

Investigating the role of social capital and social cohesion in the creation of identity among young women who sell sex in rural KwaZulu-Natal

Sibiya L^{1,2}, Shahmanesh M^{1,3}, Zuma T^{1,2,3}, Chimbindi N^{1,2,3}, Desmond N¹
¹Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, UK, ²Africa Health Research Institute, SA, ³University College London, UK

1. Background

- 121,000-167,000 (0.8-1%) adult women are estimated to be engaged in sex work 30,000 in KZN
- No sex work program until 2016 –still with limited extension into rural settings
- Resources, social structure and social networks impact on decisions to transition into and out of sex work (Desmond, 2009)
- Identity theory self-discovery of who one is (Styler, 2016)
- Social identity refers to how the society perceives one Goffman's idea of front and backstage
- This project is embedded within the AMETHIST consortium in South Africa

Sex Work	Transactional Sex
“An occupation in which participating individuals engage in sexual intercourse in designated places such as brothels, hotels, the street, inside vehicles, and so on” (Benoit & Shumka, 2015; Masvawure, 2010; Tade & Adekoya, 2012)	“Noncommercial, nonmarital sexual relationships motivated by an implicit assumption that sex will be exchanged for material support or other benefits” (Wamoyi et al., 2019)
Clients (truck drivers, mine workers, tourists, men from the community, etc.)	Blessers, sugar daddies, friends with benefits, employers, service providers

Table 1: Types of Sex Work & Transactional Sex



Fig 2: Sex Workers

Overall aim of this PhD

- To investigate the role of “social” in social networks informing sex work and transitioning into and out of sex work in Southern Africa
- To understand social behaviours to be promoted, that will influence the uptake of SRH services

Specific Objectives

- To investigate the impact of social capital and social cohesion in the creation of identity
- Understand factors that influence social capital and social cohesion in the creation of identity
- To explore how social capital affects the dynamics of identity
- To investigate how the dynamics of identities, impact on one's decision to transition into or out of sex work
- To co-create approaches to increase engagement with sex work interventions

2. Methods

- An Ethnography using qualitative data methods which includes a scoping review
- Ethnographic data collection methods to be used include.

Methodology

- **Data Collection**
 - Field Notes
 - Study sites mapping n=4
 - Participant observations n=16 (following study participants)
- **Interviews**
 - In-depth interviews with sex workers n=20 initial interviews, n=3 follow up interviews of the same participants, n=8 follow up interviews
 - In-depth interviews with relevant stake holders n=10
- **Data Analysis**
 - NVivo Software
 - Inductive Theory
 - Secondary data analysis of 10 life narrative grids from the AMETHIST study

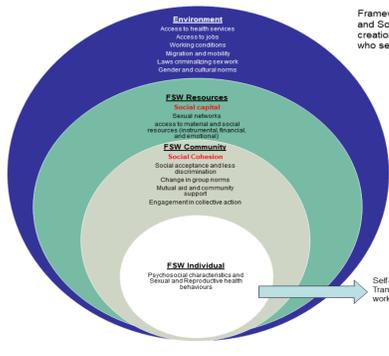


Fig 3: Conceptual Framework

Social Capital

The relations between individuals form social networks, forms of reciprocity and trustworthiness” (Putnam 2001: 18-19)

Social Cohesion

“Social Cohesion is the extent to which people are co-operative, within and across group boundaries, without coercion or purely self-interested motivation” (Wamoyi, 2020)

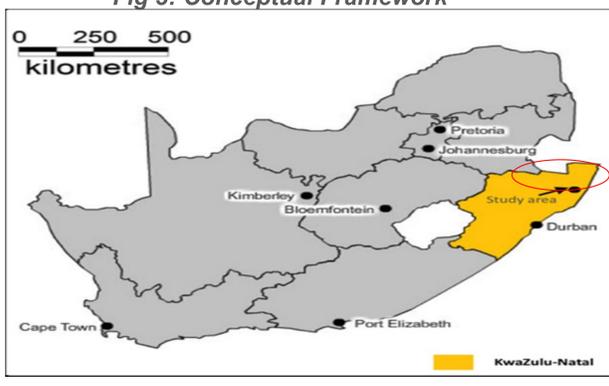


Fig 4: Study Setting

- Africa Health Research Institute (AHRI) is situated in uMkhanyakude District, KZN, SA
- Site is mostly rural and poor, with high unemployment and high HIV prevalence

3. Conclusion

Contribution

- To the body of the existing limited literature on the role of social capital and social cohesion in creating identities especially in young women involved in sexual transactions
- Understanding on FSW accessing and utilizing sex worker, HIV and SRH interventions
- Identifying areas to focus on when developing interventions for sex workers

Expected Results

- Understanding the social contributors and the impact of identity dynamics in facilitating decisions to transition into and out of sex work
- Identifying social behaviours to be promoted, that will improve the accessibility and uptake of HIV and SRH interventions for sex workers
- Inform the development of future interventions aimed at promoting safe transitions into and mostly out of sex work

Progress to date

- Application to LSTM Boards submitted, awaiting response
- To submit amendment application to BREC
- Working on a scoping review



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