

Online sex work: Professionalizing the industry amidst the Covid-19 lockdown

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Abstract: This study contributes to the relatively limited body of knowledge regarding sex work and the limited progress in the decriminalization of sex work as paid labour, which impacts the inclusion of sex workers in epidemic response. Since sex workers form part of vulnerable populations, the Covid 19 pandemic has also affected their socioeconomic status, further displacing them into poverty and exacerbate existing inequalities. In particular, South Africa has made great progress towards equality for all groups, such as the legalization of same-sex marriages in its Constitution. In spite of this, sex workers remain an underrepresented group of workers, since sex work is not legalized as a profession, which negatively impacts their representivity in epidemic responses. In this context, there is an abundance of literature on sex work, which has led to the development of theory and conceptual frameworks. Within the context of the Covid 19 pandemic, this study presents the context of sex workers in South Africa. Additionally, the study examines the barriers faced by sex workers as well as their legalization and professionalization as workers. There are numerous instances of the violation of sex workers and given that sex work isn't legalized they are not protected by the law and often find themselves confronted with criminals who break laws against them. Furthermore, the study critically examines how sex workers have professionalized their industry during the Covid 19 pandemic and in the age of 4IR. Last but not least the study concludes on the challenges that hinder the legalization of sex workers in South Africa. It would seem that the state should consider reviewing how it caters to severely socially excluded populations if they fail to represent, participate, or protect sex workers.

Keywords: Sex workers, inclusion, equity, pandemic management, 4IR, labour market, South Africa

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INTRODUCTION

Why would you do that?

They must do it because they enjoy sex
Surely there must be another job that they can do?

Sex work is not the sort of thing that people would generally talk about as it is a under contested topic that remains highly debatable and stigmatized within society impacting policy discussions (Sanders, 2018). With derogatory comment such as the above statement reinforcing notions of sex work being connected to abuse or unethical reinforcing notion of “us” versus “them (Weitzer, 2018; Kempadoo, 2018),” consequently impacting policy crafting in states.

There is pressure in South Africa by activists and sex worker rights to decriminalise sex work, in an effort for sex workers to be in a position to not only exercise their human right as individuals but rights as workers and their labour rights ensuring that their working conditions are protected and upheld by the justice system. As the result of sex work not being legalized, sex workers remains marginalised and vulnerable to many societal factors such as violence, police brutality and unsafe spaces (Mgbako, et al., 2009), however there remains notions of sex workers as exclusively shameful, being victims or outcasts reinforcing, hence insinuating division between people in society as a result of indifference(Scrambler, 2009). There are insurmountable reasons for this stigma connected to the sexual act that can be classified as a job that alike other jobs requires compensation the for the labourers or sex workers can be seen to be contributing to the economy. One of the reasons for this stigma can be seen to be connected to the sex hierarchy stereotype. Given this, Pitcher (2015) suggests, the need for recognition of sex work as legitimate labour impacting economies. Furthermore, considering technological advances, Rand (2019) suggests that

research in the US found that the race and nationality of digital sex workers does impact the economic success of webcam models. These arguments highlighted, remain important points of departure in understanding prostitution as paid labour and its impact on the economy.

In supporting a legal framework, in line with sex work activists this study seeks through qualitative interviews with sex workers, explore rather conflicting stereotypes that so many still outplay in society. In expounding on this, sex work has evolved and advanced keeping abreast with technological advances, keeping up with times, where sex workers too have gone online to ensure their businesses are 4IR ready. This study discussed how sex work has evolved and why there is the need to decriminalised prostitution ensuring South Africa’s constitution remains one premised on freedom and fairness for all.

Since sex workers form part of the most vulnerable population, the Covid 19 pandemic has impacted their socioeconomic status as well, further putting them in poverty and exacerbated their already existing inequalities. With the legalization of same-sex marriages in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, much progress has been made towards equality for all groups of people in South Africa's society. Sexual workers are not legally recognized as workers in the economy, affecting their representativeness and participation in epidemic response efforts. Consequently, there is a good deal of literature on sex work, resulting in adequate conceptual frameworks. In spite of this, this study contributes to the relatively limited literature on the impacts of sex work in epidemic management. During the Covid 19 pandemic, this qualitative study examines the context of sex workers in South Africa. In addition, the study discusses the barriers sex workers face and their potential as economic workers if they are legalized and professionalized. Due to sex work not being

legalized, there are numerous instances of sex workers being violated. Because they are not protected by law, they are often confronted by criminals who violate the law. The study critically examines how sex workers have professionalized in the age of 4IR, specifically during the global Covid 19 pandemic. In conclusion, the study discusses the challenges hindering the legalization of sex workers in South Africa. It is also important that the state takes into account how it caters for severely socially excluded groups when suggesting that sex workers are not represented, participated in, or protected by its legal and justice system.

The purpose of this study is to explore the day-to-day life of an online sex worker. The main research question is: What is online sex work? The study will talk about someone that's line of work is considered unusual because society a large considers sex as a private matter on the one hand and a job on the other. By questioning dogmatic stereotypes connected to what is acceptable and what is not acceptable, these arguments create curiosity and controversy. In addition to that, the manuscript will also discuss how sex workers provide online services rather than on-site and in person sessions, since this type of service is generally viewed to require in-person contact. Moreover, the decriminalization of sex work and the rights of these workers will be discussed. The study argues that sex workers do contribute to the economy and its informal sector through their representation in numbers and their participation in sex work. Yet they have not influenced policy which advances their contribution to the country's economy.

METHODS

This study was qualitative in nature. There is little evidence and nuances on known on intersectional theory and online sex work in South. Combined with intersectional the Covid 19 pandemic , this study offers insight into sex work and intersectionality in a developing world. This study is a case

study of South Africa. In order to address the questions and hypotheses in the study, data collection and documentation were employed. As a part of the exploratory literature review, the study explored definitions, theories, policies, viewpoints, principles, methods, as well as research findings from a range of literature.

Considering this case study on sex work in South African, it would be prudent to review the current sex work legislation for greater inclusivity in the labour market. Suggesting, it is imperative that prescriptions must be provided to address the challenges of the intersectional marginalisation of sex workers.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Exploring the notion of sex work

Prostitution is characterized by the antiprostitution feminist camp as an exploitative institution of patriarchy, a form of sexual slavery and violence against women, and therefore a violation of women's rights. Human rights have been used as a clarion call to "save" women from prostitution.

In contrast, the pro-sex-worker feminist camp seeks to protect sex workers by claiming sex work to be a legitimate job. Given this, as a result, antiprostitution and pro-sex-worker feminist theorizing is increasingly recognizing that the victim/agent dichotomy needs to be transcended. A sex worker's existence cannot be reduced to being a victim, agent, criminal, or worker (Mgbako and Smith , 2011)

In a capitalist patriarchal system, women are still undervalued, and this undermines the concept of women's sexual freedom within this system(Baloyi, 2010). In addition to taking responsibility for their actions, men who use the services of sex

workers must also take responsibility for their actions, since sex work is often considered to be a shameful and immoral practice (Roem, 2022). In patriarchal societies, men are absolved of this responsibility because they are viewed as the supreme beings (Capitalism and patriarchy intersect in a way that makes sex work inherently unequal (Shrage, 1994) As a general rule, prostitution symbolizes the dominance of men in the construction of communities generally (Shrage, 1989; Zatz, 1997). The problem with prostitution is not that it serves sexual needs, but rather that it is a way for women to serve the needs of men under patriarchal and capitalist conditions, which makes it a form of slavery (Mohajan, 2022). Due to those conditions, both male needs themselves and women's ways of meeting them are created, as well as the purchase of sexual services as a benefit for men. It is impossible for the reversibility of sex trade to exist under these conditions, and it is impossible for the sexual equality of those who are involved in this trade to exist as well (McKnight, 2022, Lawford-Smith, 2022).

Historical background on sex work in South Africa

The 1957 Sexual Offences Act and subsequent amendments created the current legal regime of total criminalization of sex work in South Africa (Mutiso, 2022).It is illegal to do sex work or be associated with sex work, and therefore sex workers, clients, brothel keepers, and others are subject to arrest and prosecution (Tomlinson et al., 2022).The Sexual Offenses Act grew out of the apartheid-era Immorality Act, which banned sex between races. Thus, the modern law that criminalizes sex work in South Africa is rooted in apartheid-era laws’ failed attempt to control consensual adult sexual behavior

(Wheeler, 2019). This sub-section explores how criminalization of sex work in South Africa is ineffective, wastes government money and, most importantly, leads to human rights abuses against sex workers, including stigma, police abuse, lack of access to justice, barriers to health services, abuse from clients and other individuals with whom sex workers transact, and lack of labour rights.

Why the criminalisation of sex work in South Africa is a failed experiment

According to Mgbako and Smith (2009), despite knowing about the criminalizing sex work does not create enabling conditions for sex workers. The challenges connected to criminalizing sex work can be attributed to several reasons, according to Mgbako and Smith (2009):

Reasons why criminalization of sex work is a barrier	
Ineffective and costly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By criminalizing sex work, states waste money on police enforcement and court costs. • Abuse of sex workers' human rights has increased. • Prostitution convictions are higher than convictions for serious crimes.
Stigma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of criminalization,

	<p>sex workers are stigmatized as criminals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People often believe abuse against sex workers is justified because they are criminalized. • Many facets of society, including the police, health workers, schools, banks, and others, stigmatize, discriminate, and abuse sex workers. • Family life is also affected by criminalization. Many sex workers hide their profession due to stigma despite being breadwinners for their families. • Stigma also affects children of sex workers. • Unless the government provides an alternative basic income grant, 		<p>unemployed people remain destitute in South Africa. Unemployment is a problem in South Africa, and sex workers do sex work primarily to make ends meet, unless the government provides an alternative live basic income grant, the unemployed remain destitute.</p>
		<p>Police abuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual workers and police have enormous power imbalances due to criminalization. The result is improper arrests and detentions, as well as economic, sexual, and physical abuse. • Sex workers are improperly and illegally arrested. When sex workers don't violate municipal bylaws concerning loitering and nuisance, they are harassed, arrested, and fined. • Even when sex workers are

	<p>engaged in activities unrelated to sex work, police arrest them as "known sex workers."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this cycle of arbitrary arrests and detention, sex workers become further vulnerable. • In exchange for not arresting a sex worker, police take bribes from sex workers or economically abuse them. • In spite of the government's condemnation of sex workers, its officials and agents profit economically from their work. • Sex workers are abused physically and sexually. In exchange for jail release or to avoid arrest, police demand sexual favours from sex workers, assault and rape them, and encourage and condone prisoner sexual abuse of transgender 	<p>Lack of access to justice</p>	<p>female sex workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of police harassment, sex workers are reluctant to report cases of rape committed against them. Such instances impede their access to justice. • The police do not take seriously rape, physical assaults, robbery, or other crimes committed against sex workers. • If the perpetrator is a police officer, police may even harass sex workers who report abuse. • Prosecutors rarely take abuse complaints from sex workers seriously due to criminalization. • It is common for sex workers to fear prosecution for anti-prostitution laws
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	<p>if they report crimes against them.</p>		<p>exposure prophylaxis medications.</p>
<p>Lack of access to health services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV public health interventions are hampered by criminalization. • In addition to stigmatizing sex workers in health services, criminalization fosters police abuse of sex workers. Additionally, it discourages sex workers from taking part in health policy development. • Health workers view sex workers negatively because of criminalization. • As a result, sex workers cannot receive health care services and information because of discrimination. • Negative attitudes toward sex workers also cause them to delay seeking treatment for STI infections, HIV testing, or post- 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furthermore, sex workers often go unnoticed because of the illegal nature of their work. • Sex workers are also vulnerable to health risks associated with police abuse. When sex workers try to avoid arrest, police confiscate condoms to use as evidence of prostitution. • The fear of being arrested at health clinics prevents some sex workers from seeking health care. In addition, HIV-positive sex workers who get caught in the common cycle of arbitrary police arrest and detention may be denied access to their antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) when in detention. • Since sex workers

	<p>are illegal and stigmatized in South Africa, they rarely have formal input into health policy decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of consultation with sex workers impedes the development of responsive health care services for sex workers. Training is needed to help health workers assist sex workers. Due to their criminalized status, the groups who need these trainings and other specialized responses are forced into the shadows. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further, street sex workers can be subjected to violence because they operate in isolated areas. hotel's premises. Under criminalization, sex workers are also unlikely to seek protection from the law since it is the law that punishes them.
<p>Abuse from clients and others with women sex workers transact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminalizing sex workers leaves sex workers vulnerable to abuse from clients, hotel management, and intimate partners. Clients who know that they cannot go to the police for support are more likely to abuse sex workers. 	<p>Lack of labour rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminalization violates the rights of South African sex workers. Without collective action, brothel owners and pimps can abuse sex workers by demanding long hours and forcing them to work in unsafe conditions. South African brothel workers report little control over their earnings and working hours. Outdoor sex workers have more control over their hours and wages but face greater violence and arrest.

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Although recognized as a vulnerable population, there is no national population size estimate for sex workers in South Africa. In South Africa sex workers constitute of 153 000 sex workers in South Africa (South African National Aids Council, 2022) . Furthermore, participatory mapping and Wisdom of the Crowd undertook a mapping exercise of sex workers in twelve locations in South Africa. A working estimate was reached of between 131,000 and 182,000 sex worker in South Africa, or between 0.76 and 1 % of the adult female population. The success of the exercise depended on integral involvement of sex worker peer educators and strong ethical considerations (Constant et al., 2015).

The Commission for Gender Equality (2014), the Office on the Status of Women (2000) and the National Department of Labour for the Republic of South Africa (2015) suggest, women are still underrepresented, more specifically in capacities of leadership and decision-making roles within local government. Furthermore, the Commission on Gender Equality concluded with their findings, that Local Government municipalities were non-compliant with Employment Equity (EE) laws. This highlighted that lack of having attained a 50/50 representation of women at senior management positions, 20 Years into South Africa's democratic dispensation (Hicks, 2014:9). This advocates, the lack of fair representation of women in local government devalues gender sensitive policy, and the engendering of local governance structures which are meant to impact on good governance (Hassim, 2015).The fundamental question of this

study addresses whether women's representation and participation impacts on decision making processes in South Africa's local governance politics.

Overall (1992) suggests that sex work can take many different forms as individuals can have sex in exchange for financial gains, rewards, all expenses paid trips, professional benefits or other. Given this society at large has differing views on sex work, sex workers largely remain shames and condemned for their labour, being cognisant that this might also not be their preferred choice of labour. In some instances sex workers revert to this type of labour due to conditions related to poverty, migration, violence and/ or event substance abuse (van Blerk, 2008, Onyango et al., 2015, Aldridge et al., 2018).

The global labour market underwent a number of changes in adaptation to the Covid 19 pandemic and increased uncertainties concerning human security. Alike other industries sex workers also aimed at professionalizing in their industry in the same manner. The angle of this article unpacks element in the decriminalizing of sex workers, which remains a topical issue in South Africa. This study looks at how the industry has gone ahead and professionalized itself regardless of whether a legislative framework and policy for the legalization of sex work, is in place or not. It looks at how sex workers remain stereotyped, even though they continue to seek equal rights like other workers, whilst contributing to the economy.

African sex workers have been largely absent from the global conversation about sex workers' rights despite the fact that the international sex workers' rights movement has been burgeoning during the past four decades(Mgbako et al., 2019; Smith and Mac,2018). To combat the stigma and abuse African sex workers face,

the sex workers' rights movement is calling for a radical shift in legal and policy positions on prostitution. Reflecting on the continent's need for collective action around sex work is timely. Recent years have seen a nascent regional engagement on sex workers' rights (Mgbako et al., 2019).

The decriminalization and legalisation of sex work remains relevant and important, considering South Africa's Labour Rights in the Constitution under Section 23, which highlights "everyone has the right to fair labour practices; every worker has the right to form and join a trade union and to participate in the union's activities; Every worker has the right to strike (Du Toit et al., 1998). Given this, sex work is illegal in South Africa, however the state's consolation for the continues exclusion of sex workers as a grouping within the labour force remains silences on the basis that people who engage in sex work are entitled to the same rights and freedoms as other people (Wheeler, 2019)

In contradiction to the Constitution of South Africa as the inclusion of marginalized groups such as sex workers remains important. The article will talk about someone that's line of work is considered unusual because society a large considers sex as a private matter on the one hand and a job on the other. These arguments creates curiosity and controversy and looks at the flip to the coin, questioning dogmatic stereotypes connected to what is acceptable and what is not. The article will also be rather enticing, as it will discuss how sex workers are now providing an online service rather on -site in person sessions, for many this type of services is thought to require in person contact, and some sort of physical interaction. At inception, readers will be intrigued on how the services is provided on-line.

O'Brien (2009) Mgbako and Smith (2009) suggest each sex worker has her own individual story, but many. African societies stigmatize sex workers by portraying them as carriers of diseases that are incompatible with conservative sexual norms. As a result of this stigma, these workers feel hopeless. As victims of gender-based violence, African sex workers are often subjected to physical, psychological, and social abuse, which can lead to a sense of hopelessness (Mgbako and Smith, 2009).

Interviews

I had the pleasure of speaking to a local sex worker Ntombi, who works in the Randburg area, and lives in a house with other high profile sex worker's services high-end clients. She is an ordinary woman like so many, with dreams and aspiration who came to Johannesburg 3 years ago, in search of a better life. It was really tough for her and a friend introduced her to a man who is now her pimp and colleague in the business.

Ntombi presented herself very well and articulated her word in a rather honest manner sharing her personal journey in the industry and how sex workers like all other industries want to remain afloat, services their clients and like so many continue to sustain themselves through sex work. The smog of her cigarette filled the atmosphere in the room, with a touch of openness and honesty, as she took intervals to simmer on her cigarette.

*Name has been changed to protect the identity of the source.

: Tell me about yourself, who is Ntombi as a sex worker?

N: She advised that she is a sex worker and escort, which has a diverse client base. She caters for both in-person sex work and online sex work depending on the client's needs. She has also been a sex worker for just over three years

Interviewer: How did you become sex worker

N: I came to Johannesburg in search for a better life with my then boyfriend. Upon arriving, he dropped me cold turkey and I was alone with no support or money. I then did domestic work for some time and shared a flat with a girl that was a sex worker. It was hard keeping jobs and then my flat mate introduced me to in person sex work.

At first it wasn't easy, as I can't tell her family that I am a sex worker, they will look down on her and stigmatise me.

Ntombi mention that she comes from a rural village and this sort of thing is really bad for them, they will say that she was bewitched and is evil if they found out that this was the nature of her job. She mentioned that yet, when she goes home over the festive, cash is king. He family tell her "you come from the city where you click as switch and have lights and a stove to cook." Her family think that she has a stable office job in a big company and that's her story.

Ntombi admitted with a smug smile on her face, that at the beginning it wasn't very easy, because she wasn't used to just sleeping with a man she didn't know and because we will in a society where intimacy and pleasure is a personal thing it made her feel bad at times.

When she started in the profession, she started off with blowjobs and took on some

of the more familiar client that her friends knew, that were open to engage with her. She laughed as she said "I started off with old men, we would drink, drink hot stuff and I would throw then hectic shots just so that they could pass out and not be a problem. Then she progressed to escorting and the more "serious stuff."

Ntombi admits that she has an attractive body, and this worked in her favour as the ones with the money like "nice things." She did however say that it gets to you, so you have to take a sniff. Admitting that many sex workers eventually resort to alcohol and drugs to keep them going.

She affirmed, "it was not easy and unusual for me in the start to reveal my body to a strange and unfamiliar man, but I needed to live and needed money." She also said that she got used to being a sex worker and the fear associated with it. She did also mention that she did have some good times, as her sexuality helped her provide pleasure to some people in a way that made them feel good such as dressing up and feeling good when she does herself up for some clients. She did mention that she works on her own time and grooming is part of her job, she has to maintain her image and clients love this.

Ntombi, recently started doing online sex work due to the virus, it was becoming hard to pay rent and support herself. Her pimp then introduced them to online sex work, as some client still wanted to communicate and allow me to services them with toys and the process of providing them with pleasure. Some clients just want to distress when they come see me and have fun in a way they wouldn't at home. Many of her clients have families or a spouse. Many of her client tell her that they can't do some of the things with their wives and with her its different.

Ntombi. communicated with a lot of clients on social media and this has helped her

grow her clientele very fast over the past year or so. She said that she also came into contact with a number of other sex workers, and they share some of their ways of making extra cash through social media such as through Instagram photos and webcamming.

Interviewer: What is Online sex work?

N: Online sex work allows me to work with my clients virtually, such as through social media, telephone, skype or zoom. Social media has been a big push helping Ntombi get new client and put herself out there in a way that showcases her looks and attitude.

Currently, online sex work is mainly marketed on social media and in different places, catering for both low-end client and high-end clients. Ntombi mentioned that she has managed to service high-end users many of whom are young professionals. However, she has not been making the money that she would make with in-person sex work with clients. On average she mentioned she has had to make the money that she would usually make in 1 week in 1 month, purely because her clientele has reduced. In her view in the South African market is just taking off and if she could make the money she makes with online sex work, hitting the same numbers she hits in a month with in-person consultations it would really be a benefit, although the effort is much more work. As webcamming and putting yourself out there to a larger audience isn't easy, its competitive and the feedback received from people online isn't always very easy.

Ntombi mentioned that sex worker has taken off overseas much faster than in South Africa. Since the Corona virus, she mentioned that many sex workers like her have looked as online sex work as an options and types of online sex work that is slowly taking off in South Africa include:

Escort directories and third party advertising platforms for sex workers to create profiles; webcam platforms which provide an interface between the webcam sex worker and the customer; multi-services adult entertainments platform provide many services that sex workers can use to advertise with a combination of escort directories and webcam platforms and is big abroad; dating and hook-up platforms with commercial advertising which connected people for personal relationships and unpaid sexual encounters, in some cases sex workers can openly advertise their services on this; dating and hook up platforms without commercial advertising which connects people for personal relationships and unpaid sexual encounters and prevent advertising for paid sex; customer review forums is an online platform where clients can post reviews about buying online sexual services such as with individual sex workers; agency website, are website run by third part intermediaries providing direct in-person services to their clients, they advertise sex worker services; social media platform and sex workers forums which connect sex workers and allow them to engage on a number of topics as a community.

Ntombi did mention that because sex work has not been legalised, many of the online sex work services she mentioned are just taking off or might only be available internationally. For her, online sex work involves doing webcamming, sexting, sex-toy and fetish wear consulting, and occasionally the sale of worn undergarments.

Interviewer: How has the online sex work scene been doing for you?

N: "This Corona is something else," for Ntombi's survival she had to consider adapting or perish, as more than 90% her clients were previously in-person as is the

case for many businesses. She did mention that it was and is not easy moving online, it "wasn't a quick fix." This forced her to go digital under the lockdown, and she has noticed that online sex work is bog overseas, many girls are joining in on the online scene in South Africa just to secure their survival.

She mentioned that she had to get creative through virtual platforms and technology such as through themed online video, making her become a cam girl with a smug smile. She mentioned that most of her clients are not into the online scene, and she needed to explore growing an online clientele, selling online content can take time, she mentioned.

She highlighted, it was a mission getting online equipment, under the lockdown. Thanks to her pimp the other sex workers she lies with are sharing the following items: "video camera, tripod, lighting, sex toys, speaker to mention a few. Ntombi highlighted that "it's not easy, as you need to sell yourself and sell sex to an audience that isn't in the room, and you can gauge the pleasure and satisfaction."

Ntombi's sex worker journey highlights, online sex work inevitably will become part and parcel on sex work offerings. Allowing these workers, the flexibility of screening clients beforehand, creating a sense of relief that they won't be easily blackmailed or abused and can protect themselves to a certain extent. Even though they work in an illegal profession they safety and profitability of work remains key and based on discussions with Ntombi on-line sex work and selling sex virtually allows for this profession to evolve into the new technology age with the comfort of knowing they are safer and can continue to safeguard their livelihood at leisure.

In retrospect, Ntombi's story highlights, perhaps society at large must reimagine a future for all, based on the freedoms that

we are able to exercise openly. Controversially, frowning upon the sense of "otherness" in those that don't conform remains the norm, as we pride ourselves on a constitution that upholds freedoms and liberties associated with the freedom of choice. This virtual revolution is the starting point for overcoming the stigma associated with sex work, that has been preconceived by societal hierarchy and expectations that no longer serve the individuals freedom of expression and choice, but rather human reinforcement unevolved realities.

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choice, but rather human reinforcement unevolved realities.

CONCLUSION

The paper has explored the idea of privilege and disadvantage using intersectional theory to depict media representations in post-colonial South Africa's massacres. The article explored prominent media houses during the Marikana Massacre and the Phoenix Massacre, demonstrating how intersecting oppressions are communicated under conflict. This link between the media and the public demonstrated politics of state and how inequality and a lack of consensus within the rich-poor divide prevails in South Africa.

The Marikana incident demonstrated that the state has upheld their national interests at all expenses even by using force and driven agendas on greater nationalism and patriotism simultaneously through conflict frames. Coincidentally, the use of force was under much scrutiny under the Phoenix Massacre and hence limited the usage of force by the state on looters and those that burnt tyres and factories. This was through images which ensure a common identity (Steenveld, 2004, cited in Wasserman, 2006: 78-79). The article suggests that under the Phoenix Massacre issues of class and ethnicity were brought into the spotlight, but in reality, classism did not form part of a discourse to be dealt with by the state (Dawson, 1999; Wasserman and Jacobs, 2003) notwithstanding that dominant frames connected to state nationalism, upholding capitalism connected to an intersectional difference in an unequal society remained.

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