Fractured families: pathways to sex work in Nairobi, Kenya

by

Melanie Dawn Ross
B.A., University of Victoria, 2001

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Anthropology

Supervisory Committee

Fractured families: pathways to sex work in Nairobi, Kenya

by

Melanie Dawn Ross
B.A., University of Victoria, 2001

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Lisa M. Mitchell, (Department of Anthropology)
Supervisor

Dr. Eric Roth, (Department of Anthropology)
Departmental Member

Dr. Helga Hallgrimsdottir (Department of Sociology)
Outside Member

Abstract

Supervisory Committee
Dr. Lisa M. Mitchell, (Department of Anthropology)
Supervisor
Dr. Eric Roth, (Department of Anthropology)
Departmental Member
Dr. Helga Hallgrimsdottir, (Department of Sociology)
Outside Member

The reasons *why* African women become engaged in sex work have received little attention in academic research. While it is largely acknowledged that there exists a connection between entering the sex trade and poverty, not all women who are poor enter sex work. Through the use of life histories with 21 women between the ages of 18 and 42, this thesis explores the combination of factors that lead women and girls to become commercial sex workers in Nairobi, Kenya. This method provides a detailed look at initiation into sex work as it occurs over the life course for women and girls in this context. Additionally, this thesis examines how structural violence impinges on their lives, thereby increasing vulnerability to engagement in sex work. Examining the larger socio-political and economic contexts illustrates how issues such as HIV/AIDS, migrant labour, changing gender roles, the erosion of existing familial structures and gender inequities structure risk for suffering for women. These issues result in many girls losing caregiver support by being orphaned, while additionally, women are burdened with providing total economic and social support for the family in a society that has gendered economic opportunities. Both girls and women are left with few options other than the sex trade to survive.

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee ..... **ii**

Abstract ..... **iii**

Table of Contents ..... **iv**

List of Tables ..... **vi**

Acknowledgments ..... **vii**

Dedication ..... **viii**

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION **1**

1.1 Research Objective *2*

1.2 Research Questions *4*

1.3 Significance *4*

1.4 Methodology and Methods *5*

1.5 Thesis Outline *6*

1.6 A Note on Terminology *7*

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW **9**

2.1 Ethnographic Context *9*

2.2 Structural Context *14*

2.3 Health Promotion Interventions Aimed at FSWs *19*

2.4 Gender, Poverty and Gendered Economic Opportunity *23*

2.5 Chapter Summary *25*

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS **27**

3.1 Methodology *27*

3.2 Participants *32*

3.3 Recruitment of Participants *34*

3.4 Methods *35*

3.5 Materials and Data Analysis *46*

3.6 Chapter Summary *60*

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS **63**

4.1 Group Factors and Themes *65*

4.2 Age Analysis *79*

4.3 Chapter Summary *91*

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION **94**

5.1 Introduction *94*
5.2 Discussion of Results and Emerging Theory *95*
5.3 Returning to the Research Questions *106*
5.4 Comparison with South Africa *108*
5.5 Age Analysis Discussion *112*
5.6 Chapter Summary *115*

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION **118**
6.1 Future Areas of Study *120*
6.2 Recommendations *121*
6.3 Knowledge Translation *122*

REFERENCES CITED **124**

Appendix 'A': Interview Questions **132**

Appendix 'B': Participant Profiles **134**

Appendix 'C': Recruitment Poster **136**

Appendix 'D': Letter of Information **137**

Appendix 'E': Consent Form **138**

List of Tables

Table 3-1: Example of Data Matrix.....52
Table 4-1: Recurring Factors Delineated Spatially and Temporally.....69

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the women from Nairobi who shared their stories with me. Their candour and willingness to impart their life histories exemplifies the resilience within each of them that is utterly inspiring. I am indebted to Dr. Elizabeth Ngugi and the team at the Kenya Voluntary Women's Rehabilitation Centre who work assiduously to help sex workers and their children in Kenya. This project would not have been possible without their collaboration and percipient knowledge of the lives of women in Kenya.

I am grateful to the members of my supervisory committee for their valuable feedback and comments throughout the preparation of each of the drafts of this thesis. I owe much gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Lisa Mitchell for her guidance and insightfully critical appraisal of my research project at every stage of the process. I am grateful to Dr. Eric Roth for his enthusiasm and expert contribution in all aspects of the research. I wish to thank him for allowing me to accompany him to Kenya and for introducing me to his colleague, Dr. Ngugi. I am thankful to Dr. Helga Hallgrimsdottir for her meaningful comments and for engaging me to think critically.

Thank you to my family for your unconditional love and encouragement. Thank you to my dog Sophie for reminding me to get outside and for faithfully keeping me company under my desk until all hours of the night.

Finally, I am eternally grateful to my best friend and husband Ed, who supported me in every way, every step of the way. Thank you for your tireless enthusiasm and understanding and for your careful reading and scrupulous editing skills. Thank you for believing in me and encouraging me. And, to my baby daughter Kamryn, I am grateful to you for reinforcing to me the importance of completing this thesis and for helping me to keep things in perspective.

This research was generously supported by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the University of Victoria through fellowships, grants and scholarships. I wish to acknowledge the Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Education, Science & Technology for granting me permission to conduct this research.

For my beautiful daughter Kamryn Maria,
you are the smile in my heart, the love in my soul and the light of my life.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> *Okay, when you started* [*sex work*] *it was okay. But it becomes sometimes difficult when you get sick. Those days, you go with somebody who doesn't like to put on a condom and because you are looking for money, you just have to accept the way the man wants it. So it was difficult because I hadn't been sick before. But, when I go there, I get sick, life becomes difficult now. I start feeling it. It is not good. I asked my colleagues what to do, they told me that it is nothing, they take me to the hospital, but even before I recover, I still go back to look for money. So it was not good, but money, being the issue, I didn't mind, yeah.*
>
> (Lynne)

Globally, and particularly in the developing world context, sex work both causes suffering and is caused by suffering. Women and girls involved in the sex trade in Kenya face many risks: being beaten, being raped, not receiving payment, being robbed, contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, facing harassment and abuse from police and being subjected to social stigma directed at themselves and their children.

Research on female sex workers (FSWs) in Africa has focused on determining their role as sexually transmitted infection (STI) "reservoirs" (D'Costa et al. 1985:64) and "core groups" (Parker 2003:182) for HIV transmission. The epidemiological factors that contribute to the spread of HIV are related to both the biological and social contexts within which sex work is situated. FSWs' vulnerability to HIV is compounded by gender inequalities, stigmatization, disempowerment and socioeconomic marginalization (Gysels et al. 2002; Ngugi et al. 1996; Elmore-Meegan et al. 2004). Although epidemiological research of STIs among FSWs is necessary, especially given that the median prevalence

rate of HIV infection among FSWs in major urban areas in Kenya was 27% in 2000 (UNAIDS and WHO 2004), the reasons *why* African women enter sex work have received little attention. Gysels et al. (2002) acknowledge that while there is a connection between entering the sex trade and poverty, not all women who are poor enter sex work and currently "[l]ittle is known about the background of commercial sex workers in Africa" (179). Kalipeni and colleagues (2004) argue that with an increased understanding of the factors leading girls and women to enter the sex trade, effective prevention programmes can be established.

1.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research is to identify factors that lead women and girls to become involved in sex work in Nairobi, Kenya. Elmore-Meegan et al. (2004) point out that in Kenya in 1999 "an estimated 6.9% of women nationally said they had exchanged sex for money, gifts or favours in the previous year" (50). In Kenya, different categories of FSWs exist and the boundary between what is considered sex work and what is not is often unclear, as "[m]any [FSWs] have a regular client, often referred to as 'boyfriend,' 'lover,' or 'husband'" (Ngugi et al. 1996:S241). The heterogeneity of this population is reflected in the fluidity of engagement in sex work, as "[w]omen sometimes mix sex work with other economic activities and move in and out of it over time" (S241). The factors that lead women and girls to enter sex work are not only unique for each individual, but are also unique at various stages of the involvement process. Since FSWs in Kenya are not a homogenous group, limiting the population sample controls for some of this heterogeneity. I have limited the population sample by recruiting self-identified former sex workers over 18 years of age who are involved with the Kenya Voluntary

Women's Rehabilitation Centre (K-VOWRC). K-VOWRC is a non-governmental organization headed by Dr. Elizabeth N. Ngugi that assists FSWs move out of sex work by providing vocational and entrepreneurial education and training as well as micro-credit loans for women to start and run their own businesses.

The literature on African FSWs reveals that while various categories of sex workers and the fluid nature of engagement in sex work are widely recognized, identification of factors that lead women to involvement in sex work is lacking. My research uses life histories to elicit the proximal, medial and distal factors that lead women into sex work. The terms 'proximal', 'medial' and 'distal' appear in the social determinants of health literature and refer to the socio-spatial distance between health determinants and individuals (see Starfield 2001). In the context of my research, proximal factors include fulfilling the immediate needs of the individual, such as a daily requirement to earn money to buy food. Medial factors include processes that require the individual to engage in sex work for reasons not directly related to her, but that affect her (e.g. a requirement to earn money to care for her younger siblings). Distal factors include the macro-level structures such as, the political economy of the nation state, colonialism, a reliance on migrant labour, etc. Additionally, I examine various times throughout the life course of FSWs, as exemplified by past childhood experiences, transitional times during which she is beginning to perform transactional sex, and once engagement in sex work becomes more regular. By analyzing the factors that contribute to leading women and girls into sex work as they correlate to spatial and temporal qualities of the life course, research results will be applicable to the development and implementation of intervention programmes for K-VOWRC.

Dr. E.N. Ngugi and my supervisory committee member, Dr. Eric Roth have observed two distinct age ranges of entry into sex work for women and girls in Nairobi (Ngugi and Roth n.d.). I examine my own interview data in conjunction with this 'Dual Entry Model.' This Model raises new questions about what leads Kenyan women to sex work at different times throughout the life course and as such, this qualitative research also aims to shed light on this observation.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Through the use of life histories of 21 former female sex workers between the ages of 18 and 42, this research attempts to answer why women enter sex work in Nairobi, Kenya. Specifically, the research addresses the following questions: (1) how does a woman's childhood and/or background affect her risk for entering sex work later in life, (2) what factors place young women at risk of becoming involved in sex work, and, (3) what factors place women at risk for remaining in sex work and/or engaging in transactional sex on a regular basis? My usage of the term *risk* here takes into account the socio-economic context within which women and girls can become involved in selling sex in Nairobi. It is important to note that this term implies a vulnerability to engagement in sex work, which as will be shown, exists for women and girls in Nairobi due to limited other viable pathways and the emerging necessity to provide total support for themselves and family members.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE

This research will contribute to the development and implementation of programmes intended to reduce the number of women entering sex work in Nairobi, Kenya. As of 2004, 1.2 million people were living infected with HIV/AIDS in Kenya

(UNAIDS and WHO 2004). This research focuses on a 'core group' for HIV and other STIs (Parker 2003), which can have important implications for reducing HIV and STI transmission rates. In addition, this research has possible benefits to the state of knowledge since currently little is known about East African FSWs (Gysels et al. 2002). It will benefit the current state of knowledge regarding the identification of factors that lead young women to enter sex work in Nairobi, Kenya. Participants may also benefit from the opportunity of recounting their life histories. Sharing her life history provides each woman with an opportunity to describe and provide meaning to experiences and choices in her life, which can be meaning-making and identity-forming (Gysels et al. 2002). Additionally, the research will benefit Dr. Ngugi, K-VOWRC and the women it serves by contributing to the development and implementation of intervention programmes.

1.4 METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This research is a qualitative critical inquiry using in-depth, semi-structured interviews to elicit the life histories of the women participants. *Methodology* refers to the underlying theory guiding the research and it links the methods to the outcomes of the research (Cresswell 2003). Guiding this research is a critical inquiry methodology with the aim that the findings are used for positive change (Patton 2002). Additionally, the methodology draws on grounded theory by identifying theory inductively from the research (Patton 2002).

Methods refer to the tools used to collect data and conduct the research. The life history method provides rich, detailed accounts of the women's lives and the factors that lead them to sex work. Life history is "a way of expressing experience, and as reality

manifests itself as experience in us, stories are [as a result] fundamental to human understanding" (Steffen 1997:99). This method produces narratives that recount the life course of the individual. Thus, it is possible to examine how particular factors structure risk for engagement in sex work at various times in the individual's life and analyze entry into sex work processually. Additionally, life histories provide the socio-spatial context of the factors that lead women into sex work taking into account the effects of structural violence and inequalities throughout the life course. A detailed description and rationale of the methodology and methods used are presented in Chapter Three. This research has been approved by the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board.

1.5 THESIS OUTLINE

In Chapter Two, *Literature Review*, I situate my research within the existing body of research relevant to this thesis. In particular, the literature review is organized around four main topics: ethnographic context; structural context; health promotion interventions aimed at FSWs; and, gender, poverty and gendered economic opportunity.

In Chapter Three, *Methodology and Methods*, I discuss the methodological approach driving the research and the methods used in conducting the research. In this chapter, I describe the methodology as a qualitative critical inquiry drawing on elements of grounded theory and I illustrate how I recruited participants and used the specific methods of open-ended, semi-structured interviews and life histories to gather data. Finally, I present the methods I used to analyze the narrative data.

Chapter Four, *Findings and Results* is a presentation of research findings from the interviews and the results of the life history analysis. The results illustrate recurring

themes, sub-themes and meaning found within the narratives. Additionally, the findings are organized to account for the socio-spatial and temporal dimensions.

In Chapter Five, *Discussion*, I interpret the results of my analysis within the greater body of existing research. I illustrate the theories that have emerged from the findings, return to the research questions and present the answers drawn from the results.

Chapter Six is the *Conclusion*, where I summarize my results and discussion. I include a synopsis of the most important findings and the contributions of the study. Finally, I provide possible directions for future study and recommendations.

1.6 A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

In this thesis, *female sex worker* refers to a woman or young woman who engages in "transactional sex" (Dunkle et al. 2004:1581-1582) to survive. *Transactional sex* is the act of trading sexual activities for money, goods, gifts, favours and/or services. In the developing world context, *survival sex* refers to transactional sex for the purpose of staying alive (Kilbride et al. 2000). It is important to note, as Talle (1995) does, that caution must be used in applying the term *prostitution* when describing sex work in the developing world, since it "is heavily charged with moral and ethical values and set in a specific historical and social context, [that] does not take account of the economic realities to which women are often subjected" (25). The term *sex worker* must also be carefully considered, as Barry (1995) argues that, 'sexual labour' or 'sex work' imbues the notion of normalcy and that, within that frame, it "*should be* labor, or a condition of laboring, work that anyone should be able to engage in at a fair wage with full benefits of social services" (67). A normalization of survival sex would require that the path into sex work occurs under typical conditions, however, the choice between sex work or extreme

suffering cannot be regarded as normal. Although the terms *female sex worker* and *sex work* might imply a certain degree of normalcy, within the context of this research, the only normalcy imbued within the term *sex work* is that it was part of these women's lives and for them the 'normal circumstances' that necessitated their engagement in it, as will be shown, resulted from the suffering caused by structural violence. It is also important to note that in the interviews, there exists great variation in the lexicon used by the women themselves when referring to sex work, including: "*sex job*", "*that job*", "*that sex job*", "*commercial sex*", "*commercial sex work*", "*going with a man*", "*getting a man*", "*going to sleep with a man*" and "*finding a boyfriend*." Despite its problems, *female sex worker* is the more commonly accepted term, and as such, it will be used here.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

There exists a wealth of literature about FSWs in Africa. In positioning my research within this greater body of literature, I discuss the literature in terms of four issues pertinent to my research: the ethnographic context, structural context, health promotion intervention programmes aimed at FSWs and gender, poverty and gendered economic opportunity. In the review of literature pertaining to the ethnographic context, I present issues specific to Kenya and sub-Saharan Africa in general. Topics covered include: Kenyan cultural practices, eroding kinship systems, structural violence, political economy and history, HIV/AIDS and the orphan crisis and the context of sex work in Kenya. The section on structural context explores understanding relationships of inequality as a theoretical framework for this research. Within this section, I discuss how this inequality is structured at a national level for Kenya as it is positioned within the global system through its history of colonialism and capitalism. I present the current literature pertaining to health promotion and prevention programmes aimed at FSWs and the value of peer networks and peer education. Finally, I review the literature pertaining to why African women enter sex work within the context of gender, poverty and gendered economic opportunity. I present a critique of the limits to current research including the heavy focus on FSWs as transmitters of infection. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of my research questions as they emerged from the review of the literature.

2.1 ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

To study the circumstances within which women in Kenya become vulnerable to

engaging in sex work, it is necessary to outline the cultural context of the Kenyan people in general. Cattel points out that Kenyan cultural practices include raising children in large inter-generational families (Kilbride et al. 2000). Kinship follows patrilineal descent with patrilocality as the dominant residence pattern (Kilbride et al. 2000). It is important to note that a consequence of patriarchy includes a lowering of the status of women within the society. This disempowerment may lead to negative results such as a lack of education (Sudarkasa 1982) and a reduced ability to negotiate condom usage (Gysels et al. 2002) and can contribute to the creation of sex-role differentiation and gendered economic opportunities (Sudarkasa 1982).

Bridewealth is paid by the groom's family and marriages are regarded as an alliance between two families rather than solely between the married couple (Kilbride et al. 2000). Weisner points out that in Kenya, the reciprocal family ties of 'sibling caretaking', ensures extended kin, especially along sibling lines, provide for each other in times of need (Kilbride et al. 2000:26). Consequently, when confronted with a disruption in the family due to a loss of the productive members of the household, such as the death of the primary caregivers or parents from HIV/AIDS or their absence due to migrant labour, older siblings might resort to sex work to care for younger siblings.

Kenya is traditionally a polygynous society, in which a wealthy man marries more than one wife and is charged with caring for each wife, his children and extended family members with sufficient land and economic resources (Kilbride et al. 2000). However, due to migrant labour, and weakened household economies, the polygyny structure has become compromised, and as a result, men will marry more than one wife without adequate resources to care for all of his wives and children. Additionally, in Kenya, these

factors coupled with poverty and a decline in the ability of extended family to assist kin, have contributed to fathers being unavailable for their children (Kilbride et al. 2000).

According to Kilbride et al. (2000), the cultural significance of the father's role "as family 'provider'" (24) has declined, contributing to an increased number of children living on the streets in Kenya. The authors argue that as a result, many Kenyan girls engage in "survival sex" (2); despite the high risks of contracting STIs and HIV, they resort to sex work as a means to stay alive.

Recently, many cultural ideals have been eroded, contributing to a breakdown in traditional family dynamics. Jochelson, Mothibeli and Leger point out that a history of colonization, migrant labour and the resulting erosion of families in sub-Saharan Africa, has an influence on women turning to sex work to survive (Farmer et al. 1996). The authors assert that marriages are placed under strain due to migrant labour and as a result often end in divorce or abandonment, leaving women and children without economic support (Farmer et al. 1996). Due to limited income generating opportunities for women in the country, sex work is often their only means of economic survival (Farmer et al. 1996).

Despite engagement in transactional sex being a cross-cutting theme among FSWs, they are not a homogenous group. Different categories or classes of FSWs exist (Pickering et al. 1997) and the lower classes comprise a more vulnerable group that is at greatest risk of contracting HIV due to a decreased ability to negotiate condom usage (Gysels et al. 2002). FSWs in Kenya include: those who work from their homes, those with a regular client, workers on the street and those who work out of bars and hotels (Ngugi et al. 1996). According to Ngugi et al. (1996), despite the commonality among

FSWs being that they engage in transactional sex, in Kenya, sex workers are a heterogeneous group.

Risk for entry into sex work is affected by important 'socio-spatial distance' variables that structure the risk. As such, this research accounts for these variables by categorizing and examining where 'spatially' particular factors have their influence, whether proximally, medially or distally. Peoples' behaviour is not wholly a matter of individual choice, but rather a result of local attitudes/beliefs that are in turn deeply shaped by the larger social, economic and cultural structures within which people are embedded. Increasingly, researchers are examining the macro-level or 'upstream' factors that contribute to the prevalence of HIV in the developing world context (Farmer et al. 1996; Farmer 1999; Farmer 2003). Focusing upstream on issues such as colonialism (Kilbride et al. 2000) and the "migrant labor thesis" (Oppong and Kalipeni 2004:54) reveals that these distally located factors that are responsible for increased HIV prevalence in sub-Saharan Africa are also related to the increased number of young women entering sex work.

Colonization brought wage labour to Africa and as a result, has contributed to widespread migration of young men in search of employment in which they usually work for one to three years at a time (Oppong and Kalipeni 2004). According to Oppong and Kalipeni (2004), migrant labourers are discouraged from bringing their families and as such, wives are left to provide total care for their children. The authors assert that many women and their families in rural areas face food shortages and malnutrition causing many to move to urban centres in search of paid employment (Oppong and Kalipeni 2004). Once in urban centres, some engage in sex work because it is one of very few

economic opportunities available to women (Oppong and Kalipeni 2004). Oppong and Kalipeni (2004) argue that male migrant labourers frequently solicit FSWs and use alcohol while away from home to stave off being alone and bored.

Murray points out that the usual purpose of migrant labour is to assist the survival of the family (Young and Ansell 2003); paradoxically, the absence of male heads of households due to migration or death contributes to the erosion of the family and dissolves traditional kinship practices. Oleke et al. (2005) refer to a traditional practice in patrilineal societies in which upon the death of a father/husband, the "obvious brother" (2629), or the surviving brother of the deceased becomes the caregiver for the orphaned children and their mother. However, the authors argue that 'obvious brothers' are increasingly uncommon due to the dissolution of traditional caretaking practices for orphans as family structures break down (Oleke et al. 2005). In addition to migrancy, AIDS has contributed to the erosion of families and extended families, reducing the "traditional safety net for orphans" (Oleke et al. 2005:2629).

Traditionally, in much of sub-Saharan Africa, children are considered to belong to the kin group in addition to the biological parents (Oleke et al. 2005), as such, it was common practice to "lend out" children to relatives for a variety of reasons including strengthening family ties (Oleke et al. 2005:2631). Over the past 30 years, however, there has been a transition "from a situation dominated by 'purposeful' voluntary exchange of non-orphaned children to one dominated by 'crisis fostering' orphans" (Oleke et al. 2005:2628). Additionally, Cattel points out that:

> This is happening at a time when many African families are experiencing increasing difficulties in living up to the traditional ideals of sharing and mutual assistance in a context of widespread poverty, food shortage, geographic dispersion of families and change of lifestyles

> – factors which among other things have been attributed to the continent's incorporation into the global political economy.
>
> (Nyambedha et al. 2003:34)

In Kenya, the economic marginalization of women results in fewer opportunities to provide care and support for themselves and their families (Thomas-Slayter and Rocheleau 1995). This marginalization can have consequences medially and proximally impelling women and girls to enter sex work. In a context that erodes kinship systems and requires women to head households of their own children, their grandchildren and/or orphans of extended family members, many cannot provide adequate support (Thomas-Slayter et al. 1995) and eventually resort to sex work to fulfill their own needs (proximally) as well as for their family's needs (medially). This research aims to identify how these factors operate from varying socio-spatial distances to influence women and girls into sex work.

2.2 STRUCTURAL CONTEXT

Farmer (2003) calls for an examination of "both the individual experience and the larger social matrix in which it is embedded in order to see how various social processes and events come to be translated into personal distress and disease" (30). Anthropology has traditionally had a narrower focus, while still remaining cognizant of the larger context. Ortner criticizes anthropologists' exploration of these larger macro-level processes as neglecting "real people doing real things" (Wolf 1990:587); however, it is precisely this attention to the macro-level processes that allows one to understand the lives of individual 'real people' by situating and establishing the multi-factorial context of the people. Examining this 'larger social matrix' within the context of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa reveals a combination of factors including the political economy,

colonialism and poverty that contribute to the current situation of placing women at risk for engagement in sex work.

Wolf (1990) discusses the notion of "structural power" (587) and its effect on the political economy:

> The notion of structural power is useful precisely because it allows us [as anthropologists] to delineate how the forces of the world impinge upon the people we study, without falling back into an anthropological nativism that postulates supposedly isolated societies and uncontaminated cultures.
>
> (Wolf 1990:587)

A broad view that takes into account structural power considers the political economic context of sub-Saharan Africa and its economic marginalization within the global context. Within the social determinants of health literature, researchers (Link and Phelan 1995; McKinlay 1994) call for an examination of the broader macro-level processes to explain social disparities in health. Social, economic, political and cultural factors shape patterns of disease (Link and Phelan 1995). McKinlay (1994) argues that researchers need to "begin focusing… attention upstream, where the real problems lie" (510). He suggests that in order to focus on the upstream causes of illness, the social structure must be examined using three levels of abstraction: families, organizations and the political economy (McKinlay 1994).

Paul Farmer (1999) uses the term *structural violence* to denote the asymmetry of power and the resulting social, economic and health inequalities faced by those in the developing world. According to Farmer (2003), this 'victimization' as a result of structural violence is directly related to risk for HIV infection. Additionally, Farmer

(2003) argues that this risk is gendered, as women in the developing world face the greatest health disparities. *Structural violence* is the combination of political, economic and social forces that structure risk for individual experiences of suffering (Farmer 2003). Farmer (2003) discusses the inherent difficulties in defining "suffering" (29) as it is a subjective experience that eludes widespread agreement. In his discussion of the "hierarchy of suffering," (29-30) he argues that "extreme suffering" (30) can be more easily agreed upon, and includes: premature and painful illnesses, hunger, torture, rape, institutionalized racism and gender inequality. Many women in Kenya face most if not all of those health determinants categorized as 'extreme suffering.' While poverty at the individual and community level in this context affects risk for suffering among women because it limits their choices and leads to disempowerment (Farmer 1999), women face additional vulnerabilities from the suffering caused by AIDS due to the social processes influencing the transmission of HIV (Wojcicki 2005). These same social processes make women vulnerable to engagement in sex work. Elmore-Meegan et al. (2004) assert that research into the conditions that necessitate women's involvement in sex work has traditionally overlooked economic and social contexts. The authors call for careful consideration of these contexts in order to effectively assist women with alternative viable economic opportunities (Elmore-Meegan et al. 2004).

The economic conditions facing women of Kenya have a direct influence on their susceptibility to suffering from HIV/AIDS and involvement in sex work. Fenton (2004) states, "poverty is one important factor in increasing susceptibility to HIV/AIDS, and facilitating its spread… [additionally,] HIV/AIDS also increases poverty, at all levels from individual to nation, through its impact on working age populations" (1186).

Additionally, Collins and Rau state that engagement in 'high risk behaviours' is a result of limited choices due to poverty (Fenton 2004).

Inequalities that structure risk for suffering operate at various levels. In examining the 'upstream' factors that contribute to the current situation in Kenya, it is necessary to situate them historically. Inequalities operating at a national level have deeply shaped the country through its history of colonialism. Through colonization, the country was thrust into the capitalist world system, which in turn, marginalized the nation's economy. Wolf (1990) argues for the importance of recognizing the colonial structure in which particular settings are embedded in order to identify the contribution of colonialism to the marginalization of the economies of African countries.

World-systems theory, as described by Wallerstein recognizes a correlation between capitalism and "the political economy of dependent development and unequal exchange" (Nash 1981:393). This theory draws on development theory, which asserts that colonies were necessarily dependent on their colonialist countries, resulting in the creation of an asymmetrical exchange between peripheral and core economies (Kearney 1995). Anthropologists that are proponents of these theories subscribe to a paradigm that regards the "integration of all people and cultures within a world *capitalist* system" (Nash 1981:393). Frank argues that the world-systems theory accounts for the emergence of *under-development* in peripheral countries as a result of global capitalism (Nash 1981). Marx discusses the exploitation of people in colonies as a result of capitalism: as the colonial capitalist,

> proves how the development of the social productive power of labour, use of machinery on a large scale, &c., are impossible without the expropriation of the labourers, and the corresponding transformation of their means of production into capital. In the interest of the so-called

> national wealth, he seeks for artificial means to *ensure the poverty of the people*.
>
> (Marx 1906:839, emphasis added)

According to Frank, industrialization relies on cheap labour, creating under-development within the countries where such labour is exploited (Nash 1981). Capitalist production "not only reproduces the wage-worker as wage-worker, but produces always, in proportion to the accumulation of capital, a relative surplus population of wage workers" (Marx 1906:842). Nash (1981) argues that industrialization also reduces wages in the peripheries while wealth is accumulated in the core countries. Wage labour not only contributes to under-development within peripheral nation-states, but the introduction of wage labour has proximal influences as it erodes kinship systems (Nash 1981). Finally, the proximal effects can also be felt within the household as Oleke et al. (2005) argue that for countries such as Kenya, engagement in the world market has weakened the household economy.

In addition, HIV/AIDS has had a tremendous impact on the people of Kenya. In 2003, the prevalence rate of Kenyan adults (between 15-49 years of age) infected with HIV was 6.7% (UNAIDS and WHO 2004). HIV and AIDS impact the population both directly in the decimation of the most productive members of society and indirectly by orphaning large numbers of children. It is important to note, however, that the orphaning of children in Kenya is a complex process related to multiple factors. A historical context of armed warfare in addition to colonization, exploitation within the world system, migrant labour and HIV/AIDS are all contributing factors to the orphan crisis in the region. According to UNICEF, "[e]ven without HIV/AIDS, the percentage of children who are orphaned would be higher in sub-Saharan Africa than in other regions of the

world due to past and ongoing armed conflicts" (Oleke et al. 2005:2630). Much of Kenya has faced a violent political history contributing to substantial loss of life and widespread displacement of people (Oleke et al. 2005), orphaning numerous of the country's children.

This research accounts for the 'larger social matrix' in which women and girls in Nairobi live. In addition to identifying proximally- and medially-located factors, this research identifies distally-located factors that contribute to leading women and girls into sex work in Nairobi. As shown in the literature, distal factors such as colonization, capitalism, HIV/AIDS and a violent political history in Kenya contribute to causing women and girls to turn to sex work in the country. These upstream factors have led to a weakened household economy and eroding kinship systems, which place the greatest burden on women to provide for the family. As will be shown, these factors together with few wage-earning opportunities for women, contribute to placing women at risk for entering sex work in Kenya.

2.3 HEALTH PROMOTION INTERVENTIONS AIMED AT FSWs

As mentioned previously, the HIV prevalence rate among FSWs in Kenya in 2000 was 27%, whereas among the general population of adults in the country in 2003, it was 6.7% (UNAIDS and WHO 2004). HIV transmission in Kenya is connected to behaviour such as, having multiple sexual partners and using injection drugs (UNAIDS and WHO 2004). It is important to reiterate here that individual behaviour is shaped by larger social and cultural contexts; having multiple sexual partners is tied to the traditional cultural practice of polygyny in Kenya (Kilbride et al. 2000). Epidemiological factors that contribute to the spread of HIV are related to both biological and social factors. Social

factors that contribute to HIV transmission in Kenya also characterize the setting within which sex work is situated. In sub-Saharan Africa, the prevalence rates of HIV among FSWs are characterized by the correlation between poverty and a reduced position in society (Wojcicki 2005). It is important to acknowledge that "[w]omen involved in sex work are seen as both the most vulnerable group to HIV infection and [as I outline below] the most effective partners in the fight against HIV" (Elmore-Meegan et al. 2004:50).

In addressing the issue of high prevalence rates of HIV among FSWs, some research has focused on reducing the likelihood of contracting and/or transmitting STIs. For example, a positive correlation has been observed between perceived risk or worry of contracting HIV/AIDS and actual prevalence rates. Smith and Watkins (2005; Smith 2003) found a correlation between decreased perceptions of risk of contracting HIV and a reduction in actual risk among FSWs in Malawi. These findings exemplify a change in behaviour, reducing the chances of contracting HIV (such as condom usage) and the responding psychological response (less worry of contracting HIV). Smith and Watkins' research has important implications for programme development, particularly within the context of empowerment. According to Chattopadhyay and McKaig (2004) in their study of FSWs in India, issues such as: women's rights, poverty, income and household issues need to be addressed to enable FSWs to use condoms consistently. It is expected that these issues are common to the situation for FSWs across the world.

In addition to research that examines behaviour and behaviour change in terms of safe practices and harm-reduction, some research has focused on exiting sex work and the contribution this makes on reducing risk of contracting HIV. Manopaiboon et al. (2003) found that Thai FSWs' "ability and decisions to leave sex work were determined

primarily by four factors – economic situation, their relationship with a steady partner, their attitudes towards sex work and their HIV/AIDS experience" (24). In other efforts to assist FSWs to change vocation, and thereby reduce their likelihood of contracting HIV, researchers have focused on programme development that assists them in generating alternative income (Ngugi et al. 1996). Elmore-Meegan et al. (2004) cite alternative income generation as a potential programme solution to assisting FSWs to exit sex work.

The value of peer education in effective HIV/AIDS prevention and educational programmes has long been recognized; however, informal peer education and other health enhancing features of social networks to FSWs have received little attention. When young women in the African context enter the commercial sex trade, they often leave their rural home to live in an urban centre and as such, are leaving their families, friends and existing social support networks. It is likely that upon entering sex work, FSWs would attempt to re-establish themselves among a new network and that acceptance into a social network would provide FSWs with a positive self-identity. De Meis found that among FSWs in Brazil, those:

> who adopt a positive self-identity as the whore or the sex worker, … leave the space of ambiguity, of liminality, of street, and find a social place. They also demonstrate a higher self-esteem and more solidarity toward their colleagues. The sex worker perceives herself as a citizen and prostitution as a job; [additionally,] AIDS prevention is a current topic among them.
>
> (De Meis 2002:3)

The notion of the importance of 'community' among vulnerable populations is highlighted in the findings by Frey et al. (2000) in their research among residential AIDS facilities in the United States:

> From a symbolic perspective, residents' perceptions of their health and their construction of community represent a dynamic interplay among themselves, immediate others (e.g., fellow residents), the larger mediating structure, and other social structures, within which they are all embedded. In line with a social constructionist view, the meanings of health and community are defined privately and publicly through various communicative practices that characterize social life.
>
> (Frey et al. 2000:56)

The value of communication among the established 'community' may be said to provide a health enhancing social structure. Svenkerud and Singhal (1998) highlight the importance of social networks to Thai FSWs, as they argue that the sub-populations of sex workers bond with one another through strong interpersonal relationships. In responding to health promotion interventions, the authors assert that FSWs react to targeted specialty media, peer networks and individual counseling (Svenkerud and Singhal 1998). According to Elmore-Meegan et al. (2004), legality and stigma contribute to the high levels of physical and sexual abuse that FSWs face and, as such, must be addressed to promote FSWs' safety.

While the research and initiatives aimed at behaviour change, exiting sex work and peer education for FSWs are extremely valuable and undeniably necessary, they are limited since they target women already involved in sex work. By identifying the factors that *lead* women to sex work, it will be possible to develop intervention programmes to educate women and girls before they enter sex work and thus, reduce the numbers of women engaging in sex work. This research identifies the combination of factors that place young women at risk for entering sex work in Nairobi, Kenya within a conceptual framework that accounts for when, how and where these factors play a role. By acknowledging that these risk factors can occur *at* and *throughout* various times in a

woman's life, and that involvement in sex work is a dynamic process, this research will contribute to the development and implementation of effective intervention programmes.

2.4 GENDER, POVERTY AND GENDERED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

In this section, I discuss the literature pertaining to why African women enter sex work within the context of gender, poverty and gendered economic opportunity. Oppong and Kalipeni (2004) argue that researchers have mistakenly blamed 'urban sexuality' as an explanation for the rates of HIV infection in Africa. The authors point out in their discussion of *Perceptions and Misperceptions of AIDS in Africa* that some researchers have argued that the proliferation of sex work in Africa is due to its 'normalization' (2004). Oppong and Kalipeni argue that these misperceptions have followed a "supposed" belief that women's engagement in sex work "has become one of the four main roles to emerge for women in urban Africa alongside being housewives, sellers of cooked food, and brewers of illegal alcohol" (53). However, the authors discount these views as "stereotypical assertions … [that typify] the lack of cultural understanding that pervades intellectual discourse on the African condition" (53). Despite the contentious issues and stereotypical assertions surrounding sex work in Africa, the high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates associated with sex work cannot be denied. This often marginalized, vulnerable and at-risk population faces much stigmatization by the perception of FSWs as 'reservoirs of disease' (D'Costa et al. 1985). According to Elmore-Meegan et al. (2004), it is this generalized perception that "has resulted in prostitution being seen as the *cause* of disease rather than the *consequence* of economic marginalization" (54, emphasis added).

In sub-Saharan Africa, factors that lead a woman or young woman to sex work often involve poverty and economic need. In Kenya, there exist gendered economic opportunities. Ngugi et al. point out that:

> Despite the fact that sex work is illegal and risky, in the context of a labor market highly segregated by gender, it offers some advantages over existing alternatives: ease of entry, a ready market, and higher earnings, especially in relation to the labor time required. In the current economic climate, few other jobs offer these advantages for women.
>
> (Ngugi et al. 1996:S241)

In their study of FSWs in Kenya, Elmore-Meegan et al. (2004) argue that "[s]ex workers are frequently stigmatized in ways that predispose them to economically marginal living conditions that make continued sex work necessary in order to maintain household income" (51). For many FSWs in sub-Saharan Africa, sex work is not their only form of income and they enter and exit the sex trade depending on the availability of other income sources (Gysels et al. 2002). Ngugi et al. (1996) argue that "[a]lthough the process of entry into the sex trade in Kenya is complex, most of the women who sell sex do so because of poverty and lack of opportunities for alternative employment" (S240). Research by Gysels et al. (2002) confirms this finding, as FSWs in a Ugandan trading town enter sex work due to an impoverished background combined with restricted access to economic resources.

Research points to the central role of poverty in leading women into sex work while acknowledging the complexity of this contributing factor. Much of the existing literature disregards the specific consequences of poverty and the real economic need that impels women and girls into sex work. In her study of FSWs in a South African mining town, Campbell (2003) identified common themes of why women entered the sex trade

including: “[the] death of spouses or parents, dropping out of school after falling pregnant, and finding it difficult to find work, leaving an abusive man, or ‘running away’ from the hardships and poverty of home” (64). This research will utilize the themes identified by Campbell (2003) to test whether these are common themes that also lead women in Nairobi to become involved in sex work. Since poverty is not a sole determinant of engagement in sex work, this research will provide insights into why some poor Kenyan women resort to sex work while others do not.

2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Many factors affect women’s vulnerability to engagement in sex work. Currently, Kenyan women experience erosion of existing familial structures due to migrant labour, increased household and caregiver demands due to HIV/AIDS and the orphan crisis, childhoods being raised in single parent households, living in extreme poverty and the effects of structural violence including a political economic structure that produces gendered economic opportunities. Existing research examines the contributing factors leading African women to engage in sex work and describes these processes within a list of findings that at first glance appear proximal such as, immediate daily economic need; however, the context within which Kenyan women are poor is embedded within the larger macro-level socio-political structure.

Farmer’s (2003) writing regarding structural violence sets a broad theoretical framework for my research. This research will examine the impact that structural violence and relationships of inequality have over the life course for these women. Specifically, the research addresses the following questions: (1) how does a woman's childhood and/or background affect her risk for entering sex work later in life, (2) what

factors place young women at risk of becoming involved in sex work, and, (3) what factors place women at risk for remaining in sex work and/or engaging in transactional sex on a regular basis?

Individuals are affected by inequalities in many ways and according to Farmer (2003), inequalities in turn structure risk for suffering. In this thesis, the individual experience and the social matrix in which it is situated will be examined to understand how social processes translate to suffering for young women and girls, by leading them to engage in sex work in Nairobi.

This research aims to identify the combination of factors that lead Kenyan women to engage in sex work while extracting the proximal, medial and distal factors, and is receptive to issues of stigma and the potential for varied definitions of sex work. As will be shown, changing kinship structures, the importance of social networks and the pervasive theme of 'support' – both receiving support and women's responsibilities of supporting others – will be illustrated through the findings and results in Chapter Five, and further explored in Chapter Six, *Discussion*. In the following chapter, I explain the methodology behind the research and describe the specific methods used in conducting this research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

In this chapter, I provide a thorough description of and justification for the research design, methodology, methods and materials. A distinction is made between 'methodology' and 'method', with methodology referring to the underlying theory that rationalizes the methods used. The research methods section (3.4) describes *how* the research was actually conducted. As such, the research design was created out of the specific methodologies on which the research is based. The methods my research uses are: (1) ethnographic interviews with open-ended questions and, (2) life histories. In this chapter, I present the methodology, followed by a description of the group of women participants and their recruitment in the study. Finally, I describe the research methods and materials, including a detailed description of the methods used for both the data collection and analysis.

3.1 METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative critical inquiry drawing on elements of grounded theory. Grounded theory is a methodology that allows for theory to be developed inductively out of the research (Patton 2002). Critical inquiry "seeks not just to study and understand society" (Patton 2002:131) but instead to have a "commitment to use [the] findings for change" (131). As such, the results of the research will be used in the development of intervention programmes aimed at reducing the number of women becoming engaged in sex work in Nairobi, Kenya. In this research, the characteristics identified that contribute to leading women to sex work have been gathered deductively; however, much of the data were analyzed inductively using narrative analysis. Grounded theory allows for openness in the data analysis by responding to a range of

questions as they arise (Denzin and Lincoln 1998). Data was gathered using in-depth, semi-structured interviews to elicit life histories of participants.

Anthropological life history provides discourse that is interpretively translated into text (Watson and Watson-Franke 1985). Through the telling of narratives, individuals are able to 'make sense' of themselves and their experiences over time (Bochner 2001). Narratives provide authors with an opportunity to verbalize their lives, recollect the meanings of experiences in their pasts and elicit legitimacy in those experiences (Bochner 2001). Semi-structured interviewing follows a guide of questions, but allows for respondents to "open up and express themselves in their own terms" (Bernard 2002:205). Interviews were designed to elicit life histories of the participants, which were used as an important means to situate factors leading young women to sex work within a voice that depicts and provides meaning to life choices and experiences (Rubenson et al. 2005).

In addition to the description offered through this method, Sandelowski argues that life histories allow participants to temporally order and elicit meaning out of events from their lives (Rubenson et al. 2005). "Life histories generate reflections on topics that would otherwise remain implicit because they are taken for granted in their particular socio-cultural contexts" (Gysels et al. 2002:181). Through the act of storytelling, people can construct meaning, healing and identity-formation.

Life history research in anthropology can be used to focus on the intersection of people and their socio-cultural system (Watson and Watson-Franke 1985). It allows for the recognition of the individual as a member of a larger system in which structured relationships and socially-defined roles influence past and future actions (Watson and

Watson-Franke 1985). Considering this larger system allows for the incorporation of Paul Farmer's *structural violence* as an overarching theoretical framework for this thesis. Structural violence is "violence exerted systematically – that is, indirectly – by everyone who belongs to a certain social order" (2004:307). Structural violence results from relationships of inequality and oppression, which structure risk for suffering. Green argues that structural violence can be incorporated into research as a line of anthropological inquiry (Farmer 2004), which encourages this recognition of the larger socio-political structure by ensuring that "the social machinery of oppression" becomes visible (Farmer 2004:119). As such, these macro-level or 'upstream' factors are identified from within the narratives.

In the interpretation of life histories aimed at understanding relationships between the individual and socio-cultural system, it is necessary to compare numerous life histories to ensure that generalizations are not made concerning the mechanisms of interaction between a particular individual and society (Watson and Watson-Franke 1985). I conduct a thematic content analysis to interpret and compare the textual narratives and discourses. A thematic content analysis allows for an immersion into the content of the data by categorizing common and recurring themes (Green and Thorogood 2004). In addition, I remain objective in my interpretation of the life histories (Watson and Watson-Franke 1985) and acknowledge that this is an interpretation of the participants' subjective accounts.

Open-ended questions such as, "Tell me about your life story when you first became engaged in sex work" provides the opportunity for participants to reflect on past experiences when telling their stories (see Appendix 'A' for a list of interview questions).

Preliminary interview questions were based on findings from the literature; however, they were reviewed by Dr. Ngugi and the staff at K-VOWRC and were further refined based on their suggestions. The questions were supplemented with a list of probe questions that I pursued if the topics arose during the interview, or alternatively, if the topics did not come up naturally over the course of the interview, I used the probes as questions.

Problems inherent in the research such as the inability to directly observe women becoming involved in sex work are overcome by using interviews as it provides participants with the opportunity to discuss information from their pasts (Creswell 2003) and it enables the interviewer to have flexibility in the direction of questioning (Creswell 2003). Some possible limitations to using interviews for qualitative data collection rest in the method itself. The responses may be biased due to my presence as the interviewer (Creswell 2003). As an obvious 'outsider', being a 29-year-old, Caucasian, Canadian woman, my presence as an interviewer surely influenced how the interviews progressed. Although the participants in the research were forthcoming in the telling of their life histories, it is important to recognize that narrative is shaped by the social context of its production as "narratives comprise the interplay between experience, storying practices, descriptive resources, purposes at hand, audiences, and the environments that condition storytelling" (Gubrium and Holstein 2008:250). In this research, the 'flow' of the dialogue, initial trust/comfort level and the ease of understanding my accent were likely all factors in the interviews themselves. Additionally, interviewees' responses may be affected by the location where the interviews were held and it is important to point out that not all participants are necessarily equally "articulate and perceptive" (Creswell 2003:190).

A possible limitation to the life history approach is in the observation that the narrative is a subjective account of the narrator's experiences (Peacock and Holland 1993). Despite this, it is the effect of those experiences on the subject that have meaning to the individual, therefore, the subjective experience is still crucially valuable to understanding the individual's life history. Another limitation to this approach, however, is that this window into an individual's experiences is told how she chooses to tell it, for example, certain elements may be withheld and/or others may be emphasized or embellished and the order of events recounted may not be accurate. My understanding of the macro or upstream factors may be affected due to the subjectivity of the author as these distally-located factors are likely to receive the least attention. According to Crapanzano (1984), the "life history has been somewhat of a conceptual – and an emotional – embarrassment to academic anthropology and has remained on the periphery of the discipline" (954). Crapanzano (1984) argues that the life history cannot portray or illustrate some aspect of culture since the source of the material may not be truthful and representative of typical elements of the culture. Contradictory to this, Steffen (1997) asserts that the value of narrative to anthropology is understood as a means to generating *knowledge* about a particular culture group. For instance, "[b]y contextualizing meaningful events…, personal narratives contribute to the understanding of individual experience as part of general social relations and cultural values, making them useful as cultural data in general" (Steffen 1997:99).

This research takes account of the larger social, cultural, political and economic context of sex work in Nairobi by identifying a range of factors, including the proximal, medial and distal factors that contribute to placing a young woman at risk for engaging in

sex work. While acknowledging the importance of the proximal, medial and distal factors, it is necessary to point out that these are not rigid classifications, but simply a conceptual strategy to organize and thematise the variety of factors and their inter-relationships. These categories are used, first, to structure the interview questions and, second, to analyze the results.

3.2 PARTICIPANTS

I conducted this research with twenty-one women between the ages of 18 and 42 who self-identified as former sex workers in Nairobi, Kenya (see Appendix 'B' for a list of participant profiles). Dr. Elizabeth N. Ngugi, Director of the Kenya Voluntary Women's Rehabilitation Centre (K-VOWRC) and Chair of the Department of Community Health at the University of Nairobi identified this proposed research as valuable to K-VOWRC and the women it serves. Dr. Ngugi and the staff at K-VOWRC reviewed the research proposal, interview questions and recruitment materials, as well as assisted with the recruitment process. Due to Dr. Ngugi's involvement with K-VOWRC and the FSWs themselves, it follows that this research is a form of community-based research. Since the women were recruited with the help of K-VOWRC, all of the participants in the research had also participated in the programmes that K-VOWRC offers and as such, all of the women in the study were former sex workers. Additionally, my preference for recruitment was for women who spoke English, as my knowledge of Kiswahili is only rudimentary. Despite this recruitment criterion, I did interview one woman in Kiswahili with the help of a translator.

Through conversations with the staff at K-VOWRC, I learned that the older clients in their programmes began sex work at an older age, whereas the younger clients,

started sex work at a younger age. K-VOWRC divides their programming and data into two corresponding groups, which they refer to as "women" and "girls." Additional recruitment criteria entailed ensuring that my sample included women from both of these age categories. These two age categories differentiate the stage of life at which the participants begin to engage in sex work. Hence, those women that began sex work under the age of 18 are referred to as "girls," and those women that began sex work after age 18 are referred to as "women." Another important recruitment criterion, however, was that regardless of the age of entry into sex work, all participants were over 18 years of age at the time of the interview to ensure that the participants were consenting adults.[1] My preference was to have a close to equal representation from both age categories (approximately ten women from each category).

Although trading sex for material gain is a common practice in sub-Saharan Africa, rarely do women involved in this type of exchange identify as sex workers (Dunkle et al. 2004). As such, it is likely that much of the sex work that is practiced in the region would fall in the category of *informal sex work*. Wocjicki (2002) argues that in Kenya and other parts of sub-Saharan Africa "informal sex work" (365), or that which takes place in bars is often less stigmatized than other forms of sex work. Informal FSWs do not self-identify as sex workers or experience the same level of shame as those who do, nor do they hide their involvement in sex work from family members (Wocjicki 2002). Contrary to this, Montgomery et al. (2001) observed a connection between self-identification as a sex woker and increased agency and empowerment. It was expected there would be variation among women's involvement in sex work reflected in the heterogeneity of the population of FSWs in Kenya. As such, my recruitment criteria

[1] Eighteen years of age is the age of majority in Kenya.

introduce a degree of homogeneity into my sample along specific dimensions.

3.3 RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

K-VOWRC's mission is "to reduce the transmission and impact of STI/HIV/AIDS by improving the physical, emotional, economic and social well-being of women, girl children and AIDS orphans in Kenya" (Kenya Voluntary Women's Rehabilitation Centre 2007). Among other services, K-VOWRC "forms a bridge of resources and empowerment to help women and children travel from lives of sex work and abandonment to lives as business owners and community leaders" (Kenya Voluntary Women's Rehabilitation Centre, [Brochure] n.d). Dr. Ngugi has developed strong and trusting relationships with numerous FSWs in Nairobi and study participants were recruited through her established connections. Participants were recruited principally through word-of-mouth with the assistance of the staff of K-VOWRC as well as by using advertisement posters (see Appendix 'C') and a letter of information (see Appendix 'D').

To assist with recruitment, K-VOWRC staff members 'sent for' women that have participated in vocational training programmes that the organization offers. Additionally, students currently in the training programmes were recruited with the assistance of K-VOWRC's vocational trainers. Each trainer was asked to send three of her students to the K-VOWRC office in Pangani, situated on the outskirts of central Nairobi. Consideration of the potential for issues around 'power over' due to recruiting participants with the help of K-VOWRC was a necessary component to the recruitment. In order to alleviate the potential for this, once women arrived at the office, I explained the details of the project and that whether they chose to participate or not, their decision would have no effect on their relationship with K-VOWRC. Trainers were contacted in

the following informal settlements in Nairobi: Dandora, Kariobangi, Baba Dogo and Kayole.

English is widely spoken in Kenya, as an official national language and language of business, therefore, my recruitment materials and the majority of interview activities were in English. One interview was conducted in Kiswahili with the assistance of a translator. During the recruitment process, I verbally explained the project goals, the nature of participants' involvement and that decisions to participate (or not) would not affect their relationship with K-VOWRC. If participants were interested in participating, prior to the start of the interview, the goals of the research project and the nature of the participants' involvement were repeated in a verbal description and a written letter of information (see Appendix 'D'). Since the literacy abilities of the participants were unknown, I read the letter of information to the participants. After describing the research project, I offered to answer any questions she might have. I explained to participants that their responses would remain completely confidential and that they would be free to refuse to answer any question and/or end the interview at any time without any consequences. I provided each participant with a written copy of the informed consent form (see Appendix 'E'), which I also read aloud to her. If the participant consented to participating in the research project, I then asked her to complete and sign the consent form.

3.4 METHODS

In this section, I describe the experience of conducting the research. I traveled to Nairobi in the summer of 2006 to conduct this research. Interviews took place over the course of four weeks from mid-May to mid-June, 2006 in Nairobi and four surrounding

informal settlements[2]: Dandora, Mathare, Kariobangi and Kawangware. Collaborating with K-VOWRC was invaluable in assisting me with many aspects of my research as well as with tips and recommendations for my daily life in the city. The staff at K-VOWRC assisted me greatly in recruiting participants; both by having women come to me as well as allowing me to visit participants on their field site visits. In this section, I discuss the methods used in conducting the research. I first describe the unexpected popularity of my research and the subsequent resulting focus group, followed by a detailed description of the process of conducting the interviews.

3.4.1 Unexpected Surprise – Focus Group

A limitation to the recruitment method of having girls 'sent for' (see Section 3.3), was that it made it difficult to determine the number of participants that would be available on a particular day. On the second day of interviewing, I arrived at the K-VOWRC office at 09:30 to find the waiting room filled with girls and young women awaiting my arrival to participate in the research. In total there were six women who were interested in participating and who were also over 18 years of age. It appeared that many of the women were friends with one another and had decided to come together. Since the number of participants was too large to accommodate in one day, and feeling uncomfortable with inconveniencing the women further by asking some of them to come back another day, I modified my approach and asked them if they would be willing to participate in a focus group instead. I was pleased that they agreed and we set about conducting a focus group. Since I had not prepared in advance to conduct a focus group, I provided a verbal description of my research to the women and explained the

[2] These informal settlements are also commonly referred to as 'slums'.

confidentiality of their participation and received verbal consent from the six participants. The *impromptu* focus group was initiated by a quick round table to introduce ourselves, followed by me posing the question to the group: "*Why do women and girls start to do sex work in Nairobi?*"

The focus group provided an opportunity for me to become familiar with some of the attitudes and beliefs that were expressed by the interviewed participants about the reasons women and girls enter sex work. The data gathered through the focus group are limited in scope and depth, as the conversation flowed along a casual line of dialogue. I chose to not ask questions about individual personal experiences, as I felt that since the women clearly knew one another, they might not wish to divulge personal stories in front of their peers. Instead, I asked the one broad question and allowed them to converse without much prompting from me as they discussed their opinions about entry into sex work for women and girls in Nairobi. As the discussion grew to a close, I ended the focus group, thanked the participants and as I had explained to them at the beginning of the focus group, I provided each woman with money to cover her fare to and from the K-VOWRC office. The results from this focus group are not included in my results section as they were only used to inform my own thinking about the topic and to garner some of the attitudes and language used around entry into sex work in Nairobi. The limitation that was quickly encountered with this recruitment method was rectified the following day, as for the remainder of the interviews I asked that only two to three potential participants be recruited per day. The lesson learned was that it would not be difficult to have willing participants volunteer and that it is important to indicate ahead of time the maximum number of women that can be interviewed on a particular day.

3.4.2 Setting up the Interviews – Office and On-location

As mentioned above, I conducted the interviews in five separate locations. The first 13 interviews were conducted at the K-VOWRC office in Pangani and the final eight were conducted in four surrounding informal settlements (slums). The initial interview process varied slightly depending on the location in which the interview was held; therefore, I have separated the descriptions of the interview locations and the initial processes (up until the start of the interview) in both the K-VOWRC office and the various slums below. Once the interview was underway, the process remained the same regardless of the location, and as such, I have amalgamated the interview description for all locations in the latter section below.

3.4.3 Pangani Office

The first 13 interviews that were held at the K-VOWRC office provided me with an excellent opportunity to become comfortable with the process in a predictable setting. I had been commuting from my hostel in downtown Nairobi to the Pangani office every day for a week or so before the interviews commenced, which afforded me some time to acclimatize to the city bustle, the public transportation and the K-VOWRC office itself. It was also important for me to become better acquainted with the staff at the K-VOWRC office, to understand their work and working style and to participate in the goings on of the Centre. I was well received by the extremely intelligent and dedicated women who work at the Centre and we shared in numerous engaging and thought-provoking discussions about many topics including sex work in the city. I participated in their

morning *chai*[3] (tea) ritual where we chatted about our own families and got to know one another better.

The office is on the second floor of a building perched over a busy thoroughfare flanked on one side by non-stop traffic and backed by winding dirt roads housing various tin kiosks with sellers and their wares. Below the office is a mechanic business in which three or four grease-covered mechanics work on various engine components on the concrete floor. The way the building is arranged, all those entering to go up the stairs to the K-VOWRC office, must navigate between engines and various engine parts carefully stepping over grease puddles. The office is a refuge from the bustle below, though the diesel fumes and loud traffic still infiltrate the building. The office has a large and comfortable waiting room, a reception area, two large shared offices with two computers each, a kitchen, toilet and two back rooms reserved for clients. One is a classroom with sewing machines and the other houses a large wooden loom for making *kikoys*[4].

In arranging the interviews that were held at the K-VOWRC office in Pangani, it was important for me to abandon notions of scheduling the interviews into specific time slots. Rather, in the recruitment, I asked that one or two women be sent in the morning and usually just one in the afternoon. My previous experience working in sub-Saharan Africa had prepared me for this necessity, as often the Western practice of incrementalizing the day into time-allotted tasks is not common practice in Kenya.

---

[3] *Chai* in Nairobi is made by boiling black tea leaves in water, then adding milk and bringing the mixture to a boil and finally straining it into a thermos. It was remarked to me by a Kenyan that, "Kenya is an exporter of coffee but a country of *chai*-drinkers." My experience of the ritual around 'tea-time' is one of pause. It is a time to stop work, to discuss pleasant matters and to enjoy a cup of sweet, milky hot tea with good company.

[4] A *kikoy* is a garment made from loomed threads constructed into a large flat piece of fabric in beautiful designs and bright colours worn most commonly as a shawl. K-VOWRC has trained a woman, Susan who is deaf and mute to use the loom and make *kikoys*, which are sold to earn money for the organization. While there, I sold *kikoys* on behalf of the Centre to other foreigners that I met at the hostel where I was staying. I bought two for myself and sold another ten.

Rather, to arrange for a time of day and to have flexibility in the schedule is more culturally appropriate. This is not a general rule as employees are expected (and do) arrive on time and meetings are arranged and attended at specific times; however, for this type of engagement, I wanted to be flexible. As such, the interviews that were conducted at the K-VOWRC office began whenever the first participant arrived (sometime after 09:30), and if another participant arrived while this interview was in progress, she waited until the first interview was complete. Initially, I brought the second participant in for the second interview of the day immediately after the first participant had left, however, I quickly learned that it was important for me to spend several minutes looking over my notes to ensure that I had not missed anything important and to have a quick moment to 'regroup' before launching into the next interview.

Interviews at the Pangani office took place in a quiet and private part of the office, in either the reception area or one of the two offices, whichever was available at that particular time. Once in privacy, I described the interview in detail, gave her a copy of the consent form, which I also read aloud to her and I asked her if she had any questions. Consent was granted from all of those people recruited. Once she consented, I asked her to choose a pseudonym that I would use to identify her responses. Most of the participants enjoyed this part of the interview and it acted a nice 'ice-breaker'. It usually produced a smile and it reinforced their anonymous and confidential participation in the interview from the outset. I interviewed a total of 13 women at the K-VOWRC office in Pangani.

3.4.4 Informal Settlements

One of the K-VOWRC staff members, a field nurse who performs outreach nursing, invited me to join her at the field sites and arranged for me to meet women who had received funds through K-VOWRC's micro-credit programme to start their own businesses. Women who have borrowed money through the programme must do so as a group and in order to maintain group loyalty, to receive business advice and to make a loan payment, the group meets once per week. The K-VOWRC field nurse brought me to these weekly meetings where I had the opportunity of recruiting women to participate in my research.

In Nairobi, informal settlements house approximately 60% of the population (Amuyunzu-Nyamongo et al. 2007). Within these settlements, people live in deplorable conditions that are overcrowded and lack water, electrical power and sanitation systems. These settlements are primarily constructed out of structures made using discarded materials such as: corrugated tin, wooden signs, boxes, plastic sheeting and mud (Amuyunzu-Nyamongo et al. 2007).

Traveling to the field sites usually involved taking one or two *matatus*[5] (small mini-buses), followed by riding on a large full-sized bus, and finally arriving at the field site (commonly referred to as the slum). Once off the bus, we would walk through dirt paths and roads, that wind their way around kiosk "shops" of corrugated tin and various cinder block buildings, all the while, carefully negotiating pot-holes, streams of raw sewage and throngs of children running up to me and following me shouting "*Mzungu!*", which translates to mean "white person." At first, this felt rather threatening, however, I

[5] *Matatus* are small passenger vans that hold approximately eleven passengers and travel around the city. Often filled to capacity, *matatus* form a system of mini-busses mostly used by locals that follow specified routes in which passengers can hop on and off for a nominal fee.

found the best (and most fun) way to interact with these children was to give a big smile and reply with, *"Hujambo!"*, which is a commonly used greeting in Kiswahili. The usual reaction by these children was an ear-to-ear grin and a bashful reply, in English, of "Hello, how are you?"

Slums are difficult places to live and the extreme poverty in such places is palpable. The meetings I attended were held in rooms made of concrete cinder block walls, corrugated tin roofs and dirt floors. Rooms had no electricity and very small openings in the walls to allow some light in, however, despite the lack of Western comforts, these dark rooms were a refuge from the Kenyan heat, as the cinder blocks kept the rooms comfortable and cool.

At the meetings, when a woman expressed an interest in participating in the interview, we would go to a separate part of the room or building and once there, I would describe the interview in detail as well as provide her with a copy of the informed consent form which I would read aloud to her. Once the consent form was read aloud to each participant, I would offer to answer any questions she might have and if consent was granted, we then went on to commence the interview in privacy. The field sites in which interviews were performed include: Mathare North, interviewed one woman; Kariobangi, interviewed three women; Kawangware, interviewed two women and Dandora, interviewed two women. In total, eight interviews were conducted in the slums.

3.4.5 The Interview

This section describes the interview process in detail for both the office and the slum sites as once the interview was underway, the process was the same for all locations. Once consent was granted, and a pseudonym had been chosen, I asked if the

participant would mind if I tape-recorded the interview. If she consented to the interview being audio-recorded, I then turned on the recorder. One participant chose not to have her voice recorded, and I did not ask why, as I felt that this might seem coercive. I replied that it would be fine and I also explained that I would be writing her responses in my notebook. It was difficult to scribe everything that was said, but overall, the main responses were captured. I would not feel comfortable reporting that my notes in this case, capture her 'voice' in the narrative sense, as my notes do not necessarily reflect her word-for-word dialogue. Not using the audio-recorder presents an additional problem as the participant may react poorly to the appearance of my attention being focused on my notebook rather than on the participant herself as I try to quickly jot down as much as I can. The recordings proved to be valuable, since I was not required to rely solely on notes and I felt less pressure to scribe as detailed an account as possible. Using an audio recorder is not without its difficulties as well as the machine can malfunction, there may be too much background noise or the presence of the recorder may make the participant uneasy. I was careful to combine extensive note taking with the recording, which proved to be very useful, especially on three occasions in which the recordings were inaudible, due to too much background noise and/or a recording malfunction. Once the recording was started (or not), and the interview was underway, I proceeded to ask some basic demographic questions both as a way to garner some background information as well as to act as a 'warm-up' to the more open-ended life-history questions to follow.

Responses garnered from the interviews varied in depth and elaboration from the first few interviews to the final interviews with an increase in elaboration as the interviews progressed. This variation is due in part to my increasing confidence and ease

with the process. As the interviews progressed, I became increasingly familiar with the questions and probes, making it easier to impart a comfortable and relaxed mood. Variation in the elaboration of responses may also be attributed to the age of the individual participants. My recruitment criteria to interview women from both of K-VOWRC's age categories meant that the first 10 interviews were with women who were aged less than 21 years (referred to as "girls"), and the remaining 11 interviews were with women over 25 years of age (referred to as "women"). For the most part, there was an observable difference between the two age groups in the ease with which the participants elaborated on their responses and 'opened up' in regards to sharing their life stories. On average, the younger participants seemed less inclined to become engaged in a dialogue with me, whereas, the older participants in general did so with less prompting and with much greater ease. This could be explained by a variety of reasons, such as my age at the time of the interview (29 years) as well as my being an 'outsider' which could both contribute to me being perceived as more intimidating to the younger participants. It is also possible that this observed age correlation of older participants sharing more openly is representative of the fact that older participants have had a greater time to live and consequently reflect on their life histories. Culturally, older women are more highly respected than their younger counterparts and as such, it is possible that the younger girls may have felt it was inappropriate to provide a detailed description of her life and hardships to her elder. Although in general, the older women in the sample provided detailed narratives with greater ease, I should emphasize that this was a general observation, and that despite it, some of the younger participants shared more openly than some of the older participants. Additionally, it became easier as the interviewing

progressed to help those quick to respond with short answers to expand on their responses and eventually launch into detailed narratives. Including additional probes such as simply asking "*why?*" and "*can you tell me more about that?*" proved to be very useful in that regard.

The location of the interview may also have influenced the ease with which participants responded to the interview questions. The first 13 interviews were held at the K-VOWRC office, whereas the final eight were held near the participants' homes in the place that they frequent weekly for their group meetings. Perhaps these participants were advantaged by having me travel to them versus those who commuted to the office with the purpose of participating in an interview. It is possible that the participants felt more comfortable on familiar territory, which in turn allowed them to open up and speak more freely. In the informal settlements, the dynamic between interviewer and interviewee was notably different after the interviews had ended from those held at the office, as all of the participants inevitably adopted a 'hostess' role with me as their 'guest.' After the interview had ended, some of the women offered me a Fanta or other cold drink, which they would send a neighbourhood child to run and buy for us and we would sit and enjoy our beverages together (it should be noted that the notion of hostess and guest is more greatly exemplified by my attempts to pay always being quickly and emphatically refused). Additionally, after the interview, many of the participants that were interviewed in the informal settlements were eager to show me their "shops"[6] that they have been able to start and run using capital from K-VOWRC's micro-credit

[6] *Shop* is the term used by the women to refer to the businesses that they run. In this case, a shop can range from an area on the ground in which she lays out her second hand clothes for sale, to a small removable platform that acts as a table in which she can display her goods for sale, such as roasted groundnuts or a small corrugated tin room where she operates a seamstress or hair salon business.

programme. One participant's shop consisted of a 2´ x 2´ piece of board supported by an overturned basket, which rested beside a wok filled with groundnuts that were slowly roasting over a small fire. She proudly offered me some of her deliciously roasted groundnuts that were neatly packaged in a cone of folded re-used paper. She excitedly explained that this business enabled her to support her two children without resorting to sex work.

In general, the interview process was the same for all of the interviews with the only exception being the physical location. Location did have some different outcomes in terms of a potential for greater ease among the respondents as well as a notable difference following the interview of me being treated as a 'guest'. Since numerous factors contribute to differences in narrative elaboration, it is important to not attribute the observed variation in elaboration as solely related to the location of the interview. Additionally, despite this observation, the results gathered from all locations are comprehensive and although some respondents' stories did not flow with the same ease as others', all the narratives express important elements of each individual's life.

3.5 MATERIALS AND DATA ANALYSIS

The materials used in this qualitative research are the interviews. The interviews provide detailed life histories and personalized accounts of life events that led participants to engage in sex work. In the following section, I describe the process of analyzing and understanding the *meaning* of these narratives or 'data.' I analyzed this rich data thematically as well as by identifying the particular factors that contributed to leading the women and girls to sex work. The thematic analysis involved identifying central common themes and sub-themes within the narratives (Bernard 2002): central

themes are those overarching recurring ideas that permeate deeply throughout the layers/fabric of the stories; and, sub-themes are important facets that together, comprise the larger central themes. I use the term *factor* to describe specific life events or circumstances that contribute to the initiation of sex work. I used both inductive and deductive methods to identify factors and I am using both participant identified factors (emic) as well as researcher identified factors (etic). Themes, sub-themes and factors are, in a sense, hierarchically arranged in the analysis due to how they fit together; numerous factors provide insight into recurring sub-themes, which in turn, provide insight into central themes. Despite this 'hierarchical' arrangement of these elements, I do not assert that one category of result is more important or valuable than another, rather it is the combination of these elements that presents the most accurate depiction.

These themes, sub-themes and factors of individual lives are additionally organized into temporal and spatial categories such as life stage and whether the factor was proximal, medial or distal. As such, this research aims to examine entry into sex work retrospectively and processually. In other words, the research asks women to recount their work in the sex trade and then analyzes their narratives in terms of the process of life before they entered the sex trade, entering the sex trade, and, then, working regularly in the sex trade. Life course theory places its emphasis on "the fluctuation of individual biographies shaped, although not determined by, social institutions and historical time" (McDonough and Berglund 2003:198). Participants' life histories are also situated within their socio-historical context to account for events occurring over an individual's life course. Unedited, whole pieces of the participants'

life history narratives are maintained in order to preserve the voice of the participants in telling their stories.

The data analysis involved several steps representing both inductive and deductive reasoning. In the following section, I expand upon each of the forms of analysis in the order they were conducted. I first analyzed the data inductively in an effort to allow the meaning and themes to emerge from the data without preconceived notions of what results I would expect. This initial thematic analysis included a more traditional approach of immersing myself in the narratives through cycles of reading, coding, reflecting and re-reading the transcripts and identifying recurring ideas and overarching themes. This process was important and valuable in order to become familiar with the women's stories and to understand their journeys into sex work. Following this process, I took a more deductive approach in which the specific factors associated with leading women and girls into sex work were drawn from the narratives. In this stage of analysis, I identified these 'factors' and entered them into a data matrix marking the time in her life that the factors occurred as well as delineating the socio-spatial distance from where the factors had their influence. I deduced these factors through reasoning, both by returning to my specific research questions as well as through knowledge gained from reading other research with FSWs (specifically, Campbell, 2003). This approach acted as both an analytical tool as well as an organizational strategy. I was able to clearly organize the factors into temporal and socio-spatial categories and observe which factors were repeated for numerous women and which ones were not. After this process, I returned to the narratives and performed a phenomenological analysis. According to Max van Manen (1990), phenomenological

reflection allows for an understanding of the essential meaning of the lived experience. This type of reflection allowed me to grasp the *meaning* of the women's stories (van Manen 1990) and to identify overarching themes present among the women's life histories. Finally, I analyzed the data to determine if the age at which the women became involved in sex work affected the results and how the age at which certain life events occur might in turn affect and/or influence the life course for these women. This analysis involved dividing the data into two age categories (women and girls) based on the age at which she began sex work. I then examined the narratives to determine if commonalities and differences existed among and between the stories of the women in the two age groups. I conducted this age analysis with both the thematic results as well as with the previously identified 'factors'.

3.5.1 Transcriptions

I recorded 20 of the 21 interviews with a digital audio recorder. In addition to the recordings, I took notes to ensure the information was documented in the event of a malfunction with the digital recording. Once all interviews were completed, I transcribed the audio-recordings into a typed text file. I then supplemented the transcriptions with my interview notes. My interview notes provided additional description and were especially relied upon in cases where the audio could not be understood and for the one participant that requested she not be recorded. The transcriptions supplemented by my notes yielded 107 pages of typed text.

3.5.2 Thematic Analysis

I conducted the thematic analysis with all 21 of the interview transcripts with the bodies of text being preserved as whole narratives. Each interview was first read as a

story without any notes being taken. I used this process as an opportunity to immerse myself in the women's stories from beginning to end. After I had time to mull over the stories and reflect on them, I identified recurring ideas as well as specific factors that contribute to leading women to become involved in sex work. I returned to the transcripts with these recurring themes and recurring factors in mind and re-read the narratives with the objective to identify common ideas, themes, stories, factors and any other interesting observations. I used this inductive form of analysis to tease out meaning from the narratives, common themes and sub-themes and specific factors that have contributed to leading the women into sex work.

In order to manage the data, I devised a colour-coding scheme to assemble important elements from the narratives. The items gleaned from the data in this way include: factors that the women self-identified as leading them to become involved in sex work; factors that contributed to leading them to sex work that they did not identify themselves; recurring sub-themes; and, other life events that appeared to be common for many women. I make a distinction here between those factors identified by the women themselves and those that I identified. Those factors that were identified by the women themselves, were ones that they spoke about either spontaneously or when asked broadly, "what factors contributed to leading you to sex work?" Whereas, the factors that I identified, are ones that I drew from the women's stories both inductively and deductively. The factors that I identified inductively were done so by observing particular associations between elements in her life, throughout her life course, that would place her at risk for entering sex work. Those factors that were determined deductively were the result of asking the women specific questions about factors that

have been observed to be common to FSWs in other research as well as factors that I hypothesized would contribute to leading women to sex work, such as moving to Nairobi from a rural area without money and/or social support.

I highlighted and flagged the elements gleaned from the women's stories using coloured pens and flags. I assigned repeating elements a specific colour, which could be identified by referring to a colour-coded key, a necessary tool in order to keep the coding consistent. Once the entire data set was highlighted and flagged, I went through the transcripts again to get a sense of how often some items were repeated. This preliminary analysis revealed recurring sub-themes, common backgrounds and repeating and unique factors that have contributed to leading the women to sex work. Additionally, this preliminary form of analysis allowed me to identify and highlight other important points within the narrative that I wanted to keep track of.

After flagging and highlighting the transcripts, I organized the data by classifying the factors, sub-themes and life events into a data matrix (see Table 3-1 for an example of the data matrix used). I classified woman-identified factors and researcher-identified factors according to two dimensions: temporality and sociality. I created a spreadsheet that delineates each woman, the factors, both self-identified and not, the identified themes and the details about her background, plotted based on the temporal and social categories that they belonged to. I classified all of these elements (themes, sub-themes and factors) into three broad temporal categories to account for the time in the woman's life when the elements occurred. The temporal categories include: the woman's childhood and/or background before she became involved in sex work; the time when she was transitioning into sex work; and, once sex work had become more stabilized and/or regular. Social

categories are divided into three spatial 'distances' specifically: the individual level; the family level, including extended family and friends; and, the societal level including cultural practices and norms, social structure and the political economy of the nation-state. Temporal categories are labeled: childhood, transitional, stabilization and the social categories are labeled: proximal, medial and distal.

Table 3-1: Example of Data Matrix

		SOCIO-SPATIAL DISTANCE		
		Proximal	**Medial**	**Distal**
TEMPORAL	**Childhood**	Stopped attending school	Stopped school due to a lack of fees	Government finances primary education only
	Transitional	Came to Nairobi in search of a job	Wanted to earn money to send it home to educate small sisters	Unable to find employment
	Stabilization	To get money to take care of self	To send money home to parents	Felt trapped and unable to stop because of no other alternative

This data matrix method of analysis is unique in how I have brought together the two dimensions of temporality and spatiality to analyze life histories. This method of analysis came about during the process of researching the complex nature of entry into sex work for women in the developing world context. In my own struggle to classify how specific elements of women's lives affect their risk for entry into sex work, I recognized the necessity of classifying temporally where these elements occur over the life course. Understanding life pathways into sex work and the temporality of these pathways, follows life course theory, which posits that an individual's background experiences can influence the life trajectory for that individual (Elder 1998). As such, the

temporal categories are chosen to reflect "life transitions" (Elder 1998:1) in which social 'trajectories' are informed. Additionally, understanding and recognizing the complexity of structural violence and relationships of inequality that are ever-present at the macro-level and which also trickle down (with a large impact) to the individual level, necessitated a classification scheme to account for the level from which the particular risk for entry is emanating. The spatial categories are used in other research, such as in the social determinants of health research, to represent the spatial location of particular influences (e.g. Starfield 2001). Both life course research and the social determinants of health research are relevant to my own research as the life history method that I used to collect data accounts for the life courses of the women in the study and the health inequities faced by FSWs are directly related to the social determinants of health. To examine how structural violence and relationships of inequality impinge over the life course of FSWs in Kenya, I felt it was necessary to thoroughly examine both the temporal and social dimensions of the women's life histories. The data matrix served as a useful classification tool in order to perform this form of analysis while examining entry into sex work as a process. Finally, this analytical tool accounts for the complexity of the combination of factors that lead women into sex work.

In order to conduct this type of analytical classification, the following assumptions were made: (1) that elements from an individual's childhood and/or background can influence her later in life; and, (2) that an individual is impacted and directly affected by the social and political structure within which she is embedded. For the first assumption, a difficulty lies in the classification of a particular element in a woman's past that has a later consequence. If both the original event and later life events

are entered into the matrix, it becomes difficult to tease apart whether one element is the result of another and if so, whether or not it should be included. Although this may be regarded as a limit, it is also a potential value of the method, underscoring the need for recognizing the importance for how these life elements act *throughout* the life course. Although elements from a woman's life might be repeated in this classification scheme, this allows for acknowledgement of the risk factors for entry into sex work over the course of her life.

Another limit to the data matrix as an analytical tool lies in classification difficulties. As I performed the data analysis and attempted to fit the factors and themes into the matrix, I sometimes had difficulties determining which cell was the most appropriate, since many of the factors and themes can fit in more than just one category. For instance, when looking at the common theme of dropping out of school, it is difficult to determine the socio-spatial distance from which this element has its influence. If it is placed in the temporal category of occurring in childhood, intuitively, it has its influence proximally; however, if the question was asked *why* the participant left school, the response was invariably, "*due to a lack of fees*", which then, seems to have a better fit in the medial category. If this response is then probed further, one can see the factor also has its influence more distally, since the Kenyan government has established free primary education (Nairobi State House 2004), but has not yet implemented free secondary education.[7] Although this classification difficulty may be regarded as a limit to the

[7] In a speech made by His Excellency Hon. Kibaki, September 14, 2007, the President reported that the Kenya Government is moving towards providing 14 years of free education to its children. President Kibaki stated that the new education policies include the waiving of tuition fees for all secondary students, commencing in January 2008 (Kibaki, 2007).

method, it is also a strength, as it lets me simultaneously consider both individual effects and 'upstream' causation.

The data matrix does prove useful for analyzing the data, by ensuring the data are thought about systematically and critically and categorized in order to examine entry into sex work processually. This method of analysis also draws attention to the complexity of the routes into sex work, by illustrating the *combination* of factors that influence women and girls' entry into sex work, which will be more fully explored in Chapter Five. An additional value to organizing and examining the data this way is in the potential benefits in identifying where and when prevention and education efforts should be aimed.

Once entered into the data matrix, I then analyzed the factors to gather a sense of frequency of recurring factors. This analysis was performed by simply counting the total number of items identified and inserted into a particular category in the matrix, followed by counting the total number of individual elements and counting the number of times a particular element recurred. Individual elements were all of the factors that were identified ignoring repeats; whereas, the recurring elements accounted for all those that repeated two or more times. Because these factors were already entered into the data matrix, it was possible to "triangulate" the data by first counting elements in each socio-spatial distance, then moving on to counting individual and recurring items in each temporal category, and finally, counting them within each intersecting category.

By inserting elements of the women's backgrounds and life stories into the matrix, it was possible to get a sense of the common themes among their life stories. Repeated factors were noted, as well as cases where participants shared similar backgrounds and stories. I analyzed all elements identified in each woman's story to

determine if there existed shared experiences among respondents. Through this classification process, I identified which specific factors, themes and sub-themes recurred in the narratives.

In Campbell's (2003) research with FSWs in a South African mining town, she found that all of the women in her study had similar backgrounds. They had each experienced the death of a spouse or parents; stopping school after becoming pregnant and having difficulty finding work; leaving an abusive man; and, leaving the hardships of home. As some of these observations are multi-faceted, I distilled Campbell's background factors into eight separate factors to explore in my own project: (1) death of a spouse; (2) death of parents; (3) dropping out of school; (4) dropping out of school after becoming pregnant; (5) dropping out of school and having difficulty finding work; (6) having difficulty finding work; (7) leaving an abusive man; (8) leaving the hardships of home. In the interviews, I asked questions to ascertain whether or not women in my study had backgrounds similar to the women in Campbell's study. I deductively analyzed the data to determine if any of these eight factors appeared and to determine whether they were 'common' to my sample. To test whether Campbell's identified factors were common to my sample, I reviewed the transcripts of each interview and highlighted each instance in which the same factors were present. Based on the results of the analysis, I determined that those factors that recurred in my data set were then deemed to be common to women in Nairobi as to those women in Campbell's study, whereas, the factors with none or very few (two or less) occurrences were deemed to be uncommon to the FSWs in this study.

At this point in the analysis, common sub-themes had been identified and many common factors and common backgrounds were neatly organized into the data matrix, however, I could not see overarching ideas or central themes. As such, I returned to the narratives to conduct a phenomenological analysis to determine if overarching themes existed among the stories.

In addition to the previous thematic analysis of reading, coding and counting elements from the women's stories, I re-read the transcripts thoroughly to identify *meaning* within the narrative. Max van Manen's (1990) argument that "phenomenological themes may be understood as the *structures of experience*" (79), I immersed myself in the women's stories to an extent that I began to grasp 'the lived experience.' This method of analysis involved several iterations of reading and reflecting. After I spent time reading the narratives and reflecting upon them, an important common theme began to emerge. This common thread to all of the stories was touched on in the other forms of thematic analysis that I did; however, it was not until I critically thought about the *meaning* of the stories that this became apparent. Here the value of the life history method presents itself as a means to reach a deeper understanding of the lives of the women who participated in the study. By analyzing the life stories using phenomenological analysis, I was able to understand how the previously identified 'elements' of the women's lives fit together to create a 'whole' story within the context of their lives as recounted in their narratives. In conducting this form of analysis the following assumptions were made: (1) the women have valuable stories to tell; (2) they are aware of their own journeys into sex work; (3) each woman's life history and journey into sex work is unique; (4) it is important to maintain her 'voice' in the narratives; and,

(5) she will share the parts of her life history that she chooses based on her own ideas of their importance.

It is important to point out that this form of phenomenological reflection allowed for a greater insight into the stories that might have been missed by only conducting thematic analysis. By conducting the phenomenological analysis, I identified a central overarching theme among the women's stories as well as three common themes comprised of the sub-themes and factors previously identified. The two forms of analysis worked together; the first stage of analysis served to organize the data and identify common elements in the women's lives while identifying where these elements fit in the temporal and social categories over the life course. The second stage allowed for a greater understanding of the meaning of the women's stories in order to comprehend how the elements fit together. It is through the blend of both analytical tools that the combination of factors that lead women into sex work in Nairobi became apparent.

As noted in the introductory chapter, I analyzed my interview data in conjunction with the Dual Entry Model that emerged from Ngugi and Roth's analysis of K-VOWRC client intake data (Ngugi and Roth n.d.). Specifically, I analyzed my interview transcripts by age. I conducted this portion of the analysis by inputting the data into a spreadsheet that delineated the ages that the respondents were when certain aspects of their lives occurred. Those elements of the women's lives used in this age analysis were gathered from the narratives inductively through familiarity with the participants' stories and deductively by looking for the Dual Entry Model observation that the length of time that women and girls are in the sex trade corresponds to the age at which they begin sex work (Ngugi and Roth n.d.). I divided the sample into the girl respondents (between 18

and 21 years of age at the time of the interview) and the women respondents (aged over 21 at the time of the interview). Each age category was then compared by elements in their lives and the corresponding age occurrence. These elements included common themes that had been previously identified in the thematic analysis as well as specific factors that have contributed to leading the participants into sex work.

In addition to this preliminary analysis, I returned to the women and girls' stories as whole narratives to determine if common themes persisted regardless of age or whether the age categories also represented unique themes. This analysis required physically separating the stories into the two age categories and re-reading each grouping with the age question present in my mind. Again, I sought to find meaning within the narratives but this time, through a lens that was focused on how the age at which certain life events occur might in turn affect and/or influence the life course for these women. Additionally, I was interested in determining how structural violence and relationships of inequality affected the women/girls at various points in their lives and whether age served as a protective factor in some instances. A phenomenological analysis consisting of iterations of reading and reflecting allowed for an interpretation of the women's stories through an age lens. By preserving the whole narratives in this form of qualitative analysis, the women's stories in essence 'speak for themselves.' The women's life histories reflect their own lives and it is through careful reading and reflection that I was able to draw out important themes, providing critical insight into the Dual Entry Model observed by Ngugi and Roth (n.d.). The results of the age analysis appear in Section 4.2, followed by a discussion of these results in Section 5.5.

3.5.3 Analysis Summary

The data analysis was an evolving and iterative process that allowed for flexibility in both the design and analytical tools used. By using the data matrix as an organizational strategy in addition to conducting a phenomenological thematic analysis, the overall result is a comprehensive immersion into the women's stories. Crucial to understanding the meaning of the women's stories and identifying the overarching themes, was the necessity to preserve the women's voices in the telling of their stories and to read them as whole narratives. Equally important was the thematic analysis that included identifying specific elements from the women's stories that are repeating among the narratives and by detecting commonalities among their various pathways into sex work. This process was valuable for a thorough analysis within the sample as a whole, between the two age groups as well as in comparison with previous research with FSWs. Although the numerous steps taken throughout the analysis process were not linear and involved several iterations of reading, organizing and reflecting on the data, it is this blend of analytical tools that offers a thorough qualitative analysis of the narrative data.

3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

At the end of each interview I turned off the audio recorder and thanked the participant for sharing her story. An unexpected result of the life history method was the number of participants who then proceeded to thank me for providing them with the opportunity of sharing their stories. Despite the research I had performed in choosing life histories as a method, and the belief that this method can provide a 'voice' to participants, I was pleasantly surprised with this reaction of many of the participants. Most of the women also expressed their sincere gratitude to Prof. Ngugi and K-VOWRC for helping them with vocational training and/or micro-credit loans, which enabled them to leave sex

work for a viable and sustainable income-generating alternative. After the interview was over, the conversation usually turned to me being the one "interviewed." The participant initiated this role reversal, however, I would gladly answer all of her questions. The women asked me various questions ranging from my background and family to Canadian politics to my thoughts about Kenya. Some of the participants were also eager to provide me with their mobile phone numbers and E-mail addresses so that we could remain connected. I also shared my E-mail address and mobile phone number while in Kenya with the participants and explained that they could contact me at any time if they had any questions regarding the research and/or their participation in the research, or if they wanted to discuss the interview at all. I also explained to all of the participants that they would have access to a final report of the research project that will be available at the K-VOWRC office.

The methods and methodology used in this research enabled me to gather qualitative data in the form of life histories and to in turn qualitatively analyze the results. The analytic methods allowed me to identify the combination of factors that lead women into sex work in Nairobi and to recognize the *meaning* within the narratives. Ethnographic interviews using open-ended questions provided the opportunity to gather the women's life histories and allowed them to share their stories in the way they chose (the results will be presented and discussed in Chapters Four and Five). The recruitment method required more flexibility than I had originally intended, as it was necessary to abandon my intention to actively recruit participants on my own and instead relied heavily on the assistance of the staff at K-VOWRC. Although the level of recruitment

assistance that I received from K-VOWRC was not my original intention, the help I received from the women who work at the Centre was invaluable to my research.

In the next chapter, I present the findings from the interviews and the results of the qualitative analysis.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The following excerpt is taken from the life history of Zatu, a young woman in her late teens who began sex work at the very young age of ten years old:

> *My family was having many problems. We sleep outside because we don't have money. My father when* [*he*][8] *was going to look for a job, people told him he don't have a job because he* don't *have certificate. He traveled because even food we cannot eat. We used to borrow from neighbours they would give us food. My father, when he was going to my uncle. My uncle gave him 500* [*Kenyan Shillings*] *and we used it to buy food, then my…* [*eldest*] brother, *…he died because of hunger. And because my family had many problems, I decided to go to use my body… and then I get money to feed. I do that job about three months. I sleep with a man, he gives me money and then I go home and I give* [*it to*] my *mother and she buys food. The next day, I go and get some money, sometimes I not getting. I sleep with a man, he beat me and then, …and then I go to the club at night. I get some man… I go to use my body to sleep with them. He gives me 200 or 400* [*shillings*][9]*, I bring home, my mother take it, she buy our food and then we sleep. Tomorrow, I will wake up and then I go out working, I washing the dishes and I tell them to give me money, 100. And then at night, I going to sell my body. We struggle with my family and then we come here at Nairobi, and then I will go to another club to use my body. Because in Nairobi, if you don't have money to pay our friends, they are going to throw you out of your house and then you are more suffering. And if you have a small child and you don't have any money, then you don't eat.*
>
> (Zatu)

[8] Zatu uses the pronoun "she" when referring to a man, therefore, to avoid confusion and for ease of reading, I have replaced instances of "she" with "he."
[9] At the time the interviews were conducted, 200 Kenyan Shillings was equal to approximately CAN$3.00.

As an introduction to the results, I present findings from the impromptu focus group held on the second day of interviewing. Although these results are not comprehensive, they are valuable because they serve as a jumping off point for the complete analysis of the life histories to follow. These findings reveal that participants believed the main reasons girls begin to engage in sex work are due to: poverty, a lack of parental support and a lack of parental love. Participants commented on how many girls in their situation do not possess job-related qualifications as most quit school due to a lack of fees and are influenced by their peer group to start commercial sex work. There was also a consensus among the focus group that peers have a large influence on them and that peers can even *force* them into sex work. One participant emphasized the importance of peer influence by expressing that it is commonplace for girls to "*want to be like someone else and the desire to buy things will lead them to sex work.*" These results provide a description of some of the attitudes and beliefs about the reasons women and girls enter sex work, setting up the context for the presentation of the complete results to follow. For the remainder of this chapter, all of the results are from the life histories of the 21 women and girls who participated in the research.

In this chapter, I present the research findings. The interviews elicited the life histories of 21 women from Nairobi, Kenya and a thorough analysis of these rich narratives generated the following results. In-depth discussion and interpretation of the findings in the context of existing literature appear in Chapter Five. For ease of reading, the bulk of the data are presented based on the themes of the results rather than in the order that the data were gathered or analyzed. Firstly, I present the findings that are common to both age categories, including the results from using the data matrix to

classify the socio-spatial and temporal categories that have contributed to leading women to sex work. These results exist for the group of participants as a whole, and take account of the time and socio-spatial dimensions. Chapter Five explores how the results fit within these categories. Secondly, I present the results of the thematic analysis when the group was divided by age (women and girls). These findings are organized thematically as well as by age-specific correlations to particular factors contributing to the initiation of sex work.

4.1 GROUP FACTORS AND THEMES

In this section, I present the findings that are common to the entire group, without adjusting for the age of entry into sex work (the results of the age analysis appear in Section 4.2). Firstly, I present the results of identifying individual and recurring factors and categorizing them into the Data Matrix. Secondly, I present the findings from the thematic analysis organized according to the recurring themes as they occur in each of the three temporal stages. Finally, I present the results of comparing the findings with previous research with FSWs in South Africa. As mentioned previously, in this thesis I draw a distinction between themes, sub-themes and factors. Central themes are those overarching recurring ideas that permeate deeply throughout the layers/fabric of the stories; sub-themes are also recurring ideas among the stories that together, comprise the larger central themes; and, factors refer to specific life events or circumstances that contribute to the initiation of sex work.

4.1.1 Data Matrix

The thematic analysis was conducted in several steps revealing important findings at each step. In garnering themes and sub-themes from the stories, I identified and

categorized specific factors that lead participants into sex work in Nairobi, including those factors that they identified and those I identified from their life histories. I analyzed these findings by classifying factors into a data matrix to correlate them with socio-spatial and temporal categories. It is important to note that these particular results represent the group as a whole and are not analyzed based on the age of entry into sex work.

Individual Factors

Removing duplicate factors gleaned from the interviews indicates the number of individual factors as well as the number of times that certain factors are repeated. The data matrix reveals that more factors identified by participants were socio-spatially categorized as proximal and medial than as distal. From the transcripts as a whole, examples of some of the factors from the women's stories that fit in the proximal category include: quitting school, getting money to buy food and being raised by a single parent. Examples of factors that fit in the medial category include: moving to Nairobi due to the death of a parent, sending money home to care for family members and a friend showing her how to be a sex worker. In the distal category, the recurring factors include, for example: being raised in poverty, the father working away from home and the inability to find work.

All factors were entered into the data matrix to obtain a sense of the total factors that lead women into sex work along the life course. Factors were then separated into those that occurred in childhood, when women were transitioning into sex work and once her engagement in sex work had become more regular and/or stabilized. Additionally,

the data matrix indicates whether the factor originates at the individual level (proximally), at the familial level (medially), or at the larger societal level (distally).

Results of identifying and classifying the factors that lead women into sex work in Nairobi are presented below. I first analyze the transcripts to identify all factors, followed by their classification into the data matrix. Finally, I divide the total factors into two classes: those individual factors and those common to the group.

Factors are classified as distal due to their roots in the macro-level context within which the women and girls live. For instance, being raised in poverty within the Kenyan context is the result of the social history and political economy of the nation state, while the father working away from home is often due to a lack of wage-earning opportunities in rural areas. Additionally, the inability of women to find work is a result of gendered economic opportunities in Kenya.

Conducting the same process of identifying and counting factors that fit in the temporal categories revealed factors in each of the three life stages. Factors that occurred in childhood include, for example: stopping school due to a lack of fees, being raised in a family with a large number of dependants and taking care of a sick family member. Examples of factors that fit into the transitional category include: being beaten by her boss, moving to Nairobi with no money and having no support after moving. Examples of factors in the category when engagement in sex work becomes stabilized include: starting to do sex work every day because she becomes "*used to it*", using the money to support her children and not being paid enough to survive from her previous job. The findings that illustrate these individual factors provide a broad picture of entry into sex

work; however, as will be shown, it is the commonly recurring factors that impart greater value to the study.

Recurring Factors

In the previous section, I describe the results of identifying and categorizing all of the unique factors along the two dimensions of temporality and socio-spaciality. In this section, I present the results of identifying recurring factors from the women and girls' stories. These factors are ones that are repeated more than twice among the life histories of the participants. Recurrent factors from the women and girls' stories are presented in the data matrix table (Table 4-1), as classified based on the temporal and social dimensions. As will be shown, most of these factors are the same as the sub-themes described in Section 4.1.2, however, the value of presenting the findings in this way is to see the distribution of the factors within the matrix.

Table 4-1: Recurring Factors Delineated Spatially and Temporally

		SOCIO-SPATIAL DISTANCE		
		Proximal	**Medial**	**Distal**
TEMPORAL	**Childhood**	• stop attending school • parent(s) died	• being raised in single parent household or by extended kin • large number of dependants in the family (including grandparents) • lack of school fees	• father working away from home • poverty
	Transitional	• friend shows her sex work • moving to Nairobi to search for a job • moving to Nairobi with no money • leaving husband	• moving to live with extended kin • family member sick at home • sending money home • living with friends • abusive husband • using money to support children	• difficulty finding work • no skills or experience
	Stabilization	• using money to care for self/basic needs	• sending money home • using money to support children • sharing money with peers	• experiencing stigma • no skills or experience

Commonalities among the life histories of the participants include: living an impoverished childhood, being raised in a single or no parent household due to the death of one or both parents or having a father who was a migrant labourer, living in a family with a large number of dependants and being forced to quit school at a young age due to a lack of school fees. Many women and girls move to Nairobi from rural Kenya in an attempt to better their lives after a withdrawal of support. Most moved to Nairobi to live with relatives, arriving in the city without money and for many, after a short time, ended

up living with friends and beginning sex work. At this transitional time in their lives, the women and girls sent money home to care for family members, including younger siblings and family members who had fallen ill. For those participants who had married, they usually transitioned into sex work after leaving a husband and used the money earned through sex work to support themselves and children (their own and other family members' children). For most of the participants, once sex work had become more regular and/or stabilized, they used the money earned through sex work to support themselves, their children, family members living in their home village and/or their peer groups. Without other skills or experience, many of the participants felt "trapped" in the sex trade and although they faced stigma from family, friends and community members, they had nowhere else to turn. When asked what she could tell me about her life story once sex work became more regular, Susan replied, "*I felt used and I knew it was not right, but I had no choice. No money, no other skills.*"

4.1.2 Life Course

The research findings from both the woman-identified and researcher-identified themes and factors indicate that a woman's childhood and/or background affect(s) her risk for entering sex work later in life. *Poverty* is a recurrent theme in the women's lives, and their stories tell of childhoods of extreme poverty. A recurring theme placing women at risk of becoming involved in sex work is *withdrawal or lack of support*. Whether her parents or her spouse withdraws the support, it has a direct influence on a woman transitioning into sex work. Once sex work becomes stabilized and/or regular, the recurring theme is that of *supporting others*. The need to support children, family and/or friends places women at risk for remaining in sex work and/or engaging in it on a regular

basis. These themes and the particular factors that comprise them will be presented more fully below.

Childhood: A History of Poverty

The participants in this research share common childhood factors that have contributed to their entry into sex work. Within this temporal category, the recurring theme among the stories is *a history of poverty*. Subsumed within this recurring theme are the following sub-themes: living in poverty, being raised in a single parent/no parent household and stopping school due to a lack of fees.

Both women and girls cite poor economic backgrounds as contributing to leading them to sex work. Describing her economic status as a child, Michelle[10] recounts:

> *My economic status… you know life in the rural areas is not like life this side, in urban areas. Because you know we have to wake up very early in the morning, do some work – even if it's in the garden – then you come back and prepare for school that is far away from home and you have to walk… and it's bare footed, not with shoes. You have to arrive early, because if you are late you will be punished. It was difficult. Life in rural areas is very difficult.*
>
> (Michelle)

Michelle and her siblings completed their primary level education (Class 8), but were forced to quit before the secondary level due to a lack of school fees. After their mother died while giving birth to her ninth child, Michelle became responsible for caring for her newborn brother. It was this difficult life in the rural areas that drove Michelle to seek a better life in the city with her aunt. *"I saw her dressing well, eating… and I asked her how she managed to do that. And the way she managed to buy dresses and… she said, 'come, I will show you how to get money to buy clothes and stay well.'"* Michelle's

[10] All names are pseudonyms that were chosen by the participants at the start of each interview.

aunt was a FSW in Nairobi and introduced Michelle to sex work when she was 17 years old. As will be shown, having a close friend or relative in the sex industry is another contributing factor. Michelle's story exemplifies the difficult life in the rural areas, which is often left behind after the death of a parent, usually with the hopes of an improved life in the city. In many of the women and girls' stories, they describe the poverty in the rural areas by contrasting it to the "better life" that is possible in Nairobi.

Most study participants were raised in single parent households after the other parent had left or died. The remaining participants were orphaned. Extended kin, usually grandmothers or aunts take in girls who lose both parents. Caroline describes her life as a child: "*My life was not good. It was not a good life. I was falling ill often and my mother died when I was seven years.*" Caroline's father predeceased her mother when Caroline was four years old. At five years of age Caroline began caring for her mother who was sick for two years before she died. Caroline was one of six children, three girls and three boys. The three girls went to live with their aunt who could not afford to care for them. They stopped attending school at Standard five, six and seven (approximately age 10, 11 and 12) due to a lack of fees. Eventually, Caroline moved to Nairobi to live with one of her brothers and a cousin and began sex work not long thereafter.

In addition to finding that most participants were raised in single parent/no parent households, all participants quit school before completing the secondary level. For the girls, most quit school in the primary level, before age 13. When asked if there were any childhood events that led her to sex work, Susan replied, "*Yeah, by then, after completing primary school, there was nothing to do. I had no experience in anything. That's when I met a friend and she introduced me to that* [sex work] *job.*" Susan was sent to live with

her aunt when she was 12 years old because her mother died and her father could not afford to care for her. When she moved in with her aunt, she quit school, "*My father told me to come, so my aunt could educate me, but I never went too far* [in school]*… because she couldn't afford.*" All of the participants stated that their inability to pay secondary school fees prevented them from completing their education.

Transitional Time: Withdrawal or Lack of Support

When women and girls are transitioning into sex work, the recurring theme among the stories is that of a sudden withdrawal of support and/or a lack of support. Within this larger theme, three recurring sub-themes are found among the stories: leaving home, peer influence and ending spousal relationships.

As mentioned previously, most participants moved to Nairobi from rural Kenya in search of a better life after being orphaned (whether losing one or both parents). Having only their transit fare, many arrived destitute. Most girl participants in the study came to live with an extended family member, whereas women participants often moved to the city in search of employment. Janenjere moved to Nairobi to live with her aunt after her mother died when she was 14 years old while her brothers stayed at home with their father. Due to a lack of support from her aunt, Janenjere moved in with friends who were FSWs and she soon began to engage in sex work as well. Another participant, Tom, explains why she left the rural area to move to Nairobi: "*To come to look for my life. …Because it is the only area which I can have money to improve my life.*" She describes when she first moved to the city: "*The day I came here, I had no job. When you have no job, your problems are to have food. So, I must find a job, but there is no way you can get it* [a job]."

Once in the city, peers play a pivotal role in leading girls and women into sex work. Girls are influenced by seeing their friends "*living well*", and many asked their friends to show them how to do sex work. When asked if there were any childhood events that led her to become engaged in sex work, Jane replied, "*There were. It was another girl who showed me to start that job.*" Jane is referring to a friend who introduced her to sex work in Nairobi at 18 years of age. She moved to Nairobi in search of employment, but unable to find work, she explained, "*I got that friend to show me that job.*" Jane describes when she first started sex work: "*Okay, when my friend first showed me, we went to a place called Koinange. When she showed me the first boyfriend, we talked with him. And then they told me how to do it and then I started*."

Lynne, who began sex work at 15 years old, describes her experience when she was first introduced to sex work:

> *When I used to have that problem* [being involved in sex work]*… I went to school* [*and*] *there were girls who said, 'Why should you do this at this time? There is a lot of money in the city centre. Now you don't even have to take a bus, you just walk there, you dress like this…' and they told me what to do. But when I went the first time, I got money and I thought it to be good.*
>
> (Lynne)

During this transitional time, peer influence contributes greatly to women and girls becoming involved in sex work. Additionally, the findings indicate that the issue of peers and the central theme of support are interrelated due to the girls' obligation to support their peers (this will be presented and further explored in the results of the age analysis, Section 4.2 and discussed in Chapter Five).

During this transitional stage, when women begin sex work, many started after the dissolution of a spousal relationship. Women left their husbands due to spousal abuse or the man "*misbehaving*" by being unfaithful or drinking. When Carolyne was asked why some women start sex work, her response was that, "*older women are married and the man misbehaves and something happens.*" Georgina left her husband after he had sex with her younger sister. Georgina had brought her younger sister to the city from their rural home to live with them and employed her to take care of her children.

> *So I went in the village and brought my younger sister. When I brought my younger sister who had also dropped out of school, who stayed working for me for four years, I would pay her a salary at the end of the month and now after staying for four years, I came to realize one day that she was pregnant and now when I questioned her about the pregnancy, she tell me that my husband was the father. That was what made us to separate. Because I felt it was very heavy for me, at least he could have slept with any other person, but my sister I felt it was a very heavy burden. A very heavy burden he pressed on me. Although I loved him, I was very much affected. So we terminated the pregnancy, I said my sister was not going to give birth to a child belonging to my husband, so we terminated the pregnancy and I sent the girl back home. And now* [*my husband and I*] *separated.*
>
> *After I separated with my husband, and my family business, you know the family business, the income was so small, it was so little. Here I had the children and my husband has gone away, he took all the furniture in the house, the bedding everything… I was left with nothing. He cleaned the house. So I was left without even a bed. So the little money I had saved, I bought a bed and I bought some cups, everything in the house. So I bought some more furniture and I was left with no money. And the family business was going broke.*
>
> (Georgina)

After separating from her husband, with nowhere else to turn, Georgina began sex work to support herself and her children.

Stabilization Period: Receiving and Providing Support

Once sex work becomes stabilized and/or regular, the meaning-centred thematic analysis reveals an important central theme: the issue of support. Support is a recurrent and pervasive theme in the lives of the women and girls, both in its provision and receipt. This central theme will be presented below as well as further explored in the age analysis section to follow (Section 4.2).

Participants sent home money earned from sex work to support parents and/or siblings or children and/or peers. The implications of this are apparent when despite sex work being heavily stigmatized, there are family members who are aware of their sisters' or daughters' involvement in sex work, but since they benefit financially from it, they do not stop them. Nancy started sex work in Nairobi when she was 16 years old. She sent home money earned through sex work to her parents, as she says, "…*because my parents were not so well financially*." When asked if her parents knew what she was doing, she replied, "*Yes, my mum was knowing, but she could not even stop me from doing it, because I was the main source* [*of income*]. *I was the one providing for them.*" She also went on to explain that, "*if my dad was well and had a good job, I would not have to do this.*" When asked if her mother encouraged her to do sex work, Nancy replied: "*She was not advising me to do it, but even after noticing, she did not tell me to stop.*"

Summary

These findings for the group as a whole provide insight into the life course of FSWs and the particular events leading to sex work. The thematic analysis of the

transcripts indicate the following recurring sub-themes: (1) coming from a history of poverty, (2) being raised in a single parent/no parent household, (3) stopping school due to a lack of fees, (4) coming to the city from a rural area without money, (5) a friend introducing her to sex work, (6) the dissolution of a spousal relationship and, (7) supporting children, family and/or friends. These recurring themes among the life histories show the combination of factors that contribute to leading the participants into sex work and highlight the complexity of exploring why women enter sex work in Nairobi. When considering whether these recurring sub-themes are necessary or sufficient conditions for entry into sex work for my sample, I draw on insight from the participants themselves. This is an important endeavour since, for example, although the observation may be made that all participants quit school, none cited it specifically as a factor that led them into sex work. However, when asked directly about what has led them to sex work, the most common responses were: poverty, a friend introducing her to it and the need to support children, family and/or friends. As such, these themes could be classified as necessary conditions for entry into sex work for this sample. It is important to point out that these conditions work together over the life course in the three temporal categories: childhood poverty; peer influence during the transition into sex work; and, the need to support others, contributing to stabilization of engagement in sex work.

4.1.3 Comparison to FSWs in South Africa

In the analysis of the results shared by the entire group of women, I compared those themes identified by Campbell (2003) in her study with FSWs in a South African mining town to the transcripts of the 21 women I interviewed in Nairobi. Findings indicate four shared themes among both groups: the death of parents, dropping out of

school, having difficulty finding employment and leaving the hardships of a home village in search of a better life in the city.

Both the similarities and differences between Campbell's and my results are important. For example, the death of a spouse and dropping out of school after becoming pregnant were not factors for this group. Additionally, dropping out of school and then having difficulty finding work was only mentioned by two of the participants. Many participants indicated that they had difficulty finding work and most dropped out of school, however, the indication that dropping out of school occurred immediately preceding having difficulty finding work was only indicated twice in the transcripts.

The theme "death of parents" is recurrent in the women and girls' stories in my study. Stories from Nairobi told most often of one parent dying; however, many of the participants were in the care of a single parent to begin with, leaving her orphaned and sent to live with extended family. Dropping out of school is also a common theme for the group in my study with the majority of participants mentioning that they had quit school. It is important to mention here that the term, *to drop* out of school was the language Campbell used in her study. This language may imply that leaving school for these girls was a choice between 'dropping' and 'keeping' school, with the ultimate decision being to 'let it go'. However, in my sample, women and girls who left school before completing their education, all cited a lack of school fees as the reason they were forced to quit. Additionally, having difficulty finding work was mentioned by many of the participants. In my sample, having difficulty finding work was often mentioned in conjunction with transitioning into sex work, as contributing directly to leading the women and girls to begin sex work. Finally, the common background factor of "leaving

the hardships of home" was reported by many of the women and girls in Nairobi. Most stated that life in the rural areas of Kenya is very hard, with extreme poverty and no employment opportunities. All of the women and girls who left rural areas due to the hardships present in their home villages were hoping for a better life in Nairobi in which they could find work and earn enough money to send money home to their families.

4.1.4 Summary

Results presented in this section represent the analysis of the transcripts from the group of participants as a whole. Recurring themes, sub-themes and factors provide important insight into the lives of sex workers in Nairobi, including those elements of their lives that place them at risk for engaging in and remaining in sex work. Findings indicating common themes among participants in this study and FSWs in South Africa (Campbell 2003) are also valuable, especially for making comparisons between different sub-Saharan African contexts. Results take into account temporal and social categories by illustrating the time in the individual's life when the particular factor occurs and if the factors are proximal, medial or distal. Particularly important is the observation that the women and girls' entry into sex work is affected by a multitude of factors from a variety of settings. These factors arise from social settings that include individual family and peers requiring support through to distal factors such as the socio-political structure that does not fund education beyond the primary level.

4.2 AGE ANALYSIS

In addition to the thematic analysis on the transcripts as a whole, I analyzed the transcripts thematically based on the age at which women began sex work. Although differences between the two groups exist, the thematic analysis of identifying common

themes and sub-themes in the data does reveal common factors that lead both women and girls to become involved in sex work. The purpose of this analysis is to determine if and why there are differences and similarities between the life histories of the two age groups as well as to shed light on the 'Dual Entry Model' as observed by Ngugi and Roth (n.d.). Below, the results as they compare for the two groups based on age of entry into sex work are presented. These findings are followed by the results of analyzing the transcripts by identifying and comparing specific life factors of the participants based on their age of occurrence.

The qualitative analysis, which is at the core of my thesis, revealed the key theme of support. Most of the participants, regardless of age, began to engage in sex work following a withdrawal of support. Women participants became involved in sex work once their spousal support ended, whereas girl participants began sex work following a withdrawal of parental/care-giver support. Additionally, both groups share the necessity to provide support for others in addition to themselves. In the following section, I present this key theme more fully while delineating the findings by the two age groups.

4.2.1 Women

Within the central theme of support, the common sub-themes shared among the women's group include: a withdrawal of support, the necessity to support others and a lack of employment. These sub-themes can be reduced further to delineate how these factors are unique to the women, while remaining similar to the girls' stories (which will follow). For women, a withdrawal of support refers specifically to spousal support in the sense that the relationship ends. The necessity to support others relates particularly to children (whether her own, or other family members' children). Both women and girls

have difficulty finding suitable employment. Girls cite a lack of work experience as a reason for this situation. Unlike girls, women do possess previous work experience but are still unable to find wage-earning opportunities. These three sub-themes are explored more fully below drawing on examples from the women's stories.

Women in the group shared a common history of the relationship ending with their husbands[11] and soon afterwards, beginning sex work. These relationships ended due to various reasons, but usually the woman left her husband due to his infidelity, him physically and/or mentally abusing her and/or their children and/or him abusing alcohol and becoming violent. In most cases, the husband had been the sole provider for the family and with the dissolution of the relationship she no longer had his support and was left to support herself and their children on her own. This finding could imply that a termination of support is a causal factor that leads women to sex work; however, the result of the thematic analysis of the transcripts points to another important theme: the requirement to support children. Many of the women support their own children as well as their siblings' children with the income they earn from sex work.

One of the women, Carolyne, was married from 1998 to 2003, during which time, she and her husband had two children. The husband supported the family until, in 2003, he "*abruptly changed*"; he "*started misbehaving… was drinking and beating* [Carolyne]." At that time, she took the children and left her husband. Carolyne described how she and her children lacked food to the extent that her children could not eat and that she lacked school fees for them; consequently, she began sex work. These circumstances, including the necessity to feed and school her children drove her to engage in sex work.

[11] Some women reported that their 'husbands' were not their legal husbands, as they had not been legally married. Regardless of the legality of the union, the couple was considered to be husband and wife by themselves as well as by family and friends.

It is commonplace in Kenya to assist in the raising of extended family members' children, along sibling lines and inter-generationally (Kilbride et al. 2000). Problems arise, however, when family members are not in close enough proximity, physically well or financially able to support the children. Jennifer, who was 32 years of age at the time of the interview, had relied on her own mother to care for her only child. When her mother fell ill and eventually died, Jennifer began to engage in sex work to support her child, as she explained that there was no one else to do it.

For many women, HIV/AIDS compounds the difficulties of caring for their own children. Lynne began to engage in sex work to support her mother; however, when her own burden became greater due to the birth of her own children, it further necessitated her involvement in sex work. Lynne had additional children to care for with the death of two of her sisters from AIDS. Her sisters had also both been FSWs and together, they left behind a total of three children. Lynne took in her sisters' children thereby increasing the number of people relying on her support to include herself, six children and her mother. Lynne describes the factors that contributed to leading her to sex work:

> *Working as a sex worker is not something that is all that pleasing. But sometimes [you] lack of enough money to take care of your children, when you have, or maybe when you are coming from a poor family, you wouldn't like to see your mother suffering, you know. Maybe your mother is dead, or maybe like in my situation, my mother was a single lady and we had seven in our family. She had to look after her aged mother and they all depend on one person that is jobless. So you see, it becomes so hard. …So difficult. And comes the situation that sometimes the children are sick, your mum is sick, you have to work. You know you have to look for money in each and every way. So you are forced to doing that work to get money. You are forced into that. …Like me, I've lost two sisters, it's*

> *so painful and they left back children – I have to take care of their children. So it becomes really difficult. So sometimes, when business is low, you don't have anybody to help and you have no hope. You are just forced to do something which you are not ready to.*
>
> (Lynne)

Many women held jobs previous to sex work, often as *housegirls*[12] or barmaids. They quit their jobs once they married; however, despite this previous work experience, when their relationships dissolved, they had a difficult time securing suitable employment. In cases where they did find employment, they often supplemented their income with sex work because of deplorable working conditions. The women told stories of jobs in which the wages were derisory, they were simply not paid money they were owed, or they were even abused by their bosses and forced to quit.

Georgina recounts how she became involved in sex work after leaving her job as a housegirl after working for six months without payment and finally being accused of stealing a dress from the *mama*[13]:

> *What made me leave that job? That mama was paying me only 300 shillings per month and I stayed for six months without her giving me even a single cent…. when it came the day she had promised to pay, she say that there is one of her dresses which had gotten robbed and she was suspecting that I was the one who had stole it. So my salary went to that dress, you see? And now I was left without anything…. So I moved out of her house…. and I went and now I started living with other girls who already known the town and they introduced me to men.*
>
> (Georgina)

---

[12] A "housegirl" is a young woman who lives with a family, cares for the children and does household chores such as cooking and cleaning. Housegirls are often compensated with room and board and a small wage.

[13] "Mama" is a Kiswahili word meaning 'mother' and refers to an older woman or one in authority and is a measure of respect. In this context, Georgina is referring to the woman of the house, who oversaw her work and was her boss.

Georgina was involved in sex work for two periods in her life. After her job as a housegirl, she became a FSW for a short time until she met her husband. Georgina's husband helped her start her own business operating a food kiosk, which she continued to operate after their 10-year relationship ended due to his unfaithfulness. Unfortunately, the food kiosk did not generate sufficient income to support herself and her children.

> *The family business was going broke. I had women friends who were already in commercial sex. They would come and I would tell them how business was bad. They told me, 'now since you operate this business during the day, we can show you something else that you can do during the night when you are not operating the food kiosk.'*
>
> (Georgina)

In this case, Georgina's income was insufficient and as such, she used sex work to supplement her business income.

> *So I told them, 'okay', now we started going in the bars at night when I closed my business, sometimes I would leave it with the workers, because I had at least four workers. When the job* [business] *became bad, I reduced them to three and then I reduced them to two so that I could afford to pay them, because the business was going very low. …So we started going to the bars during night and we would look for* [*sex trade*] *clients there.*
>
> *And during the morning, I would come and open my business and now the customers, they, you know they were not coming* [*to*] *take tea or food in the kiosk* [*as*] *they were the ones in the bars. When they see me in the bars and they see what kind of job I was doing there, and during the day, they see me at the kiosk, they refused the food. So at the end of the day I had to close down the kiosk and go to commercial sex work full time.*

> *Now they are saying I am dirty -- they cannot eat the food -- I am dirty. I am operating a* [sex work] *business at night and now I am, during the day I am coming to sell to them food, so they said I am dirty and they cannot eat. So I had to close down the food kiosk.*
>
> (Georgina)

In the end, due to her failing business, exacerbated by the stigma associated with her involvement as a FSW, Georgina resorted to sex work full time.

4.2.2 Girls

The theme of 'support' also pervades the girls' stories. Although both groups share this overarching theme, *how* the issue of support affects each group differs. Within this central theme, there are three main sub-themes that recur for the girls. These include: a withdrawal of support, supporting others and stopping school. Although these sub-themes appear to be similar to those found for the women, they differ in how they operate. For the girls, a withdrawal of support refers specifically to support ending from an adult caregiver. The theme of supporting others includes sending money home to family members as well as supporting peers. Additionally, findings indicate that peers have a large influence on members of the girl group especially when girls are *transitioning* into sex work; whereas this observation was not true for the women group. Finally, unique to the girls' life histories is the finding that stopping school is a common sub-theme and as will be shown below (and discussed in Chapter Five), is also tied directly to a lack of support. Findings specific to the group of girls are presented below using examples drawn from their stories.

The interviews indicate that girls commonly begin sex work after being placed in the care of extended kin following a loss of parental support. Poverty coupled with a

traumatic event such as the death of a parent is usually the reason girls are relocated. For many of the girls, HIV/AIDS has a direct influence on the withdrawal of parental support. Girls had parents, grandparents, aunts and/or uncles living with them who were sick and dying, resulting in a large number of children raised in households with few income-generating adults. This situation often results in pressure on the girls to earn money or, if the nuclear family cannot support her, she is placed in the care of extended kin. This extended kin living arrangement often dissolves due to an inability of the family to provide for an additional child, resulting in the girls engaging in sex work. This withdrawal of support often happens twice in the lives of the girls. Initially they lose a parent followed by the withdrawal of support from their subsequent principal caregiver. It is this lack of adult support that contributes to leading girls into sex work.

Jackline lived with her mother, father and three brothers in a rural area until she was ten years old. At that time, both of her parents died in an accident. Not only were Jackline and her siblings orphaned, but they were also separated and sent to live with other kin. Jackline moved to live with her grandmother and her brothers moved to live with their uncle in Nairobi. When she was 15, she too moved to Nairobi to live with her uncle because life with her grandmother "*was too hard.*" When she arrived in Nairobi, Jackline's uncle refused to care for her:

> [*When I*] *first came* [*to Nairobi*]. *I went to my uncle, I told him my life is very bad in the rural area. Then he* [*said that he*] *can't take care of me because he have a lot of things to do and he told me to leave. I want to leave* [*but*] *because I did not have any transport to go to rural area, and I decide to stay with my friends.*
>
> (Jackline)

This example is typical of many girls who move to Nairobi from the rural areas; without adequate support and nowhere else to go, they move in with friends and begin to engage in sex work to survive.

Like the women group, girls also use sex work to care for others in addition to themselves. Many girls sent money home to care for younger siblings. This money was used to buy food and to pay for their siblings' school fees. Several girls in the group explained that they sent money home to ensure that their younger sisters would not follow their path into sex work.

Additionally, all of the girls, with the exception of one[14], used sex work to contribute to supporting a cohort of peers. The girls lived together in groups of three or four and they all engaged in sex work. The peer group engaged in sex work and shared the money between them, to pay for rent and food and to support one another. Some girls reported that they lived with their friends for several months before they began to engage in sex work themselves. During this time, their friends supported them by providing them with food and shelter; some of the girls reported being "*encouraged*", "*convinced*" or "*forced*" to engage in sex work by these friends and when they did not earn money, they were even beaten by them. As Jackline recounts, "*When I first started* [*sex work*] *it was too hard. When I told them* [her friends] *I can't, they were beating me. But because I had nowhere to go, I just stayed and do what they want.*"

Transitioning into sex work follows a common path for the girl participants. All the girls in the group mentioned that a friend had showed them "*how to do this job.*" This peer influence includes where to solicit business, how to approach a man, and what to do

[14] The single exception Zatu, lived with her parents and siblings and engaged in sex work to support her nuclear family.

sexually. One participant, Caroline-Akoth moved to Nairobi to live with her elder brother and cousin after being orphaned. Although her brother wanted to pay for her schooling, he was unable to afford the fees, and, as Caroline-Akoth explains, "*life became difficult. There was no money… and he* [*could*] *not provide* [for her]." Arriving with only her transit fare, Caroline-Akoth explains, "*I started to live with friends… Then I entered in the sex work.*" She blames "*peer pressure*" as the reason she began sex work. Caroline-Akoth and her friends were all FSWs who supported one another with the money earned from sex work. In addition to supporting her friends, Caroline-Akoth also sent money home in order for her two younger brothers to attend school.

For all of the girls, in addition to the central role peers play in leading them to engage in sex work, dropping out of school was a predominant theme. Transcript analysis reveals that the average age at which girls stop attending school is 12 years old, and the average age at which sex work is started is 15 years old. For women, the average age for stopping school is 15 years old, and the average age for beginning sex work is 22 years old. Many of the girls interviewed cited a lack of training and experience and difficulty finding jobs as factors that contributed to leading them to begin sex work. As Susan recounts, "*It's just for lack of skills that can lead you to sex* [*work*]. *If you have no other job, that's the only thing. If you have no experiences, you can do it."* All the girls cited an inability to pay school fees as the reason for stopping school. This lack of financial support forced the girls to stop school, which in turn left them with few options. Some girls indicated that although their parents could not afford for her to attend school, the fees were paid for a brother to attend. This observation clearly relates to gender inequality, which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

4.2.3 Comparison of Women and Girls

An important finding from the transcript analysis is that women and girls share common backgrounds. Although between the two groups, the journeys as they transition into sex work vary, both groups share common childhoods. All the women and girls, with the exception of one participant, report that they came from poor families. Many participants describe their childhoods as "*very hard*", where eating only one meal in a day was commonplace. These hardships included long treks to fetch water, having to care for sick family members and watching siblings die from starvation.

> *It was so difficult. You had to go to school bare feet. You have to walk a long distance and sometimes it would be so dry, no food, just pick some… how do you call? Just what you can eat from the bushes or whatever. Just what you can eat. And the water, it was so difficult to get… you had to walk and search for water. You had to go to school, collect firewood…. it was so difficult.*
>
> (Susan)

The majority of participants originated from rural areas outside Nairobi. At the time of the interview, all of the participants lived in Nairobi and the surrounding informal settlements. The impetus that drove these women and girls to the city was similar – to improve their lives. Often traveling to the city with only their fare, girls moved to Nairobi to live with a relative. For girls in the sample, it was usually a short time after moving to Nairobi that they began sex work. The women participants, however, had been in Nairobi for several years before beginning sex work.

An analysis of the life histories to identify correlations between the age at which sex work began revealed a distinct variation between the two age groups and the time at which four key life events occurred. These life events included the age at which she: (1)

stopped school; (2) moved to Nairobi; (3) began sex work; and, (4) stopped sex work. Additionally, the length of time that she was engaged in sex work was extrapolated from this information. The results of this age analysis are presented below.

On average, women in the sample received approximately three more years of schooling than those participants in the girl group. Generally, women also began sex work 7.5 years later than their girl counterparts and stayed in sex work approximately 2.5 years longer than those in the girl group. These variations indicate distinct differences between the two age groups.

In addition to the variation between the two age groups, the age analysis findings indicate a connection between certain life events and beginning sex work within the girl group. Results show a pattern between the age at which girls quit school and start sex work, as well as the age at which girls move to Nairobi and begin to engage in sex work. The average age that girls quit school was 12.3, often moving to Nairobi approximately two years later, and on average, after six months, beginning sex work at 15 years of age. These results were not found for the women group.

4.2.4 Age Analysis Summary

Analyzing the transcripts for commonalities among and between the two age groups reveals interesting findings including the central theme of support. Receiving and providing support is key to both the women and the girls in all three of the temporal categories as well as the social categories. The issue of support affects the women and girls' lives in each temporal category. For example: support withdrawn as a child whether it be in the form of school fees and/or the death of a parent; during the transitional phase, the withdrawal of support from a husband or caregiver and/or the need

to support herself and others; and, during the stabilization phase, the need to continue to support herself and her children. These findings demonstrate factors that together contribute to making women and girls vulnerable to engaging and remaining in sex work in Nairobi. Likewise, 'support' also spans the three social categories, including: (1) at the individual level, or proximally, she must support herself; (2) medially, the theme of support accounts for both the necessity to support family and peers, as well as the withdrawal of support from parents, husbands and/or caregivers; and, (3) distally, the issues surrounding providing and receiving support in general are affected by things such as cultural expectations of women to care for (and support) nuclear and extended family members and the erosion of traditional kinship systems (this will be expanded on in Chapter Five). Findings from the age analysis served to further illuminate the observation of a Dual Entry Model from previous research conducted with K-VOWRC intake questionnaire data (Ngugi and Roth n.d.). Although the present sample is small, it confirms the Dual Entry Model with two distinct ages of entry into sex work present. The findings related to age including the varying length of time in sex work as well as the varying age of stopping school between the two age categories provide important insight into the lives of FSWs in Nairobi. These findings will be crucially important for the development of intervention programmes aimed at reducing the number of women and girls from entering sex work, as different mediation strategies need to be developed for the two age groups.

4.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Results from each form of analysis provide a detailed picture of the process of entry into sex work for the women and girls who participated in the study. The findings

of the research follow three central themes related to the temporal categories expressed at the outset of the project, childhood, transitional time and stabilization period. Overall, the findings illuminate a central theme of 'support', both providing and receiving support, as contributing to leading women and girls to sex work and causing them to remain in it. This key theme is exemplified in the following excerpt from the interview with Zatu. When asked what it was like when she first began sex work, Zatu replied:

> *My friend tell me what to do with a man -- and then you sleep and then after that you go to take a bath and then* [*he*] *will give you money and then you get out to look for another one.*

I then asked, "Did she advise that you should do it? Or did you go to her because you wanted to do it… because you needed to?" Zatu explains below:

> *I guess I went to her and told her that I need that job. She told me, 'you are very small* [young] *to do that job.' I tell her that I need that job because my family and my brother will die. And she told me, 'if you want, I can help you' and she gave me 100 shillings. And then first time I cried. And then we finished she give me 500, I give to my mother. I didn't tell my mother the first time. My mother told me, 'this money, you have stolen where?' The second time, I told her, 'I have not stolen it, I am selling my body to get money to give you and you will buy food and then my small brothers can eat.' She told me that I am doing bad. I told her, 'I must do that job if I want my brothers to survive.' Because I like my brothers too much I don't want them to die. My mother told me that, 'if you decided to do that job, to go.' After another day I go with this guy, I get another man, I sleep with him,* [*he*] *beat me and that day I did not have any money. I told my friend and she give me 100 and then I give my mother to buy food.*
>
> (Zatu)

By the time Zatu began to engage in sex work at the age of ten, she had already lost one brother from hunger. Despite disapproval from her mother, she continued to "sell her body" in order to support her nuclear family consisting of five children, her mother and father.

The desperate situation described by the women and girls who participated in the interviews emphasizes that this type of sex work is truly 'survival sex.' Poverty, a lack of education, the influence of peers, social inequalities and gendered economic opportunities all contribute to leading women and girls along a path to sex work. The factors are complex and the pathway itself is a process that occurs over time along the life course. Results highlight that it is a combination of factors that contribute to leading women and girls to become involved in sex work in Nairobi. There are differences and similarities among the life histories of these women and girls that together, provide insight into this complex process. In the following chapter, these findings and results will be further explored and discussed in the context of other research on FSWs.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Female sex workers are a heterogeneous population reflecting the social context within which they are situated, the age of entry into the sex trade, the length of time in the sex trade as well as the factors that have led them to sex work in the first place. As previously mentioned, structural violence is the combination of political, economic and social forces that structure risk for individual experiences of suffering (Farmer 2003). In Kenya, and sub-Saharan Africa in general, women face deeply rooted gender inequalities which, coupled with poverty place them at great risk for suffering. This suffering makes women vulnerable to health inequities and increases their risk of contracting infectious disease such as HIV/AIDS over their life course (Farmer 1996; Farmer 2003). Here I discuss how suffering in the form of increasing women and girls' risk of entering sex work is also prevalent by examining how structural violence impinges over the life course for FSWs. The findings from the life histories of the women and girls will be discussed within this context, along the two dimensions of socio-spatialilty and temporality by identifying the contributing factors that lead women and girls to engage and/or remain in sex work. It is important to reiterate here that by recruiting self-identified former sex workers who are involved with K-VOWRC, some of the heterogeneity of the population is controlled for; notwithstanding, the women and girls who shared their stories are unique individuals and their individual experiences shape their own lives and their own journeys to sex work. By reading, examining and understanding the meaning of the women and girls' stories and situating the narratives in

a historical, political-economic and cultural context, unifying ideas among the stories emerge. These commonalities are explored and discussed below.

The existing research into the identification of factors that lead women to involvement in sex work is sparse, particularly in the African context. The use of life histories to elicit the proximal, medial and distal factors that contribute to leading women to becoming involved in sex work is unique to this study and provides a rich resource of narrative that explores the path to engagement in sex work in Nairobi. Also distinctive in this research is the elicitation of factors that lead a woman to becoming involved in sex work at various times throughout her life course, as exemplified by past childhood experiences, transitional times when she is beginning to perform transactional sex, and once engagement in sex work becomes more regular. This thesis contributes to the greater body of knowledge about FSWs in Kenya and sub-Saharan Africa in general and in particular with regards to the path into sex work for these women.

In this chapter, I discuss the research findings. Firstly, I discuss the interpretation of the findings within the greater body of existing research, by illustrating the theories that have emerged from the findings while situating the results within the broader structural violence framework. Secondly, I return to the research questions and answer them based on the research findings. Thirdly, I discuss the results of comparing the data with common background factors found among FSWs in South Africa. Finally, I discuss the results of the age analysis findings and testing for the Dual Entry Model.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND EMERGING THEORY

Following the grounded theory methodology, the following discussion will elicit theory drawn out of the narrative research. From the findings of the research, I theorize

that within the larger contexts of poverty, HIV/AIDS and changing gender roles, the erosion of existing familial and kinship structures create a situation rife with suffering that leads women and girls to engage in transactional sex as a means of supporting themselves and others. Within this frame, more specifically, the erosion of traditional kinship structures has a direct influence on: migrancy and the orphan crisis, the adoption of new social networks and transitioning into sex work. The findings of the research and analysis present the overarching theme of 'support', both the loss of support and the need to provide support as central to leading women to engage in sex work. I argue that the issue of support cross-cuts all of the above concepts, in how women must support others, who they must support and what happens when support is withdrawn when these women were children.

5.2.1 Poverty, HIV/AIDS and Changing Gender Roles

A common theme among the women's lives is a shared history of poverty. As has been shown previously, poverty in Kenya is related to the socio-political history of the nation and its history of colonization. This poverty is further exacerbated by many factors including the privatization of land that has occurred throughout much of rural Kenya over the past few decades (Thomas-Slayter and Rocheleau 1995). Land privatization has left those living in the rural areas with limited resources and as a result, has contributed to men migrating from the rural areas in search of work leaving women as the "de facto heads of households" (12). These changing gender roles cause women to bear the largest responsibility for the care of the family, often being left as the sole provider for the family. In rural areas, where the majority of participants in this study originated from, hardships include the scarcity of necessities such as water, wood for fuel

and vegetation. It is women and children who are tasked with gathering wood and water, often trekking for more than 15 hours per week to gather these survival necessities (Thomas-Slayter and Rocheleau 1995). According to Thomas-Slayter and Rocheleau (1995), men's new primary role is to earn enough income to pay for school fees and other large household expenditures. As can be seen from the research findings, all but one participant stopped attending school due to a lack of fees. Although with shifting roles it is expected that fathers will pay school fees, this persistent lack of fees calls to question deeper issues at play. Many participants had indicated that their fathers had died or left the family and as a result, their mothers were the sole providers for the family. According to Silberschmidt (1992), in Kenya, "men seem to have withdrawn from their financial as well as their labour obligations to the household, and more and more women have become the sole supporters of their families… [as] the traditional division of labour has been collapsing" (237). As mentioned previously, Kilbride et al. (2000) argue that culturally, in Kenya, fathers' economic and social responsibilities to the family have declined in importance. The findings from the interviews also support this observation in the noticeable absence of fathers in the women's stories. Could this absence and resulting kinship erosion be the result of shifting gender roles, or could the lack of responsibility felt by fathers be causing this shift to occur? These questions call to light the importance of changing gender roles within kinship patterns and familial structures and the subsequent effects they have for women in Kenya.

Research findings support Oppong and Kalipeni's (2004) argument that women thrust into the role of sole provider for the family have few income-generating options and as a result, resort to sex work. Additionally, the findings support those found by

Ngugi et al. (1996) and Gysels et al. (2002) that women in this context enter sex work due to poverty and restricted economic opportunities. Ngugi et al. (2002) argue that in Kenya due to few other wage-earning opportunities for women, sex work has some advantages over alternatives, such as "ease of entry" and a "ready market" (S241). Findings from the interviews also support this observation as many women indicated they were unable to find other paid work, or work they did find they had to quit due to poor working conditions. In addition, their descriptions of starting sex work described a fairly straightforward process, both in terms of having someone show them what to do as well as for finding clients. As mentioned previously, sex-role differentiation and gendered wage-earning opportunities are tied to patriarchy in Kenya (Sudarkasa 1982). Although still considered a patriarchal society (Kilbride et al. 2000), the declining role of men in the family, the subsequent changing sex roles and the need for women to support their families could inevitably challenge patrilocality as the dominant residence pattern in the country.

The devastating effects of HIV/AIDS intensify poverty and the resulting shifting gender roles. HIV/AIDS further increases the burden of care and support on the single woman, to care for sick and dying extended kin, those family members' children, as well as the risk to herself and the family if she becomes sick and eventually orphans her own children. With few wage-earning opportunities available to women, due to gender inequities, the traditional cultural practice of caring for siblings' children when required (Kilbride et al. 2000) presents greater challenges for women in this context when confronted with the effects of AIDS. As seen in the findings of the research, several women are tasked with supporting themselves, their children and also their HIV/AIDS-

orphaned nieces, nephews and grandchildren. For example, Wambui, who was 38 years old at the time of the interview, used sex work to support herself, one child of her own, her sister's two children and four grandchildren. Wambui was left to care for and support her sister's two children after her sister, who was also a sex worker, died from AIDS, orphaning her own children. The findings point to this recurrent theme of support, in this case, *supporting others*, situated within the context of changing gender roles exacerbated by poverty and HIV/AIDS. Within this context, women use the money earned from sex work to support themselves, their children and extended family members.

5.2.2 Orphans, Migrancy and Transitioning to Sex Work

Girls raised in this context, in single-parent households, experience childhoods fraught with poverty and unreliable support. The recurring sub-theme of stopping school due to a lack of fees directly impacts the girls in this research and usually not long after stopping school, they begin sex work. As mentioned, all participants but one cited a lack of fees as the reason for stopping school; this inability for parents/caregivers to pay for school differentiates this finding from Campbell's (2003) research with FSWs in South Africa. In Campbell's research, she notes that FSWs stopped school after falling pregnant; however, she does not indicate that stopping school is related to a lack of fees. In addition to the lack of parental/caregiver support to provide school fees for girls, a withdrawal or lack of caregiver support in general has a direct influence on entry into sex work. Participants in the study who were orphaned were forced to migrate in order to be cared for by extended kin. For these girls, this migration also resulted in a second wave of withdrawal of caregiver support that consequently, led them to engage in sex work to

survive. Paradoxically, the family's attempt to provide a girl with support ends up contributing to her lack of support and her entry into the trade.

In a report by UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID (2004) an orphan is defined as a young person who has lost one or both parents. Nyambedha et al. reported that in 2003, 33.6% of all children had lost either one or both parents in rural Kenya (Nyambedha et al. 2003:47). Extended kin are burdened with the care of orphans placing extreme stress on existing kinship systems (Nyamukapa and Gregson 2005). Aunts, grandmothers and sisters care for many double orphans; despite most of these female caregivers being socio-economically disadvantaged. Due to the spatial dispersal of extended families from a history of migrant labour (Ansell and Young 2004), many orphans must migrate to their new homes. Migration can cause numerous difficulties for orphans, including problems associated with "integrating into new communities and families" (Ford and Hosegood 2005) and the possibility of worse treatment from the new caregivers.

The migration of orphaned children occurs on an individual or sibling basis, but is unique with regard to the larger scale in which it is also occurring among many individuals and many siblings across and within the region. Marcus (1995) advocates a multi-sited ethnographic approach to account for the complexity of movement of people across space and time. Despite the argument for a multi-sited approach to understanding the orphan crisis in Kenya, considering the effects on the individual is also important for a greater understanding of the factors that lead women into sex work and as they occur over her life course. Additionally, the individual experience may be representative of a larger shared collective experience. Understanding the movement of orphans from this perspective allows for consideration of what life is like once the migration has occurred.

In the life histories of the women and girls in this study, many report that soon after moving in with extended family caregivers, they began sex work. In existing research on orphans in sub-Saharan Africa, it is argued that migrant orphans face differential treatment from their caregivers compared with the biological children in the home. These differences include a reduced access to resources such as food and clothing and high expectations for work (Ansell and Young 2004; Ford and Hosegood 2005). Although reported in the literature, this finding was not directly observed here. The majority of participants left the new home very soon after arriving, which may be attributed to differential treatment, however, since it was not said explicitly in the life histories of the women, it is an area that requires further consideration. Women in the study commonly describe the situation in their new homes as "difficult" and that despite the promise that the new caregiver will pay school fees, this was rarely done[15]. Additionally, findings support the observation by Kilbride et al. (2000), that without adequate familial support, Kenyan orphans often resort to survival sex. As shown, the findings illustrate the central role that support – in this case, a withdrawal or lack of parental/caregiver support – plays in leading girls into sex work. According to Gregson et al. (2005), the risk of contracting HIV is greater among orphans due to a corresponding increased likelihood of engagement in high-risk behaviours.

Following the withdrawal or lack of caregiver support, most girls move out of the new home to live with a cohort of peers. Within this new social network, girls support one another and use sex work to do so. As will be shown, I argue that the erosion of traditional family and kinship structures, compounded at the distal level by structural

[15] For one participant, her aunt, who was her new caregiver, paid her school fees. Unfortunately, it was not long before her aunt could no longer afford the fees and she was forced to withdraw from school.

violence exerted from HIV/AIDS and poverty, girls are faced with a withdrawal or lack of caregiver support at the proximal level, which, in turn, causes them to adopt a new 'family' in the form of a social network.

5.2.3 Peers and Social Networks

Changing kinship structures coupled with the orphan crisis has contributed to a lack of support for girls and young women in Nairobi. Farmer (2004) points out that, "looking at the impact of HIV on life expectancy in certain sub-Saharan African nations lets us know that this virus has had, in the span of a single generation, a profound effect on kinship structure" (316). This lack of familial support, in turn, directly influences women and girls' engagement in sex work as this central theme permeates their stories. As mentioned previously, Oleke et al. (2005) argue that the erosion of families due to AIDS has reduced the 'safety net' for orphans. Without support from a traditional familial structure, I argue, many turn to peer networks to act as a social 'safety net.' This peer network can be both advantageous and deleterious. This peer network could be regarded as an informal network, which according to Thomas-Slayter and Rocheleau (1995), in Kenya, informal networks can serve to replace eroding kin systems. This can, however, also have negative consequences for women and girls, as illustrated in the findings, peers are most commonly responsible for introducing them to sex work as well, within the peer network, there exists an obligation to support one another.

Informal networks are structured around systems of reciprocal exchange where the exchange itself is central to maintaining the relationship. In Kenya, woman-headed households are increasingly relying on informal networks in the face of a breakdown of traditional systems, including kinship networks and changing gender roles (Thomas-

Slayter and Rocheleau 1995). Thomas-Slayter and Rocheleau (1995) argue that these informal networks provide social identity, social ties, security and support.

The findings indicate that for girls, the loss of caregiver support within a system of eroding kinship structures, leads them to rely on informal networks of peers for support. Additionally, the findings illustrate that this peer network is based on reciprocal ties that necessitate girls' involvement in sex work to exchange support for one another. This form of reciprocity follows Sahlins' 'generalized exchange' in which exchange occurs without expectation of *immediate* return (in Howell 1989). Girls describe how they live with a cohort of peers and this network supports them by providing food and shelter. In addition to the food and shelter received by this informal peer network, I argue that the network acts as a pseudo family for girls that were orphaned, geographically displaced and subsequently provided with inadequate support from their adoptive caregivers. However, as illustrated in the life histories of many of the girls, despite the protective factors associated with receiving support from their peer networks, they soon found themselves required to return the exchange.

This system of reciprocal exchange necessitates girls' involvement in sex work to contribute to supporting their pseudo family. This common sub-theme among the girls' life histories fits within the central theme of support, in this case, that of supporting others. Several stories tell of situations in which if they did not reciprocate the support received, their peers beat them. It is important to mention here that this apparent coercion is not the sole factor that led these girls into sex work as has been previously shown, the factors that carve the path to participating in this informal network are multifaceted.

In addition to the role peer networks have in leading girls to sex work through the system of reciprocal exchange, peers also introduce each other to sex work. The life histories of the women and girls indicate that as they are transitioning into sex work, it is most often stated that, "*a friend showed me how to do that sex job*." This introduction to sex work may be the result of being situated within the larger, more distally located factors of the informal peer network and reciprocal exchange concepts, however, proximally and in essence, 'on the ground,' it is a friend/peer that also actually explains how to be a sex worker. Friends explain where to go (whether it be bars or on the street in the informal settlements), how to "*get a man*" (including how to dress and what things to say), and what to do with him sexually. In addition to this verbal introduction, friends will physically take the girls to the places where they can find men looking to purchase sex.

As mentioned previously, it was hypothesized that upon migrating from rural to urban areas, women and girls would attempt to re-establish themselves among a new network of peers and that this network would have health enhancing features. As shown, the findings support the first part of the hypothesis and, despite the potential risks of subsequent sex work, I argue that *features* of this peer network are indeed health enhancing. Within the context of eroding kinship structures, exacerbated by being orphaned, the re-establishment of some semblance of a kin network, could be argued to provide women with a positive self-identity. In the early stages of being taken in by the cohort of peers, girls are supported by the group, reinforcing her sense of belonging, and this acceptance could contribute to a positive self-identity (De Meis 2002). It is likely that this acceptance and resulting sense of belonging fills the void that was left from the

previous loss of caregiver support. By re-engaging in a new social network, I argue that the girls leave a place of ambiguity and liminality and find the "social place" (De Meis 2002:3) with the associated health enhancing benefits of belonging to a "community" (Frey et al. 2000). Additionally, peer networks of FSWs are characterized by their engagement as tightly knit groups (Svenkerud and Singhal 1998). The findings indicate that within the peer groups, friends instruct each other how to bathe after engaging in sex with a client, how to use condoms, which men to avoid because they have been violent or have not paid for sex, they discuss transmission of STIs and HIV and they take one another to the hospital if needed. Despite the negative association of the peer networks of introducing girls to sex work, the groups provide many things that the girls need, both emotionally and physically. Additionally, the structure of the groups provide great potential for peer-focused health promotion, education and prevention programmes.

5.2.4 Summary

'Support' as a central theme, is a proximally situated factor that directly influences women and girls to engage in sex work. How this theme comes about is the result of medially and distally influencing factors. Within the broadest scope, poverty, HIV/AIDS and changing gender roles impinge on the lives of women in Kenya and structure their risk for suffering. At the medial level, the resulting eroding kinship systems influence – and are influenced by – migrancy, the orphan crisis, the adoption of new social networks and transitioning into sex work. Within this context, with few wage-earning opportunities available to women, many are left with no alternative but to engage in sex work to survive. Within the larger social processes, the additional burden placed on women to support others in addition to themselves exacerbates the problem.

5.3 RETURNING TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The objective of this research is to identify factors that lead women to becoming involved in sex work in Nairobi, Kenya. Specifically, to examine entry into sex work processually by taking into account the life histories of the participants. Subsumed within the larger question, why do women enter sex work in Nairobi, Kenya, this research attempts to answer: (1) how does a woman's childhood and/or background affect her risk for entering sex work later in life, (2) what factors place young women at risk of becoming involved in sex work, and, (3) what factors place young women at risk for remaining in sex work and/or engaging in transactional sex on a regular basis? In this section, I return to these questions in order to answer them based on the research findings.

5.3.1 How does a woman's childhood and/or background affect her risk for entering sex work later in life?

A history of poverty is the common theme among the stories of the women's childhoods. Within this theme, the findings reveal the following recurring sub-themes: living in poverty, being raised in a single parent/no parent household and stopping school due to a lack of fees. Although none of these factors immediately precede entry into sex work for the participants, it is the shared experience that is important here. Life course theory posits that individual lives are shaped by the social institutions they belong to and historical time (McDonough and Berglund 2003). Within the life histories of the participants, common themes and collective experiences emerge, highlighting common childhood factors that lead women to sex work later in their lives. One objective is to understand why only some women who have these experiences become sex workers. Among the sub-themes present in the women and girl's stories of childhood, the common

thread is a lack of support. The level of poverty that girls are subjected to also affects their adult caregivers' ability to support them. Being raised in a single parent and/or no parent household further impacts this amount of support. Finally, as will be shown, stopping school is directly related to a lack of support.

5.3.2 What factors place young women at risk of becoming involved in sex work?

Within the temporal category of transitioning into sex work, the commonly recurring theme is a *withdrawal/lack of support*. The factors that place young women at risk of transitioning into sex work include: leaving home, peer influence and ending spousal relationships. Situating these sub-themes within the larger macro-level processes reveals that the findings support the theory that the erosion of kinship/familial systems greatly affects women and girls in the amount of support that they receive from caregivers and spouses. This lack and/or withdrawal of support, contributes to leading women and girls to engage in sex work in Nairobi.

5.3.3 What factors place young women at risk for remaining in sex work and/or engaging in transactional sex on a regular basis?

Factors that place young women at risk for remaining in sex work and/or engaging in it on a regular basis are also tied to the central theme of support, in this case, both *providing* and *receiving* support. In answering the question above, a multitude of factors contribute to causing engagement in sex work to be stabilized; however, it is a loss of support that places women and girls in the position in which they must support themselves and additionally, as has been shown, the requirement to support others, such as their children and family members' children also keeps women engaged in sex work.

5.4 COMPARISON WITH SOUTH AFRICA

A comparison of the research findings with themes identified by Campbell (2003) in her research with FSWs in South Africa reveals similarities and differences. In both studies, the death of parents, dropping out of school, leaving the hardships of home and having difficulty finding work are associated with entry into the sex trade. These results are important in themselves, and especially interesting is that they are found to be common to two groups of FSWs in differing countries in sub-Saharan Africa. That entry into sex work in both contexts is associated with these themes may indicate underlying contributing factors which pervade the entire region.

Only seven participants indicated that they had difficulty finding work. Although this number is low in frequency (less than half of the participants), I argue that this is a reflection of the age distribution of the sample. Those in the women group cited having difficulty finding work more often than those in the girls' group and since the sample included 10 women and 11 girls, it is likely that this result is reflective of the two different age groups. Women in the sample often held jobs previously in their lives before they began sex work and as such, already had experience, both in looking for work and in working in paid employment. When faced with supporting themselves, their children and/or their family members' children, unable to find adequate work, women began sex work. Girls, on the other hand did not commonly cite being unable to find work as a factor that led them into sex work, but rather, they cited a lack of skills and experience. Although this difference between Campbell's research and the results of my research exists, it is a result of the dual entry situation in Nairobi. Campbell did not report a dual entry pattern in her study; therefore, this and the other differences between

the two groups are significant, as they emphasize the heterogeneity of FSWs in sub-Saharan Africa.

The following themes were found to exist for the South African population, but were only present for very few of the participants[16] in the Nairobi research: dropping out of school after becoming pregnant, dropping out of school and having difficulty finding work, death of spouse and leaving an abusive man. As will be shown, why these differences emerge may be due to the political economy and social context of the women in both studies.

Campbell's research is with FSWs in a South African mining town. Mining towns are replete with migrant labourers employed in the mines. These men are away from their wives, girlfriends and families for years at a time and within this setting, the soliciting of prostitutes is widespread (Oppong and Kalipeni 2004). According to Barry (1995), "the prostitution market is driven by customer demand for sexual service. In pre-industrial and early industrializing economies, the demand is heaviest where men are congregated in large groups away from home and family" (124). In the urban setting of Nairobi, sex work occurs predominantly in the informal settlements. In this setting, there is not an obvious unequal ratio of men to women and often both men and women have migrated to the city from rural areas. Following Barry's argument, the demand for FSWs would be less in Nairobi, which in itself could significantly impact the results; however, Barry also states that "[r]ural to urban migration socially dislocates women and girls as patriarchal power in traditional societies provides almost no possibilities for women

[16] The number of participants in the Kenyan study that indicated these factors, ranged from zero to two participants.

outside of marriage or their family. Under these conditions women are made particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation" (Barry 1995:49).

Despite both settings being particularly conducive to women engaging in sex work, the differences are likely due to the differing social locations and contexts of the studies. Women in Campbell's study are dropping out of school after becoming pregnant, implying that they have begun to engage in sexual activity preceding stopping school. It is not known whether this sexual activity was in fact sex work, and as such, whether the women in South Africa had begun sex work while still in school. Of the women I interviewed in Nairobi, the majority was not sexually active until the first time engaging in sex work. For these women, quitting school preceded moving to the urban area and soon after moving, the women began sex work.

The theme found by Campbell that women dropped out of school and then had difficulty finding work, was not found to be common to women in my study. For this theme, as well as the previously mentioned one (dropping out of school after becoming pregnant), I argue that the differences between the two studies are likely due to how I framed the questions and interpreted the transcripts. These two themes identified by Campbell are multifactorial. In the way Campbell frames each of these two-part themes she implies that one situation necessitates another. For example, a girl becomes pregnant and as a result, she drops out of school; and, a girl quits school and subsequently has difficulty finding work. When I conducted the interviews, neither of these themes were identified with great frequency. Very few participants noted that either of these situations had occurred for them, specifically in the order as observed by Campbell. In the case of dropping out of school after becoming pregnant, all but one participant quit school, and

many have become pregnant, but none reported that one circumstance necessitated the other. The combination of dropping out of school and having difficulty finding work was only cited by two participants in the Kenyan study whereas just having difficulty finding work was mentioned by seven participants. Although these themes, and the sequential characteristics of them in which one factor necessitates another, are not common to the narratives in my research, the presence of the component themes is valuable for drawing comparisons between the two studies.

In addition to the differences between the two studies mentioned above, only two women in the Kenyan study reported leaving an abusive man. In this context, I interpreted "man" to refer to a spouse or boyfriend. Although this appears like an obvious difference between the two studies, caution must be taken in drawing conclusions from this observation. In the Kenyan study, many women reported being in abusive relationships with the relationships ending; however, it was not always the woman that left. As such, this difference between the two studies is a result of the way the theme is worded.

Identifying similarities between the two populations of FSWs in Kenya and South Africa are important for substantiating Campbell's research as well as for recognizing factors common to structurally marginalized populations/regions in Africa. The observed differences between the two studies are equally important by bringing to light disparities between the populations of FSWs and underscoring the need for ongoing research that takes account of context-specific situations for FSWs in the region.

5.5 AGE ANALYSIS DISCUSSION

The results support and illuminate the observation of the Dual Entry Model as well as provide additional observations and questions. The quantitative delineation of a Dual Entry Model (Ngugi and Roth n.d.) prompted the examination of why there are two distinct ages of entry into sex work; one for girls and another for women. While differences in the life histories of the two groups are apparent, the immediate factors that have led both women and girls to sex work are strikingly similar. As hypothesized, a sudden withdrawal of support is found to be common to both groups, namely, parental or spousal support. The analysis of the findings also reveals shared backgrounds among those in both groups and the commonality of supporting others in addition to themselves.

When asking the question, *why* women become involved in sex work in Nairobi, I hypothesized that some of the women were turning to sex work to support themselves and their own children and that a small proportion of the girls were supporting themselves and perhaps their siblings. It was expected that some participants would be sending money home; however, the results were surprising in the extent to which all of the participants use money generated from sex work to support people in addition to themselves. The FSW uses money earned through sex work to support herself, as well as her family (children, siblings and/or parents) and/or her peers. As has already been shown, this central theme of support is tied to the larger context and is related to macro-level factors that in turn shape the familial structures and gender roles, which have a significant impact on women by structuring the risk for suffering.

The need to care for others in addition to themselves does not account for the Dual Entry Model; but within the distinct age groups, it does raise some new important questions. Since the findings reveal that both women and girls have the need to support

others, it begs the question, when along the life course do girls take on this burden? The processes that structure this female role of 'supporter' are culturally based and, has been shown, embedded within poverty, HIV/AIDS and changing gender roles. From these findings, it is possible that the eroding traditional kinship systems contribute to a lack of autonomy for women and girls in Kenya. Even if caregiver support is present, this heavy burden to support and care for others may be thrust on girls at a young age. As has been shown, the prevalence of single parent households, often with many extended family members to feed places great strain on the household economy. As the kinship and family structures continue to erode, will we begin to see increasingly younger girls tasked with caring for and supporting others? If so, what are the ramifications on these girls' lives? Will girls stop attending school at a younger age in order to care for family members? With limited income generating opportunities available to women it is probable that even fewer exist for young girls. As such, there exists the possibility that the reduction in age of girls bearing the burden to support family will lead to younger girls engaging in sex work. If this disturbing hypothesis occurs, a three-aged model of entry might become apparent, with children, adolescents and young women comprising the three categories. Additionally, with increasing numbers of girl children engaging in sex work, it is possible that the location of sex work will become concentrated close to home in the rural areas. These hypotheses are reality for one participant in this study, Zatu, who began sex work at just 10 years old in order to support her parents and siblings. Of note also, is that in her life story, the sex work that she engaged in as a child was concentrated in her rural home village.

The findings indicate that girls stop attending school closely preceding starting sex work. Additionally, the level of education that the girls attain and the age school is stopped is similar for all of the girls. Most girls stop school before beginning the secondary level. This finding of stopping school at a low level and then entering sex work, contradicts previous research with Thai child labourers, where a higher level of education is associated with engagement in high-risk labour (Taylor 2005). In Kenya, this correlation does not appear to exist. Instead, the level at which girls stop school is directly related to the current level at which state-funded education ceases. Currently, school in the country is funded up to approximately age 12, consequently, also the age many girls quit school. Most girls cite a lack of education as a factor that drove them to engage in sex work. Despite the finding that girls stop school due to a lack of fees, the results also call to question the effect gender inequalities have on girls' education. Some life histories told of parents' preferential payment of school fees based on the sex of the child, with boys receiving education to a higher level. Statistically, the primary school enrollment ratio in Kenya for females to males is 49:51, whereas at the university level, it is 1:3 (Thomas-Slayter et al. 1995). The findings coupled with these statistics draw attention to gender inequalities and the resulting societal preference to educate males. According to Georgina, the gender inequalities rooted in traditional beliefs prevent girls from attending school:

> *There are those who don't go to school, whose parents believe – you know tradition, African tradition – they believe that a girl child is not supposed to be educated, and there are those people who are absolutely clinging to that belief. That's tradition. The girl child is supposed to stay at home, she's not supposed to go to school. And when she gets to school age, she*

is supposed to be married off. There are those tribes that are doing that.
(Georgina)

At the time of the interviews, government-funded education included only primary levels, however, President Kibaki has indicated that new education policies will soon include state-funded secondary education (Kibaki 2007). If implemented, this policy has the potential to significantly reduce the number of girls entering sex work in Nairobi. Despite the obvious advantages to increasing accessibility to education through governmental funding, the deeply rooted gender inequalities and a continuing loss of parental support due to the prevalence of AIDS and high unemployment, may still impede many girls from continuing their education beyond the primary level.

The change in policy *may* reduce the number of girls entering sex work in Nairobi, though it is unlikely to have an impact on the number of women entering sex work. The findings from the age analysis reveal no correlation between the level of educational attainment and entry into sex work for the women group. As such, a higher (secondary) level of education might not protect against entry into sex work for both women *and* girls. In addition to differing amounts of education between the two groups, the women do not share the girls' lack of training, nor their lack of previous work experience. For the women, higher levels of training and previous work experience do not buffer them from sex work, even though the girls' lack of training and work experience is often cited by the girls as reasons they began sex work.

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This research adds to the greater body of knowledge about FSWs in sub-Saharan Africa in general as well as more specifically, it increases understanding regarding the lives of FSWs in Kenya and their journeys into sex work.

Tracey describes when she first started sex work:

> *At first, you know I didn't love the idea. You know at the time you are moving from the slums to town, it is late and maybe the police are chasing you. Maybe when you go, even the person you are going with will not pay you, he'll just beat you and you'll go home with bruises. It was hard at first.*
>
> (Tracey)

As described previously, the risks associated with sex work are numerous. The realities of survival sex include: not getting paid, being beaten, being chased by police, facing stigmatization and an increased risk of contracting STIs and HIV. Despite all of the associated risks, women and girls turn to sex work in order to cope with the demands of living in poverty in Kenya.

Existing systems of support through kinship structures are being eroded placing great demands on women as the sole providers for the family. For FSWs in this study, 'support', both *receiving* and *providing* it is an overarching theme that together with economic opportunities limited by gender necessitates their involvement in sex work.

Kenya's political economy and history of colonialism contributes to the structural violence present for women in the country. This structural violence and the resulting relationships of inequality impinge over the life course of FSWs in Kenya in various ways, with the common thread throughout being a key theme tied to support: a lack of support and the need to provide support for others. This theme emerges as a result of the changing family and kinship structures and the burden placed on women as the sole providers of support. This erosion of family also structures risk for girls as they become orphaned and consequently lose caregiver support. As a result, girls re-establish themselves among a network of peers as a pseudo family. This informal network

increases the demands placed on girls to support themselves, their siblings (by sending money home) and their peers. The findings from the age analysis indicate that although different processes are at work for the two age categories, similarities exist. Support again presents itself as a common theme, with unique elements between the age groups appearing such as the women's requirement to support children, siblings' children and grandchildren, and for the girls, stopping school due to a lack of fees.

In the following chapter, I present the conclusions drawn from the research and a summary of the thesis. Additionally, I discuss possibilities for further study and I present recommendations for preventing girls and women from engaging in sex work.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The findings from the research illustrate the complex journey to sex work for women and girls in Kenya. This research adds to the greater body of knowledge about FSWs in sub-Saharan Africa in general as well as more specifically, increases understanding regarding the lives of FSWs in Kenya and their journeys into sex work. This study is unique as it investigates the temporal and socio-spatial dimensions of factors associated with entry into and continuing in the sex trade by contextualizing this journey to sex work within the macro structural factors of history and political economy and along the individual's life course.

In this chapter, I present a summary of the thesis and the conclusions drawn from the findings. Additionally, I discuss areas for further study and I present recommendations for preventing girls and women from engaging in sex work.

This thesis examines entry into sex work processually. Moore (1987) argues that to achieve a processual understanding, anthropologists must consider larger historical conditions that inform the current situation. Additionally, Green (1998) points out that "[m]edical anthropologists have begun to pay closer attention to… how everyday forms of violence and suffering structure people's everyday reality and social relations" (3). Considering the historical, political and structural context in which women in Kenya are situated allows me to identify the processes that occur over time that influence women's involvement in sex work.

By drawing on grounded theory and critical inquiry methodologies the theories are developed inductively out of the research with a commitment to use the findings for change. A consideration of structural violence guides the research as an overarching

theoretical framework; both in situating the research and findings within the macro-level structures as well as in examining how the inequalities caused by structural violence impinge over the life course for FSWs.

The life history method provides rich narrative data, empowering women to describe the elements of their life stories as they choose. In this way, women in the study speak about issues that are important to them and as such, their subjective experiences are shared.

From the findings, I theorize that the erosion of existing kinship networks in Kenya makes girls and women vulnerable to engaging in sex work. This erosion of the familial network is influenced by the larger context including such factors as poverty, HIVAIDS and changing gender roles. These factors contribute to migrancy, the orphan crisis and the establishment of informal networks which together structure risk for suffering by burdening women and girls with the requirement to support others.

The findings of the research follow three central themes related to the temporal categories expressed at the outset of the project: (1) during childhood, girls share a history of poverty; (2) as women are transitioning into sex work, the common theme is a sudden withdrawal or lack of support; and, (3) when sex work becomes more regular, women are burdened with the requirement to support others.

Overall, the recurring and key theme within the findings is the issue of ‘support’, both providing and receiving support. This overarching theme also characterizes the findings from the age analysis, indicating that despite other age-related differences among the life histories, the pervasive theme of support continues to have significance. The findings support the observation of two distinct ages of entry into sex work for

women and girls in Nairobi. This central theme is also present in both groups in similar ways. For women, the need to support children is paramount, whereas for girls, the burden to support others includes the informal network of peers and younger siblings.

6.1 FUTURE AREAS OF STUDY

It is a combination of factors that lead women and girls to sex work in Nairobi and various events throughout the life course can influence when women or girls turn to it. As has been shown, the age at which a woman begins sex work also influences how long she remains in it, with women remaining in sex work on average five years longer than their girl counterparts. This finding is significant as it leads to more questions with regard to future areas of study. Issues around age of entry into sex work are also important to consider if increasingly younger girls are tasked with supporting family members. In the current context of adults succumbing to AIDS, child-headed households will become increasingly common. This erosion of kinship structures, gender inequalities and shifting gender roles exacerbate the problem by placing large burdens on girls and women to care for and support others.

Along the vein of considering the age of entry into sex work, the Dual Entry Model calls for future study. Of interest is whether girls re-engage in sex work later in life. Is this observation of two distinct ages of entry the result of a particularly turbulent time to be a female in Kenya, necessitating both age groups to enter? And/or is this a pattern that will continue to be seen as time goes on and the effects of AIDS continue to affect families at different stages of women and girls' lives? I expected that girls who began sex work at a younger age than their woman counterparts would remain in the trade longer, however, as has been shown, this is not the case. Why do varying lengths of

time in the trade exist as correlated to the age of entry? Further to the theory that orphans re-establish themselves within a social network of peers, and the observed shorter length of time that they are in engaged in sex work, does this imply that the informal network ends? This calls for further research into whether the necessity to support peers wanes in contrast to the support of children that women are tasked with.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Mediation strategies to reduce the number of women and girls entering sex work in Nairobi are perhaps most easily aimed at the proximal and medial levels rather than those distally located factors. The research findings point to numerous factors that structure risk for women and girls making them vulnerable to engagement in sex work. The eroding kinship structure contributes to this vulnerability and as such, mediation strategies could include the establishment of informal support networks for women heads of households in the form of community groups, church groups, non-governmental and non-profit organizations. Thomas-Slayter and Rocheleau (1995) argue that in Kenya, strengthening informal networks can assist women to cope with the economic demands of heading households. Additionally, the establishment of informal networks to support girls could be equally as effective in preventing them from beginning sex work.

Health promotion and prevention programmes could be effectively aimed at peer networks. The influence of peer networks on the lives of FSWs makes them an appropriate and worthy setting to target such initiatives. Peer led interventions have been shown to be effective in HIV/AIDS education initiatives in informal settlements with associated advantages including empowering peer educators, training role models, reducing stigma, improving knowledge and enabling educators to act as links to health

clinics and treatment programmes (Murdock et al. 2003). Peer educators are also effectively used among FSWs in Kenya to reduce HIV/AIDS and STIs (Ngugi et al. 1988; 1996; 1999). K-VOWRC has established extremely effective intervention and education programmes to help women in Kenya leave sex work. K-VOWRC provides vocational training and education to FSWs, which empowers them to leave sex work for viable economic opportunities and, as a result, many become community leaders and mobilizers for helping other FSWs leave the trade. As Ngugi et al. (1996) argue programmes to educate, empower and provide vocational training to FSWs are necessary in order to provide women and girls in Nairobi with viable alternatives. A community-based approach will increase effectiveness of peer education as the development and delivery of programmes is done with and for the community. Policies to fund education beyond the primary level will undoubtedly improve the lives of girls and may protect them from beginning sex work. Additionally, education empowers women and provides them with more options and access to better income generating opportunities. Finally, social and economic support for women and orphaned girls would provide the ultimate protective factor against entry into sex work.

6.3 KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION

As this is a community-based research project, a report will be prepared for dissemination to the participants in the study and to K-VOWRC. The community report will allow participants to read and reflect on the stories and to engage in further dialogue with programmers at K-VOWRC, opening up iterative cycles of participation, action and reflection. A final report of the findings and recommendations will be prepared for K-VOWRC with the intention that the research findings and recommendations may be used

in policy development and programme planning specific to the community's needs. The findings may also be used by K-VOWRC in order to leverage funding to increase health promotion programmes and interventions performed by the Centre.

Additional knowledge translation activities include the preparation of a report to be submitted to the Kenyan government. Research findings, including notes and methodology will be submitted to the Republic of Kenya's Ministry of Education, Science & Technology. Other activities to transfer the knowledge gained from this research include promoting the community's needs. These types of activities raise awareness to further support community initiatives aimed at reducing the number of women and girls entering sex work in Nairobi. A final report was submitted to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), which serves to translate knowledge and raise awareness to further influence policy and practice. Additionally, I participated in a half-hour long interview with CBC Radio, in which the preliminary research findings and their connection to HIV/AIDS were highlighted. Finally, this research has been presented academically on two occasions and an academic paper to be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal is in progress.

REFERENCES CITED

Amuyunzu-Nyamongo, M., L. Okeng, A. Wagura and E. Mwenzwa
2007 Putting on a Brave Face: The Experiences of Women Living with HIV and AIDS in Informal Settlements of Nairobi, Kenya. Supplement issue, AIDS Care 19(S1):S25-S34.

Ansell, N. and L. Young
2004 Enabling Households to Support Successful Migration of AIDS Orphans in Southern Africa. AIDS Care 16(1):3-10.

Barry, Kathleen
1995 Prostitution of Sexuality. New York: New York University Press.

Bernard, H. Russell
2002 Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods. 3rd Ed. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Bochner, A.P.
2001 Narrative's Virtues. Qualitative Inquiry 7(2):131-157.

Campbell, Catherine
2003 Letting Them Die: Why HIV/AIDS Intervention Programmes Fail. Oxford: James Currey.

Chattopadhyay, Amit and Rosemary McKaig
2004 Social Development of Commercial Sex Workers in India: An Essential Step in HIV/AIDS Prevention. AIDS Patient Care 18(3):159-168.

Crapanzano, Vincent
1984 Life-Histories. American Anthropologist, New Series 86(4):953-960.

Cresswell, John W.
2003 Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

D'Costa, J., Francis Plummer and I. Bower
1985 Prostitutes are a Major Reservoir of Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Nairobi, Kenya. Sexually Transmitted Diseases 12(2):64-67.

De Meis, Carla
2002 House and Street: Narratives of Identity in a Liminal Space Among Prostitutes in Brazil. Ethos 30(1/2):3-24.

Denzin, N.K. and Y.S. Lincoln, eds.
1998 Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Dunkle, Kristen L., Rachel K. Jewkes, Heather C. Brown, Glenda E. Gray, James A. McIntyre and Siobán D. Harlow
2004 Transactional Sex Among Women in Soweto, South Africa: Prevalence, Risk Factors and Association with HIV Infection. Social Science & Medicine 59:1581-1592.

Elder, Glen H. Jr.
1998 The Life Course as Developmental Theory. Child Development 69(1):1-12.

Elmore-Meegan, M., R.M. Conroy and C.B. Agala
2004 Sex Workers in Kenya, Numbers of Clients and Associated Risks: An Exploratory Survey. Reproductive Health Matters 12(23):50-57.

Farmer, Paul
2004 An Anthropology of Structural Violence. Sidney W. Mintz Lecture for 2001, Current Anthropology 45(3):305-325.

Farmer, Paul
2003 Pathologies of Power: Health Human Rights and the New War on the Poor. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Farmer, Paul
1999 Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Farmer, Paul, Margaret Connor and Janie Simmons, eds.
1996 Women, Poverty and AIDS: Sex, Drugs, and Structural Violence. Monroe: Common Courage Press.

Fenton, L.
2004 Preventing HIV/AIDS Through Poverty Reduction: The Only Sustainable Solution? Lancet 364:1186-87.

Ford, K. and V. Hosegood
2005 AIDS Mortality and the Mobility of Children in Kwazulu Natal, South Africa. Demography 42(4):757-768.

Frey, Lawrence R., Mara B.Adelman and Lyle J. Flynt
2000 Weaving Meanings Together in an AIDS Residence: Communicative Practices, Perceived Health Outcomes and Symbolic Construction of Community. Journal of Health Communication 5: 53-72.

Green, Judith and Nicki Thorogood
2004 Qualitative Methods for Health Research. London: Sage Publications.

Green, Linda
1998 Lived Lives and Social Suffering: Problems and Concerns in Medical Anthropology. Medical Anthropology Quarterly 12(1):3-7.

Gregson, S., C.A. Nyamukapa, G.P. Garnett, M. Wambe, J.J.C. Lewis, P.R. Mason, S.K. Chaniwana and R.M. Anderson
2005 HIV Infection and Reproductive Health in Teenage Women Orphaned and Made Vulnerable by AIDS in Zimbabwe. AIDS Care 17(1):785-794.

Gubrium, Jaber F. and James A. Holstein
2008 Narrative Ethnography. *In*, Handbook of Emergent Methods. S.N. Hesse-Biber and P. Leavy, eds. Pp. 241-264. New York: The Guilford Press.

Gysels, Marjolein, Robert Pool and Betty Nnalusiba
2002 Women Who Sell Sex in a Ugandan Trading Town: Life Histories, Survival Strategies and Risk. Social Science & Medicine 54:179-192.

Howell, Signe
1989 Of Persons and Things: Exchange and Valuables Among the Lio of Eastern Australia. New series, Man 24(3):419-438.

Kenya Voluntary Women's Rehabilitation Centre
N.d. [Brochure]. Seattle: University of Washington and Cascade Health Communication Group.

Kenya Voluntary Women's Rehabilitation Centre
2007 Organization Mission Statement. Electronic document, http://www.kvowrc.or.ke, accessed December 10, 2007.

Kalipeni E., S. Craddock, J.R. Oppong and J. Ghosh, eds.
2004 HIV and AIDS in Africa: Beyond Epidemiology. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Kearney, M.
1995 The Local and the Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism. Annual Review of Anthropology 24:547-565.

Kibaki, Mwai
2007. Speech by His Excellency Hon. Mwai Kibaki at St. Paul's University, Limuru, Sept 14th, 2007. Transcript of speech from Kenya State House website, Electronic document, http://statehousekenya.go.ke/, accessed: November 19, 2007.

Kilbride, P., C. Suda and E. Njeru, eds.
2000 Street Children in Kenya: Voices of Children in Search of a Childhood. Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey.

Link, B.G. and J.C. Phelan
1995 Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Disease. Special Issue, Journal of Health and Social Behavior SI:80-94.

Manopaiboon, C., R.E. Bunnell, P.H. Kilmarx, S. Chaikummao, K. Limpakarnjanarat, S. Supawitkul, M.E. St. Louis and T.D. Mastro
2003 Leaving Sex Work: Barriers, Facilitating Factors and Consequences for Female Sex Workers in Northern Thailand. AIDS Care 15(1):39-52.

Marcus, George
1995 Ethnography in/of the World System: the Emergence of Multi-sited Ethnography. Annual Review of Anthropology 24:95-117.

Marx, Karl
1906 Capital: A Critique of Political Economy. Frederick Engels, ed. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, translators. New York: The Modern Library, Random House.

McDonough, Peggy and Pat Bergund
2003 Histories of Poverty and Self-Rated Health Trajectories. Journal of Health and Social Behavior 44:198-214.

McKinlay, J.B.
1994 A Case for Refocusing Upstream: The Political Economy of Illness. *In* The Sociology of Health and Illness. P. Conrad and R. Kern, eds. Pp.509-523. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Montgomery, H.
2001 Modern Babylon?: Prostituting Children in Thailand. New York: Berghahn Books.

Moore, Sally Falk
1987 Explaining the Present: Theoretical Dilemmas in Processual Ethnography. American Ethnologist 14(4):727-736.

Murdock, Peggy O'Hara, H. Garbharran, M.J. Edwards, M.A. Smith J. Lutchmiah and M. Mkhize
2003 Peer Led HIV/AIDS Prevention for Women in South African Informal Settlements. Health Care for Women International 24:502-512.

Nairobi State House,
2004 Press Statement: Free Primary Education Programme, December 09, 2004. Electronic document, http://statehousekenya.go.ke/commentary/commentary091204.htm, Accessed November 19, 2007.

Nash, June
1981 Ethnographic Aspects of the World Capitalist System. Annual Review of Anthropology 10:393-423.

Ngugi, Elizabeth N., E. Branigan and D. Jackson
1999. Interventions for Commercial Sex Workers and Their Clients. *In*, Preventing HIV in Developing Countries: Biomedical and Behavioural Approaches. L. Gibney, R. DiClemente, and S. Vermund, eds. Pp. 205-230. New York: Plenum Press.

Ngugi, Elizabeth and Eric Roth.
N.d. Data on Demographic, Economic and Sexual Characteristics of Female Commercial Sex Workers in Nairobi, Kenya. Unpublished data, Victoria, BC.

Ngugi, Elizabeth N., J. Simonsen, M. Bosire, A. Ronald, F. Plummer, D. Cameron, P. Wiayaki and N. Ndinya-Achola
1988 Prevention of Transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus in Africa: Effectiveness of Condom Promotion and Health Education Among Prostitutes. The Lancet (iii):887-890.

Ngugi, Elizabeth N., D. Wilson, J. Sebstad, F. Plummer and S. Moses
1996 Focused Peer-Mediated Educational Programs Among Female Sex Workers to Reduce Sexually Transmitted Disease and Human Immunodeficiency Virus Transmission in Kenya and Zimbabwe. The Journal of Infectious Diseases 174(Suppl 2):S240-S247.

Nyambedha, E., S. Wandibba and J. Aargaard-Hansen
2003 "Retirement lost" – The New Role of the Elderly as Caretakers for Orphans in Western Kenya. Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology 18:33-52.

Nyamukapa, C. and S. Gregson
2005 Extended Family's and Women's roles in Safeguarding Orphans' Education in AIDS-Afflicted Rural Zimbabwe. Social Science & Medicine 60:2155-67.

Oleke, C., A. Blystad and O.B. Rekdal
2005 "When the Obvious Brother is Not There": Political and Cultural Contexts of the Orphan Challenge in Northern Uganda. Social Science & Medicine 61:2628-2638.

Oppong, J. R. and E. Kalipeni
2004 Perceptions and Misconceptions of AIDS in Africa. *In*, HIV and AIDS in Africa: Beyond Epidemiology. E. Kalipeni, S. Craddock, J.R. Oppong and J. Ghosh, eds. Pp. 47-57. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Parker, Melissa
2003 Anthropology's Reflections on HIV Prevention Strategies and London's Backrooms. *In*, Learning from HIV and AIDS: Biosocial Symposium Series. G. Eliison, M. Parker and C. Campbell, eds. Pp. 178-209. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Patton, M.
2002 Variety in Qualitative Inquiry: Theoretical Orientations. *In*, Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods. 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Peacock, James and Dorothy Holland
1993 The Narrated Self: Life Stories in Process. Ethos 21(4):367-383.

Pickering, H., M. Okongo, B. Nnalusiba, K. Bwanika and J. Whitworth
1997 Sexual Networks in Uganda: Casual and Commercial Sex in a Trading Town. AIDS Care 9(2):199-209.

Rubenson, Brigitta, Le Thi Hanh, Bengt Höjer and Eva Johansson
2005 Young Sex-Workers in Ho Chi Minh City Telling Their Life Stories. Childhood 12(3):391-411.

Silberschmidt, Margrethe
1992 Have Men Become the Weaker Sex? Changing Life Situations in Kisii District. The Journal of Modern African Studies 30(2): 237-253.

Smith, Kirsten P.
2003 Why Are They Worried? Concern About HIV/AIDS in Rural Malawi. Special Collection, Demographic Research 1(9):279-318.

Smith, Kirsten P. and Susan Cotts Watkins
2005 Perceptions of Risk and Strategies for Prevention: Responses to HIV/AIDS in Rural Malawi. Social Science & Medicine 60:649-660.

Starfield, Barbara
2001 Basic Concepts in Population Health and Health Care. Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health 55:452-454.

Steffen, Vibeke
1997 Life Stories and Shared Experience. Social Science & Medicine 45(1):99-111.

Sudarkasa, Niara
1982 Sex Roles, Education and Development in Africa. Anthropology & Education Quarterly 13(3):279-289.

Svenkerud, Peer J. and Arvind Singhal
1998 Enhancing the Effectiveness of HIV/AIDS Prevention Programs Targeted to Unique Population Groups in Thailand: Lessons Learned from Applying Concepts of Diffusion of Innovation and Social Marketing. Journal of Health Communication 3:193-216.

Talle, Aud
1995 Bar Workers at the Border. *In*, Young People at Risk: Fighting AIDS in Northern Tanzania. K. Klepp, P.M. Biswalo and A. Talle, eds. Pp. 18-30. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.

Taylor, L.
2005 Dangerous Trade-offs: The Behavioral Ecology of Child Labor and Prostitution in Rural Northern Thailand. Current Anthropology 5(3):411-433.

Thomas-Slayter, Barbara and Dianne Rocheleau
1995 Gender Resources, and Local Institutions: New Identities for Kenya's Rural Women. *In* Gender, Environment, and Development in Kenya: A Grassroots Perspective. Barbara Thomas-Slayter and Dianne Rocheleau, eds. Pp. 7-22. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc.

Thomas-Slayter, Barbara, Betty Wamalwa-Muragoriand and Dianne Rocheleau
1995 The African and Kenyan Contexts. *In* Gender, Environment, and Development in Kenya: A Grassroots Perspective. Barbara Thomas-Slayter and Dianne Rocheleau, eds. Pp. 23-43. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc.

UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID
2004 Children on the Brink 2004. A Joint Report of New Orphan Estimates and a Framework for Action. New York:UNICEF.

UNAIDS and WHO
2004 Kenya Epidemiological Fact Sheet on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections, 2004 Update. UNAIDS/WHO.

van Manen, Max
1990 Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy. London, Ontario: The Althouse Press.

Watson, L.C. and M.B. Watson-Franke
1985 Interpreting Life Histories: An Anthropological Inquiry. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Wojcicki, Janet Maia
2002 Commercial Sex Work or *Ukuphanda?* Sex-for-money Exchange in Soweto and South Africa. Culture Medicine and Psychiatry 26:339-370.

Wojcicki, Janet Maia
2005 Socioeconomic Status as a Risk Factor for HIV Infection in Women in East, Central and Southern Africa: A Systematic Review. Journal of Biosocial Science 37:1-36.

Wolf, Eric R.
1990 Facing Power: Old Insights, New Questions. American Anthropologist, 92(3):586-596.

Young, L. and N. Ansell
2003 Fluid Households, Complex Families: The Impacts of Children's Migration as a Response to HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa. The Professional Geographer 55(4):464-476.

Appendix 'A': Interview Questions

Background

1. What is your age?
2. Do you have children? How many? Ages? Are you their sole provider? How old were you when you first became pregnant?
3. Do you send money home?
4. Do your family and friends know that you are trading sex?
5. If you have any, what are your other economic resources?

Childhood background

1. Where did you spend your childhood?
2. What can you tell me about your life story when you were a child growing up?
3. Can you tell me about your family?
    a. How many people lived in your household?
    b. How many children? Parents? Grandparents? Aunties/Uncles? Cousins? etc.
    c. Did both of your parents live at home with you?
    d. Did your mother take work outside the home?
    e. Who provided for the family?
    f. How would you describe your economic status when you were a child?
    g. Did you and all of the children in your home attend school?
    h. Was there anyone sick at home who was taken care of? Who cared for that individual?
4. Do you think there were any childhood events that contributed to leading you to sex work when you became older? What were they? Why? Could they have been prevented?

Transitional period – if coming from rural area

1. Why did you leave the rural area?
2. Why did you come to the urban area?
3. What can you tell me about your life story when you first came to the urban area?
    a. Were you connected to any friends or family when you arrived? How many? Who were you in contact with when you arrived? Were they supportive?
    b. Did you come to the city with any money?
    c. Did you come alone?
4. What can you tell me about your life story when you first became engaged in sex work?
    a. How did you come to engage in sex work for the first time?
    b. Where were you working? Bar? Street? etc.
    c. Did someone show you what to do?

d. Did you have other jobs?
e. Did your family and/or friends know that you were trading sex?

Transitional period – if already lived in city

1. What can you tell me about your life story when you first became engaged in sex work?
    a. How did you come to engage in sex work for the first time?
    b. Where were you working? Bar? Street? etc.
    c. Did someone show you what to do?
    d. Did you have a boyfriend or husband? If so, did he know? What did he think about your sex work?
    e. Did you have other jobs? What were they?
    f. Did your family and/or friends know that you were trading sex?
    g. How long before you became engaged in sex work on a more regular basis?

Stabilization period

1. What can you tell me about your life story when sex work became more regular?
    a. Why did it become more regular?
    b. For how long has sex work been your main source of income?
    c. Do you have other jobs? What are they?
    d. Do you send money home?
    e. Do your family/friends from home know that you are trading sex?
    f. Do you have a boyfriend or husband? If so, what does he think about your sex work?

General

1. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your life story that relates to the factors that contributed to leading you to sex work?
2. Are there particular factors that placed you at risk for entering sex work?
3. Could these factors be common among other female sex workers?
4. How could these factors be mediated?

Appendix 'B': Participant Profiles

The following list provides brief profile information about each woman who participated in the study. The descriptions are organized alphabetically based on the pseudonym chosen by each participant. When the information was available, each profile provides the name of the rural area where the participant is originally from, her age at the time of the interview, the age at which she stopped attending school, the age she began to engage in sex work and the number of children she supports.

Carol: Age 18; from Kariobangi; stopped school at age 12; began sex work at age 14; has 0 children.

Caroline-Akoth: Age unavailable; location unspecified; stopped school at age 12; age began sex work unavailable; number of children unavailable.

Carolyne: Age 26; from Kapkures; age stopped school unavailable; began sex work at age 23; has 2 children.

Eunice: Age 35; from Nakuru; stopped school at age 12; began sex work at age 18; has 2 children.

Georgina: Age 31; from Kevote; stopped school at age 15; began sex work at age 27; has 2 children.

Jackline: Age 18; from Siaya; stopped school at age 11; began sex work at age 16; has 0 children.

Jayne: Age 42; from Amakamba; stopped school at age 18; began sex work at age 18; has 1 child.

Jane: Age 22; from Machakos; stopped school at age 13; began sex work at age 18; has 0 children.

Janenjere: Age 21; from Kahithe; age stopped school unavailable; began sex work at age 14; has 1 child.

Jennifer: Age 32; from Mathare North; stopped school at age 13; began sex work at age 25; has 1 child.

Joyce: Age 19; from Nandawa; age stopped school unavailable; began sex work at age 12; number of children unavailable.

Lynne: Age 37; from Mukuuyuni; stopped school at age 15; began sex work at age 15; has 3 children.

Mary: Age 38; from Nairobi; stopped school at age 18; began sex work at age 34; has 2 children.

Michelle: Age 18; from Sirembe; stopped school at age 13; began sex work at age 17; has 0 children.

Mueni: Age 29; from Matchakos; stopped school at age 13; began sex work at age 21; has 3 children.

Nancy: Age 24; from Nyere; stopped school at age 11; began sex work at age 16; has 0 children.

Susan: Age 20; from Bondo; stopped school at age 13; began sex work at age 14; has 1 child.

Tom: Age 27; from Kangundo; stopped school at age 19; began sex work at age 21; has 2 children.

Tracey: Age 20; from Muranga; stopped school at age 15; began sex work at age 17; has 0 children.

Wambui: Age 38; from Nyere; stopped school at age 12; began sex work at age 23; has 1 child (but takes care of 7 children in total).

Zatu: Age unavailable; unspecified rural area; stopped school at age 11; began sex work at age 12; number of children unavailable.

Appendix 'C': Recruitment Poster

Sharing Your Life Story

Are you interested in participating in an interview to share your life story?

WHO?

My name is Melanie Ross, and I am a Canadian graduate student working on my Master's degree at the University of Victoria, Canada.

I would like to hear the life stories of female sex workers in Nairobi.

WHAT?

My research aims to identify the combination of factors that place young women at risk for entering sex work in Nairobi, Kenya.

You will share your experiences about entering sex work.

You will participate in one interview that will last approximately two hours.

WHY?

Your participation will assist in identifying the factors that lead women to entering sex work.

You will be compensated for your time.

If you are interested in participating or if you have any questions, please contact Dr. Ngugi (telephone) or Melanie Ross in person at the K-VOWRC office.

This research is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Appendix 'D': Letter of Information

You are invited to participate in a study examining ***Why women enter sex work in Nairobi, Kenya*** that is being conducted by Melanie Ross, a Canadian graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Victoria.

The purpose of this research is to answer the following questions:

1. How does a woman's childhood and/or background affect her risk for entering sex work later in life?
2. What factors place young women at risk of becoming involved in sex work?
3. What factors place young women at risk for remaining in sex work and/or engaging in transactional sex on a regular basis?

The results of this research can be used to contribute to the development and implementation of programmes that aim to reduce the number of young women entering the sex trade in Nairobi, Kenya. The results of this study will be shared with K-VOWRC, directly with the participants and it will be prepared into a written thesis and will be presented at academic conferences.

If you are a female sex worker over the age of 18 and you are interested in sharing your life story and you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include one face-to-face interview with Melanie Ross. The interview will last approximately two hours and will be held at the K-VOWRC office.

As a way to compensate you for your participation, you will be given a cash honorarium, as well as money to cover your transportation costs to participate in the interview and you will be provided with some light refreshments. It is important for you to know that it is unethical to provide undue compensation or inducements to research participants and, if you agree to be a participant in this study, this form of compensation to you must not be coercive. If you would not otherwise choose to participate if the compensation was not offered, then you should decline.

If you are interested in participating or if you have any questions, please contact Melanie Ross in person at the K-VOWRC office or by email at: (E-mail) or you may also contact Dr. Ngugi at (telephone). This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Lisa Mitchell. You may also contact my supervisor at (telephone).

This research is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Appendix 'E': Consent Form

Why women enter sex work in Nairobi, Kenya

You are invited to take part in a study examining ***Why women enter sex work in Nairobi, Kenya*** that is being conducted by Melanie Ross.

Melanie Ross is a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Victoria and you may contact her by email at: (E-mail) or in person at K-VOWRC.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Anthropology. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Lisa Mitchell. You may contact my supervisor at (telephone number).

This research is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

The purpose of this research project is to identify the combination of factors that place young women at risk for entering sex work in Nairobi, Kenya.
This research aims to answer the following questions:

(1) How does a woman's childhood and/or background affect her risk for entering sex work later in life?
(2) What factors place young women at risk for beginning to become involved in sex work?
(3) What factors place young women at risk for remaining in sex work and/or engaging in transactional sex on a regular basis?

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a former female sex worker in Nairobi over the age of 18. You were selected because Dr. Elizabeth Ngugi knows you and it is through her that I have come to ask if you are interested in participating in this interview.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include one face-to-face interview with Melanie Ross, where you will have an opportunity to share your life story. The interview will last approximately two hours and will be held at the K-VOWRC office or a location that is convenient for you.

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including the time it takes to complete the interview. As a way to compensate you for any inconvenience related to your participation, you will be given a cash honorarium of 630 KSh. In addition to the cash honorarium, you will be provided with money to cover your transportation costs to participate in the interviews. It is important for you to know that it is unethical to provide undue compensation or inducements to research participants and, if you agree to be a participant in this study, this compensation to you must not be coercive. If you would not choose to participate if the compensation was not offered, then you should decline.

There are some potential risks to you by participating in this research and they include the potential for emotional distress, fatigue and/or stress as a result of sharing your life story. To prevent or to deal with these risks, you will be given the choice to answer or refuse to answer any question without any consequences as well as end the interview at any time without any negative consequences. If you do experience fatigue, stress and/or emotional or psychological discomfort, I will call a friend or family member of yours to pick you up and I will wait with you until he or

she arrives. I will be there to talk with you if you like, as well, I will arrange for you to talk with Dr. Ngugi to provide you with a chance to debrief following the interview.

The potential benefits of your participation in this research includes the opportunity to recount your life history, which provides you with an opportunity to describe and provide meaning to experiences and choices in your life. Possible benefits to society includes the identification of factors that contribute to placing young Kenyan women at risk for entering the sex trade. Possible benefits to the state of knowledge are related to the fact that currently little is known about African female sex workers and this can benefit the state of knowledge regarding the identification of the factors that lead young women to entering sex work in Nairobi, Kenya.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. It is important that you are participating out of your own free will and that your existing relationship with K-VOWRC and/or Dr. Ngugi has not influenced your decision to volunteer in the study. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will only be used if you give permission. You will still receive compensation even if you choose to withdraw from the study.

You will not be completely anonymous, as Melanie Ross (the interviewer) will know your name from the recruitment process and by meeting with you to conduct the interviews. She will be the only person that knows your name and she will ensure that no one else can associate your name with your participation in the study.

Your participation in the study will be confidential. Your answers will remain completely confidential by ensuring that your name will not be associated with your interview answers. You will be asked to choose a pseudonym that will only be associated with your name on your signed consent form and the recruitment form. Any other material will be coded with your chosen pseudonym, including notes and audio-taped files. The documents that include both your name and your pseudonym will be stored separately in a locked filing cabinet and only you and I will know which pseudonym is yours.

With permission, the interview will be audio-taped.

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: directly with the participants, a written thesis, presentations at academic conferences and published articles.

Interview transcripts and field notes will be stored for the duration of five years after the research project, after which time, original field notes and interview transcripts will be shredded.

In addition to being able to contact Melanie Ross and Dr. Lisa Mitchell at the above phone number, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research at the University of Victoria (telephone). Or you may contact either myself or Dr. Ngugi in person at the K-VOWRC office.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	*Signature*	*Date*

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.