Data Description

TUL 670B

Miriam Westin

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**Data Collection Methodology**

My chosen qualitative methodology is conducted for the sake of understanding how and why people act, through fieldwork, seeking a full understanding of the subject with verification of findings by participants (Gray, 2009). I have outlined data collection methods in the table below. My research is oriented toward processes. I utilized maximum variation sampling for my main data collection, recruiting potential participants who have spent short/medium/long periods outside of the sex trade. From within the pool of potential participants, I chose at random who I would approach.

**Location**

My field research will be conducted in two places. The first will be among women presently in the sex trade at a community drop-in center in a major red light area. The second will be among women who have already exited and are currently working at a production unit close to the red light district.

**Validity**

I attempted to ensure internal validity (credibility) through methodological triangulation whereby I gather data from multiple sites and populations. These include relevant literature, community observation, a community presentation, focus group discussions and interviews. I will give voice to research participants by engaging in an initial focus group discussion and asking open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews. The final focus group discussion will allow participants to comment on my analysis of their interviews and the current situation in their community. I will ensure external validity (transferability) through conducting regular literature reviews and acknowledging the limitations to the generalizability of any research conclusions. Quotations will not be used to prove hypotheses but only to illustrate conclusions made based on thorough analysis.

**Narrative**

When combined with the focus of my study, the story-telling nature of the local (Bengali) culture and the narrative-focused weekly therapy sessions attended by my potential participants suggest narrative to be an appropriate unit of analysis for this study. Recent studies show that event narration fostered in properly structured studies can be part of participants' healing processes (Edwards & Sylaska, 2014; Hamberger & Ambuel, 2014; McClain & Frederick Amar, 2013). Open-ended, private, semi-structured interviews will best create the environment for such event narration. Focus groups can provide background information to research and feedback on research results in cases where extensive ethnographic work is difficult to conduct (Desai & Potter, 2006). For my study, focus group discussions will provide information and perspectives on exiting which I cannot gain from community observation due to the risk it would pose potential participants.

**Table 1: Data Collection Methods**

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| **Category** | **Participants** | **Specifics** | **Goals** |
| Focus Group Discussions | 2 groups of 8-10 women from production unit | 1 FGD held before interviews begin, 1 after interviews; group composed of women who work together, same age group | 1st group: to ascertain a local definition of “exit” and what issues women who have been through the process find important  2nd group: to bring forward a few major themes from interviews to determine credibility |
| Semi-structured Interviews | 25 individual women from production unit (all FGD participants will also be interviewed) | PI asks open-ended questions in Bengali; audio recording and post hoc note-taking; 1 interview per participant; 1 potential follow-up per participant for member-checking of data | To gain minimal quantitative data to be used for organizing stories for analysis; to acquire complete exit narratives, including indications of both barriers and facilitators |
| Observation | Public; anyone in red light area; women visiting drop-in center | Informal non-participant observation in community served by host organization; 1-2 hours per day, 2-3 days per week, 8-10 weeks; no identifying information noted; no direct questions asked | PI's increased sensitivity to local issues and social realities to increase reliability; learn local jargon surrounding research topic |

**Results**

Data collection is currently underway. Through observation, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews I am collecting data that I will store, code and analyze using data analysis software NVivo for Mac. In this section I will describe the story told by that data. This will come after the analysis process is complete, however I have provided some temporary descriptions of the data-gathering process thus far below.

**Non-Participant Observation**

The majority of my non-participant community observation is complete. As this was conducted in a brothel area where participants were under unknown forms of control, I was very cautious. I did not bring up the topic of exiting, and in fact did little talking aside from small talk. Rather, I interacted with women who entered the community center and the NGO fieldworkers, taking in the topics of conversation and details explained by the fieldworker. I took notes after each day in the community, and will be entering them into my coding software in upcoming days.

Thus far, major motifs from my observations have included: madams, customers, family and home, community violence, language, cost of living, jobs outside of 'the line,' addiction.

**Initial Focus Group Discussion**

For my first focus group discussion, I was only able to gather four women from the production unit. These women have been out of the sex trade for between 5 and 13 years. The questions encouraged conversation on the topics and revealed realities that differed from those suggested by the literature. Women were engaged in discussing the current and former realities that bring people to, keep people in, and cause people to leave the sex trade in Kolkata. Two women spoke more than others, but all participants shared something. They were all generally in agreement about each other's views. I conducted this discussion in Bengali and provided my translator with an audio recording. This portion of my data has been translated and transcribed in English. It will require an edit by a second translator, after which I will begin the coding process.

**Semi-Structured Interviews**

I am in the process of interviewing 20 women regarding their experience exiting the sex trade over the past 0-32 years. At this point, I have completed 8 interviews. These occurred on the premises of a social business production unit located in a red-light area. Women have received permission to take time out of production to participate in this study. Each interview so far has taken no more than 25 minutes, including the informed consent process. I am gathering some quantitative data and a large amount of qualitative date by giving the women the opportunity to answer specific questions or share their narratives freely as they so choose. I am following a loose interview schedule which will be available in the appendix.

After asking questions surrounding the informed consent process, participants appear quite comfortable in the interview setting. I ensure that they are aware of their right and ability to access the staff counsellor, nurse and social workers at any time. Some women exhibit emotions when telling their stories, while others appeared more detached.

Depending on what room is available, interviews are held alternately in the production unit's staff room and the conference room (both behind closed doors). I am conducting these interviews in Bengali and providing my translator with audio recordings. This portion of my data is in the process of being translated and transcribed in English. After being edited by a second translator, the data will be coded and analyzed.

At this point, it is difficult to know whether or not I am asking the right questions. I am unsure if my questions are garnering new information for my partner organization or if I will simply be reporting in formal terms information they already know. I do not want to waste my participants' time, nor have them recall difficult things if the results are insignificant. Once I have my English transcriptions it will be easier to determine if and how I need to adjust my interview guide.

**Final Focus Group Discussion**

The purpose of this focus group discussion is to receive feedback from participants regarding my results towards the end of the research process. I will invite 8-10 individuals who were not involved in the initial focus group discussion to participate in this discussion.

**Sources**

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