers, which is why I have chosen to ensue this study)
- The participant will then be told about what this study entails and the rights that they have within this study.
- She will be issued with a consent form and an ethics form.
- A collection of demographical information will be taken: Age, marital status, dependents etc.
- The interview will begin with the opening question of; "Tell me something about yourself?" This gives agency to the participant as she can then choose exactly what to reveal which will set the tone for the rest of the interview.
- The second topic will regards the participants childhood and will be lead by the question: "Tell me about your childhood?"

Part two:

Directed towards the current study:

- How long have you worked as a sex worker?
- How did you enter this industry?
- Tell me about your family? (analysing the theme of support)
- What are some of the challenges that you face as a sex worker working in Johannesburg? (Start discussing HIV, condom use, violence, police brutality, health care and social care etc, if she brings any of them up)
- Have you experienced any violence or abuse in your industry or in your life? Please elaborate.
- What has this career allowed you to do financially, that you could not do before?

Part 3:

Working conditions/advice to other sex workers:

- Do you have any advice for other sex workers that are new in this industry?
- Tell me about your working conditions? (Safety)
- Has the government impacted your life as a sex worker in any way? (Laws)

APPENDIX E

Ethics Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MACC/18/008 IH**
PROJECT TITLE:	Sex in the city: exploring agency and challenges in the narratives of sex workers
INVESTIGATORS	Naran Sanam
DEPARTMENT	Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	29 May 2018
DECISION OF COMMITTEE*	Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 29 May 2018

CHAIRPERSON
(Prof. Hugo Canham)

cc Supervisor:

Dr Hugo Canham
Psychology

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)

To be completed in duplicate and **one copy** returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2020

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES