Review

Sex Work and the Problem of Resilience

Heather Worth [1,*], Karen McMillan [2], Hilary Gorman [1], Merita Tuari'i [1] and Lauren Turner [1]

[1] Te Puna Vai Mārama | the Cook Islands Centre for Research, The University of the South Pacific, Rarotonga P.O. Box 130, Cook Islands; hilary.gorman@tepunavaimarama.org (H.G.); merita.tuarii@tepunavaimarama.org (M.T.); lauren.turner@tepunavaimarama.org (L.T.)
[2] Independent Researcher, Auckland, New Zealand; k.mcmillan@unswalumni.com
* Correspondence: heather.worth@tepunavaimarama.org

Abstract: The notion of resilience has been widely invoked as that essential resource by which sex workers may endure, cope, or thrive despite encountering adversities and stressors. A useful definition within the resilience discourse around sex work is the ability to connect, reconnect, and resist disconnection in response to hardships, adversities, and trauma. In this article, we will examine the history of 'resilience' and show how it has been ubiquitously applied to sex workers in some Pacific Island settings. The resounding message of resilience discourse is that sex workers must learn to cope, accommodate, and adapt themselves to conditions that oppress them, and in fact, presuppose a continued acceptance of a degraded place in the world. Rather than resistance as a political action aimed at changing the social, institutional, and economic structures that have placed sex workers there, resilience shifts the onus onto the individual sex worker or her community support to learn to adapt to those conditions. Resilience strategies may be pragmatic but, in the end, to present these as any kind of solution to sex worker struggles becomes little more than victim blaming.

Keywords: resilience; sex work; Pacific Islands; structure; agency; resistance

Academic Editors: Cecilia M. Benoit and Andrea Mellor

Received: 20 September 2024
Revised: 11 December 2024
Accepted: 3 January 2025
Published: 24 January 2025

Citation: Worth, H.; McMillan, K.; Gorman, H.; Tuari'i, M.; Turner, L. Sex Work and the Problem of Resilience. *Sexes* **2025**, *6*, 7. https://doi.org/10.3390/sexes6010007

Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

1. Introduction

The resilient subject is a subject that must permanently struggle to accommodate itself to the world and not a subject that can conceive of changing the world, its structure, and conditions of possibility [1] (p. 83).

The notion of resilience has been widely accepted as a way for sex workers to be able to endure, cope, or thrive despite encountering adversities and stressors [2]. A useful definition within the resilience discourse around sex work is drawn from Hartling [3] (p. 56), who describes resilience as "the ability to connect, reconnect, and resist disconnection in response to hardships, adversities, trauma". The resounding discourse of resilience is that sex workers must learn to cope, accommodate, and adapt themselves to conditions that oppress them, and in fact, presupposes a continued acceptance of a degraded place in the world. Resilience shifts the onus onto the individual sex worker or her community support to learn to adapt to those conditions.

In this article, we will examine the history of 'resilience' and show how it has been ubiquitously applied to sex workers. We then turn the argument to a different reading of sex work as inhered in political economy, and the relationship between sex work and inequality as one that is configured by increasingly globalised capitalism. This reshaping of sex work discourses comes with a concomitant call not to resilience but to resistance. We will examine examples from our previously published research findings as well as other

literature on sex work in the Pacific to show that sex workers in the region do not purely resile to their 'fate' as sex workers but are active in resistance, even in the most difficult conditions. Moreover, we contend that such resistance is necessary to make visible, and confront, the inequalities that both underpin and are consequent upon engagement in sex work.

Sex work practises take various shapes across the region and the data we specifically refer to here arise from qualitative data collection we undertook in Fiji, Kiribati and Palau: three Pacific Island states with different and distinctive dominant forms of sex work. Sex work is criminalised, and socially stigmatised, in all three countries—as it is in other Pacific Islands. The research we conducted at those and other sites between 2010 and the present is motivated by the need to understand locally specific experiences and concerns of sex workers in order to better inform and advocate for the development of harm reduction services and policy at both regional and local levels.

2. The Birth of Resilience as a Ubiquitous Discourse

Appearing as early as the 1970s in the ecological literature, 'resilience' centred around the capacities of non-human living systems to adapt to dangers which otherwise would threaten catastrophic failure—to "absorb changes (particularly sudden catastrophic events) and still go on living" (see [4–6]). Notably, due to these origins in ecology, the concept of 'resilience' promoted and described mechanisms of the preservation of a *system*. Discourses of 'resilience' began appearing in the early 1980s in the psychological literature, always associated with risk and vulnerability [7], and at first, mostly associated with children (e.g., [8–10]).

Since then, resilience as a concept has gained traction across many social science disciplines [11,12], and the arrival of HIV meant that resilience found a particular home within studies on marginalised populations, such as men who have sex with men, those living with HIV, transgender people, drug users, and sex workers (e.g., [13,14]). Whilst understandings of resilience were disparate and sometimes ambiguous, definitions broadly converge on the ability of 'vulnerable' populations to cope with, adapt to, or recover from external stresses and adversity. Bottrell [2] contends that "resilience. . .and resilience building are important concepts and practises for social policy because they are concerned with the quality of people's lives forged within conditions of marginalisation and disadvantage" (par.1).

For sex workers, the literature in the 1990s focused on those most vulnerable to HIV, where resilience was a positive response to external stresses and adversities that exposed sex workers to the virus (e.g., [15–17]). Resilience is viewed as something the sex worker 'has' or something that is 'made' [18], either a characteristic or trait that can be shaped, but as something that is highly individualised, including the ability to cope with issues such as mental distress [19,20], substance abuse [21], lack of control over their situation [22], or loneliness [22]. For example, Yuen et al. (2013) [23] argue that "when individuals are exposed to traumatic or stressful situations, some may display psychological distress while others may have the ability to positively adapt to adversity and function competently. Such positive adjustments are referred to as resilience" (p. 2). In such a definition, resilience is bound to the innate abilities of the individual. Resilience is seen as a protective ability to deal with external stressors or adversities that sex workers commonly face, such as financial hardship, threats such as client violence [19,20,22,24], harassment [20,25] stigma, and discrimination [19–22,25], limited social protection [19–21,25], the criminalisation of sex work [19,20,24], exclusion from the formal economy [26], and limited access to medical care [26].

3. The Individualism of Resilience

While resilience has become ubiquitous in the sex work literature, the term itself is rarely critiqued within those studies. The underlying ontology of resilience is vulnerability [1]. To be able to become resilient, one must first accept that one's being is fundamentally vulnerable; a precondition of the resilient sex worker subject is an acquiescence to vulnerability as a basic reality of the sex worker's existence. There are assumptions about the subject's capacities to deal with negative effects (such as stigma and discrimination, incarceration or beatings in the case of sex workers). Sex workers must accept that life is a permanent process of continual adaptation to threats and dangers which are positioned as always outside their control. Here, resistance is reduced to a purely reactionary impulse aimed at increasing the capacities of the subject to adapt to dangers and simply reduce the degree to which it suffers. Any potential of, or value in, political action is elided, and the burden of provision of security shifts from systems to individuals. Bauman's work helps us understand this further explains:

Left increasingly to their own resources and acumen, individuals are expected to devise individual solutions to socially generated problems, and to do it individually, using their individual skills and individually possessed assets [27] (p. 17).

Thus, the sex worker subject is a subject who accepts the dangers of the world and lives in it as a condition for partaking of that world and who accepts the necessity to change herself, but she must do it through the deliberate disabling of the political capacity to resist. In fact, resilient sex workers must accept the imperative not to resist. Accepting the imperative to become resilient means sacrificing any political vision of a world in which sex workers will be able to live better lives free from danger. Rather than resisting and demanding an end to discrimination and violence through political action, the resilient sex worker must make individual changes to make it possible to bear that violence.

4. Institutionalisation of Resilience

Resilience has captured the imagination—and the critical lens—of researchers across the academic spectrum and is widely used in public and policy circles. And the discourse around resilience has become increasingly institutionalised. By the 2000s, resilience had become a popular catchphrase within governments and international bodies [28], where resilience is primarily operationalised as being a necessary feature of capitalist social relations [29]. Thus, what is termed 'resilience policy' privileges established social structures that are shaped by unequal power relations, which in turn generate discrimination and stigma.

It also puts the onus for coping and adaptation back onto communities, in what Evans and Reid have called a new ethics of responsibility. Members must take responsibility for their communities' resilience, where the onus is on communities to adapt and cope [30] (p. 234), to take 'knock after knock' and keep getting up again. For example, the Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce [31] conducted a study of 17 workers to understand their functioning and coping. Participants articulated the value of taking regular breaks, going for a walk, personal religious beliefs, and engaging in leisure activities outside of work to help them cope with the stigma and isolation of their work environments. In this way, a resilient sex worker is one who has learned responsibility; however, it is 'responsibility without power' [32] (p. 386). The recent upsurge of interest in community resilience is not only a product of the 'top-down' strategies of government but also an effect of the passive acceptance of 'bottom-up' adaptation activities by community groups working with sex workers.

The effect of community coping is a suppression of economic and social differences (according to class, gender, race, and so forth) and a masking of inequality and hier-

archy [33–35]. Walker and Cooper [36] (p. 144) argue that the success of resilience in 'colonizing multiple arenas of governance' reflects its ideological fit with neoliberalism. One of the major issues in resilience discourse is its lack of focus on structural issues. The uneven distribution of risk is unimportant except in the designation of certain groups for whom resilience is most necessary. In an acknowledgement and designation of 'vulnerability' a separation within the social order is both ensured and reinforced. The simultaneous gesture to universalisation appears as cruelly cynical then: a universalising mode that tasks the most vulnerable subjects with adaption to, and absorption of, adverse impacts in the interests of the preservation of the system.

At first glance, the requirement of (for example) sex worker resilience appears to emphasise agency, but this agency is restricted to the subjects' capacities to act on themselves. Also, the a-historicization of specific and localised paid sex practises obscures ways in which the interface of economic forces and cultural elements at any given site (such as gender imperatives and traditions of resource exchange [37]) generates a larger or smaller field of possibility for both individual and collective sex worker action. So, while the agency is always circumscribed there are a variety of differing mechanisms by which limitations occur, and these specific mechanisms are important. Moreover, while constraint and freedom are always a matter of degree, within the discourse of resilience constraint and freedom appear as outcomes of the subjects' own actions.

5. Sex Work and Resilience in the Pacific

Diverse forms of sex work undertaken in Pacific Island countries include sex with seafarers and migrant worker clients, local women boarding foreign fishing vessels, as well as the provision of sex services to locals, tourists, and business travellers. Though various in form, sex work across the region is largely driven by economic need. Boredom, limited employment, and other economic and social opportunities, alienation, and marginalisation are also factors [38,39]. Local forms and drivers of Pacific Islands' sex work are forged within a wider framework of economic regimes, agendas, and ideologies. Countries in the region are not homogenous. Culture and other social factors differ across the Pacific Islands, and attention to local context specificity is essential to investigations into the various forms of sex work undertaken there. Yet, it is attention to this local specificity that makes apparent the ways in which the particular shape of local forms of sex work is linked to a political economy and to social transitions consequent on economic factors. Attention to local specificity also makes apparent the manner in which features of sex work, and the sectors of the population who engage in it, reflect and respond to global patterns of power.

Unlike most of the 'resilience' work which focuses on the individual sex worker and her coping mechanisms, our work in the Pacific [39] is centred around the global political economy as the major structural driver of sex work as well as being a key force in the various shapes and forms that sex work takes at different sites. Research has demonstrated that "the illicit and illegal economy is intimately related to, not separable from, the functioning of the 'formal' global economy" [40] (p. 530). Our Pacific research describes ways that local forms of Pacific Islands' sex work are forged within a wider framework of economic regimes, agendas, and ideologies. Of course, countries in the region are not homogenous. Culture and other social factors differ across the Pacific Islands, and attention to local context specificity is essential to investigations into the various forms of sex work undertaken there. Yet, it is attention to this local specificity that makes apparent the ways in which the particular shape of local forms of sex work is linked to the global political economy and to social transitions consequent on economic factors. For example, transnational seafaring is one of the most potent examples of the integration of Kiribati's economy into what Arrighi (1994) calls "global circuits of capital" [41]. The migrant labour

of i-Kiribati seafarers is an essential element of Kiribati's economy, as are the leases sold to foreign fishing vessels within Kiribati's exclusive economic zones, which extract value from Kiribati's marine resources and from the sex workers who frequent foreign fishing vessels to sell sex. Attention to local specificity also makes apparent the way features of sex work, and the sectors of the population who engage in it, reflect, respond to, and reproduce global patterns of power and unequal resource distribution. We argue that sex work in the Pacific is driven by economic need and underpinned by social structural forces such as the transnational nature of labour, the marginalisation of transgender people, criminalisation, and gendered economic inequalities with low wages for typically feminine labour.

The integration of Pacific Island nations into, and their positioning within, global circuits of transnational production are not the only avenues by which global forces are exerted at a local level. For example, young i-Kiribati women have few opportunities for secure well-paid work and little control of local resources or access to commodities and consumer goods, making provision of intimacy and sexual services to the crew of international fishing fleets a viable choice for some. The lives of these sex workers are caught up in global processes and structures outside their control, part of what Comaroff calls the "intensified circulation of persons and things in the world" [42] (p. 66).

Our work with Fiji's garment workers, who also sell sex, is another case in point [39]. The garment industry in Fiji was founded on the ready availability of a cheap and docile feminine pool of labour. The garment industry is poorly regulated and is reliant on the labour of poorly remunerated women and transgender women workers. The working conditions of these women are highly exploitative and underwrite the perpetuation of feminine dependency [43]. As sex work is criminalised and highly stigmatised in Fiji, those women who use sex work to resist legalised labour exploitation or to ensure their economic independence are effectively stripped of a range of social and legal entitlements. Ironically, the only assisted exit path presented to sex workers attempts to channel them into the very jobs that do not pay enough to support an independent existence. Those feminised jobs are consistent with Fiji's positioning of itself in the global market. In this way, our data illustrate the imbrication of illegal and legal women's work in the reproduction and reinforcement of gendered social and economic inequalities, at both a local and a global level. Women's garment work becomes a tool of economic oppression and enforced servitude. Through an investigation of the intersections of structural factors and differences—transnational production regimes, sex, and class—in Fiji, inequalities appear not merely as isolated or specific cultural phenomena, but as produced by and constituting an overarching political economy and global social order.

Legislation and justice system practises affect both the legal and social status of sex workers and are mechanisms that impact the sex worker's vulnerability. Fijian sex workers have also faced further criminalisation of sex work. The criminalisation of clients in 2010 under the Fiji Crimes Decree, led to harsh (and illegal) military treatment of street-based sex workers [2]. In Lautoka (the second largest city in Fiji), over a period of about a year in 2010 and 2011, members of the armed forces used military vehicles to round up both female and transgender sex workers, taking them to the military barracks, detaining and abusing them overnight and making them submit to forced labour the next day (This harsh treatment stopped once our report was made public through the media [2]).

It is not only local criminal laws which affect sex workers in the Pacific. The active definition of, and focus on, trafficking and the formulation of anti-trafficking efforts, as they currently stand, divert attention from—if not tacitly legitimate—exploitative labour practises as well as inequality, poverty, and a lack of social and legal rights concomitant with criminalised sex work (particularly that undertaken by migrants) [44,45]. Counter-

trafficking measures in the Pacific have centred around the deportation of sex workers and the prosecution of bar and brothel owners [46,47].

Sex work in Palau is undertaken primarily by women who arrive in the country legally to undertake legitimate employment as hostesses. Many Chinese, Filipina, and other female migrants working in entertainment and hospitality establishments supplement their income with sex work [48]. While some hostesses travel to Palau specifically intending to sell sex, our research found that other hostesses take it up subsequently—as a way of mitigating the impact of poor pay. There has been police action against massage venues and karaoke bars in Palau designed to generate trafficking prosecutions and has resulted in hostesses losing their jobs, their means of support, and their accommodation, as well as potentially facing trafficking charges if they did not denounce their employers. These actions did nothing to protect the migrant workers, instead rendering them more vulnerable to indebtedness, and creating an environment in which seeking labour protections might embroil workers in a trafficking case.

The manner in which local laws and policing practises in Palau and other Pacific countries enact international protocols against sex work demonstrates how the policing of sex work, migrant labour regulations, and anti-trafficking efforts have eroded migrant rights and hindered advocacy efforts with migrant sex workers. The central role of 'legitimate' global supply chains and 'free' labour relations within a global matrix of exploitation and injustice, is effectively obscured. While migrant sex work is regularly conflated with "sex trafficking", there is no evidence that measures to combat human trafficking have reduced the exploitation of sex workers. On the contrary, the well-being of migrants and other sex workers regularly emerges as "collateral damage" in this battle [49]. HIV prevention and other safeguards for sex workers are among the first casualties. Mai et al. (2021) [50] use the concept of 'sexual humanitarianism' to describe the ways in which "groups of migrants are strategically problematized, supported, and intervened upon by humanitarian institutions, representations and NGOs according to vulnerabilities that are supposedly associated with their sexual orientation and behaviour" (p. 1608). Their research focused on migrant women engaged in sex work in Australia, France, and New Zealand, like migrant women engaged in sex work in Palau found that humanitarian interventions to address trafficking result in further exclusion of migrant groups.

6. Resisting Resilience

Sex workers themselves have never actually been purely resilient subjects. From early on, there has been ongoing resistance to police brutality and the criminalization and exclusion of sex work that has been waged by sex workers and allies [51–53]. Since the 1970s sex workers organised and demanded human rights and labour rights with the slogan 'sex workers rights are human rights'. Over the decades they established an ongoing resistant presence through demands for decriminalisation, access to justice, and demand for safety and security which has continued to be articulated up to the present. Community networks and collective solidarity can increase sex workers' knowledge of sexual safety and rights, and their visibility, inclusion and participation in the social sphere [20,21,23]. Sex workers interviewed by Wanjiru et al. [20] mentioned collective movements such as 'Nothing Without Us'. Likewise, Scorgie et al. [21] urge "[c]ollective empowerment of the sex worker community through building knowledge of their rights cannot be overestimated. When sex workers have been trained and supported in this way, it can foster the confidence and resilience of individual sex workers to take control of dangerous situations" (p. 10). The Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW) is a network of sex worker-led organisations focused on the decriminalisation of sex work who oppose the trafficking paradigm and human rights abuse towards sex workers. In the Pacific, sex worker organisations including

Friends Frangipani of Papua New Guinea and Survivors Advocacy Network of Fiji exist in contexts of deeply religious social and cultural norms which stigmatise sex work.

Resistance can be conceptualised as operating at a range of levels [54,55]—from challenging those structures pertaining to local environmental conditions (the policy and practises of service providers and of police, for example), to national-level factors (such as laws and economic restructuring), and even international or global factors that originate beyond the nation (such as trade agreements or embargos). We signal the role that regimes of transnational production, foreign-aid dependence, moralities and ideologies embedded in development and humanitarian projects, and global agendas such as anti-trafficking and border protection play in exacerbating social inequalities in the Pacific context.

Empowerment-based interventions increase the ability of sex workers themselves to influence these factors through collectivization, not as ways of coping with laws, policies, international global capital etc., but as ways of challenging these structures, and of increasing sex worker agency even as those structures impede it. As Comaroff argues, "no world-transforming force exists without the engagement of tangible human agents and interests. . . all activities, large and small, which can be shown to have social and cultural determinations and, hence, are susceptible to debate, contestation, and intervention" [42].

Interview data from our Pacific studies have drawn our attention to the ways sex workers' options and choices are shaped by external structural constraints, but also to ways that sex work is an active and agentic navigation of and resistance to those constraints and contexts. Respect for sex workers' own decisions and for their capacities and rights to make the choices that they do is premised on an acknowledgement of the opportunities and advantages that may be afforded by voluntary engagement in sex work. These acknowledgements also further understand the complex social inequalities that are manifest in, and through, various forms of sex work.

In Fiji, after the 2010 Crimes Decree, sex workers asserted their agency in a number of ways, such as finding new ways to carry out sex work, or by moving to less-known spots. Most of the sex workers we interviewed had no intention of giving up sex work as it remained the most viable way of supporting themselves and their families. They were also staunch in their belief that the treatment of sex workers was unjust and that both the law and discriminatory or stigmatising practises are worth contesting and felt that the Decree had made the sex worker network stronger.

For i-Kiribati sex workers, oppositional resistance especially to institutional, social, and police stigma and brutality, rather than the acceptance of, adaptation to or absorption of the worst adverse impacts of those acts of violence, will be the productive space of engagement in their own futures. These futures are a complex mix of exclusion and marginalisation and a desire for a better life on the part of the young women themselves.

7. Conclusions

If we look at Pacific sex workers through a lens which designates them as a vulnerable group in which resilience should be fostered, we will miss the structural drivers through which global forces (manifest in their impact on local labour conditions and justice system actions, as well as on gendered, ethnic, and class differentials) shape the labour of sex work at the local level. These same drivers underwrite threats and dangers sex workers face. However, the resilience discourse with its focus on the capacities of adversely affected individuals and communities, fails to attend to either those threats or their sources. In fact, resilience can be viewed as a taming mechanism of the problematic 'transgressive subject'—sex workers who will now be more acquiescent and police themselves, keeping themselves within the boundaries of 'acceptable transgression'—rather than allowing the existence of the dangerously abject.

In the Pacific, the course of community empowerment—the pace at which resources and capacities can be activated, the emergent agendas, and the sequence of outcomes, milestones, and stages that serve as markers of success—will be as variable as the particular social, political, and programmatic contexts involved [56]. As a process, empowerment is enacted across a spectrum, from the organisational level through to that of the community [56]. Accordingly, it may be conceptualised as a cyclic progression, through which the mobilisation and organisation of individual agency into collective action is constituted in, and as, a process of community empowerment. Collective or community empowerment resisting poverty, inequality, and criminalisation fosters and supports the agency and efficacy of individuals and organisations constituting that community. However, the particular social, political, and historical context in which a community is embedded will shape the trajectory of the empowerment process and determine the features marking progress [57]. In a process of community empowerment, specific outcomes of collectivisation, such as engagement in and control of advocacy programmes, cannot be predetermined: aims and priorities will be established in and through the mobilisation of each community. Often these aims are thwarted by a lack of foresight, understanding, or commitment on the part of donors, funders and programme designers—rather than any failure of the empowerment process.

Large-scale social, political, and economic institutions are slow to change, and interventions targeting structural factors may be difficult to effect when local conditions are generated and underwritten by global forces. For this reason, analyses of the role and influence of distal factors may be considered to be impractical. However, despite the relative intractability of political and economic structures, accounts of the role and function of structural forces in underpinning engagement in sex work, and of the mechanisms by which those forces shape sex work practises, have important and immediate practical and theoretical utility to sex work advocacy. What is needed is a call for continued efforts towards resistance, to bravery in the face of criminalisation, stigma and discrimination.

The Fiji Crimes Decree not only saw sex workers humiliated by members of the Fiji Army, but it also installed in them a greater agency. They were not simply victims of this punitive crackdown — they found new ways to carry out sex work, or by moving to less-known spots. Most had no intention of giving up sex work as it remained the most viable way of supporting themselves and their families. They were also staunch in their belief that the treatment of sex workers was unjust and that both the law and discriminatory or stigmatising practises are worth contesting. Three sex workers made these statements:

> "I just want to say this to my friends, we fight on our rights. I want to tell my friends that if you have been arrested by the police fight for your rights don't give up, fight for it because if you'll give up they'll put you down". (Charlotte)

> "This Decree has made the [sex worker] network stronger in the way it's moving now. Now it's trying to look for options to better the life of sex workers in Fiji". (Bree)

> "I hope the next election will change everything in this country because I know most of us SW have contributed to the economy and I wish in future that some NGos and other sex workers would fight for their rights and seek help from people out there in the community and that's all, thank you". (Carrie) (all cited 2013 in [2])

In the Pacific, sex workers are standing up for their rights and against all odds fighting against harassment and for decriminalisation of sex work.

Author Contributions: H.W. wrote much of the first sections, K.M. wrote most of the section on sex work in the Pacific, H.G. and M.T. commented on drafts, L.T. carried out preliminary work on the resilience literature. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This review received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

1. Evans, B.; Reid, J. Dangerously exposed: The life and death of the resilient subject. *Resilience* **2013**, *1*, 83–98. [CrossRef]
2. McMillan, K.; Worth, H. Fiji Sex Laws Breed Human Rights Abuse. 2011. Available online: https://www.unsw.edu.au/newsroom/news/2011/12/fiji-sex-laws-breed-human-rights-abuse- (accessed on 17 January 2023).
3. Bottrell, D. Responsibilised Resilience? Reworking Neoliberal Social Policy Texts. *M/C J.* **2013**, *16*, 5. [CrossRef]
4. Hartling, L.M. Strengthening Resilience in a Risky World: It's All about Relationships. *Women Ther.* **2008**, *31*, 51–70. [CrossRef]
5. Walker, B.H.; Noy-Meir, I. Aspects of the Stability and Resilience of Savanna Ecosystems. In *Ecology of Tropical Savannas. Ecological Studies*; Huntley, B.J., Walker, B.H., Eds.; Springer: Berlin/Heidelberg, Germany, 1982; Volume 42. [CrossRef]
6. Westman, W.E. Resilience: Concepts and measures. In *Resilience in Mediterranean-Type Ecosystems. Tasks for Vegetation Science*; Dell, B., Hopkins, A.J.M., Lamont, B.B., Eds.; Springer: Dordrecht, The Netherlands, 1986; Volume 16. [CrossRef]
7. Holling, C. Simplifying the complex The paradigms of ecological function and structure. *Futures* **1994**, *26*, 598–609. [CrossRef]
8. Anthony, E.J. Risk, vulnerability, and resilience: An overview. In *The Invulnerable Child*; Anthony, E.J., Cohler, B.J., Eds.; The Guilford Press: New York, NY, USA, 1987; pp. 3–48.
9. Crittenden, P.M. Maltreated infants: Vulnerability and resilience. *J. Child Psychol. Psychiatry* **1985**, *26*, 85–96. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
10. Werner, E. Vulnerability and Resiliency: A Longitudinal Perspective. In *Children at Risk: Assessment, Longitudinal Research and Intervention*; Brambring, M., Lösel, F., Skowronek, H., Eds.; De Gruyter: Berlin, Germany, 1989; pp. 157–172. [CrossRef]
11. Masten, A.S.; O'connor, M.J. Vulnerability, stress, and resilience in the early development of a high risk child. *J. Am. Acad. Child Adolesc. Psychiatry* **1989**, *28*, 274–278. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
12. Bourbeau, P. A Genealogy of Resilience. *Int. Political Sociol.* **2018**, *12*, 19–35. [CrossRef]
13. Sjöstedt, M. Resilience revisited: Taking institutional theory seriously. *Ecol. Soc.* **2015**, *20*, 8. [CrossRef]
14. Bandura, A. Perceived self-efficacy in the exercise of control over AIDS infection. *Eval. Program Plan.* **1990**, *13*, 9–17. [CrossRef]
15. Leary, D. Fast cars don't kill me: Marginalised young people, HIV and suicide. In *Preventing Youth Suicide*; Australian Institute of Criminology: Canberra, Australia, 1992.
16. Browne, J.; Minichiello, V. Research directions in male sex work. *J. Homosex.* **1996**, *31*, 29–56. [CrossRef]
17. Maher, L. Hidden in the light: Occupational norms among crack-using street-level sex workers. *J. Drug Issues* **1996**, *26*, 143–173. [CrossRef]
18. Preston-Whyte, E.; Varga, C. Survival Sex and HIV/AIDS in an African City. In *Framing the Sexual Subject: The Politics of Gender, Sexuality, and Power*; University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, USA, 2000; p. 165.
19. Aranda, K.; Zeeman, L.; Scholes, J.; Morales, A.S.M. The resilient subject: Exploring subjectivity, identity and the body in narratives of resilience. *Health Interdiscip. J. Soc. Study Health Illn. Med.* **2012**, *16*, 548–563. [CrossRef]
20. Wanjiru, R.; Nyariki, E.; Babu, H.; Lwingi, I.; Liku, J.; Jama, Z.; Kung'u, M.; Ngurukiri, P. Beaten but not down! Exploring resilience among female sex workers (FSWs) in Nairobi, Kenya. *BMC Public Health* **2022**, *22*, 965. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
21. Scorgie, F.; Vasey, K.; Harper, E.; Richter, M.; Nare, P.; Maseko, S.; Chersich, M.F. Human rights abuses and collective resilience among sex workers in four African countries: A qualitative study. *Glob. Health* **2013**, *9*, 33. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
22. Nyabeze, K.; Jakaza, T.N.; Chikoko, W.; Mwapaura, K.; Zvokuomba, K. The Resilience of Female Sex Workers in the Wake of COVID-19 in Zimbabwe. *J. Asian Afr. Stud.* **2021**, *57*, 514–528. [CrossRef]
23. Yuen, W.W.Y.; Wong, W.C.W.; Holroyd, E.; Tang, C.S.K. Resilience in Work-Related Stress Among Female Sex Workers in Hong Kong. *Qual. Health Res.* **2014**, *24*, 1232–1241. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
24. Yuen, W.W.-Y.; Wong, W.C.-W.; Tang, C.S.-K.; Holroyd, E.; Tiwari, A.F.-Y.; Fong, D.Y.-T.; Chin, W.Y. Evaluating the effectiveness of personal resilience and enrichment programme (PREP) for HIV prevention among female sex workers: A randomised controlled trial. *BMC Public Health* **2013**, *13*, 683. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

25. Shdaimah, C.S.; Leon, C. "First and Foremost They're Survivors": Selective Manipulation, Resilience, and Assertion Among Prostitute Women. *Fem. Criminol.* **2015**, *10*, 326–347. [CrossRef]
26. Reza-Paul, S.; Kumar, P.N.; Lazarus, L.; Pasha, A.; Ramaiah, M.; Paul, M.R.; Lorway, R.; Sundararaman, S. From Vulnerability to Resilience: Sex Workers Fight COVID-19. In *Health Dimensions of COVID-19 in India and Beyond*; Pachauri, S., Pachauri, A., Eds.; Springer: Singapore, 2022. [CrossRef]
27. Rouhani, S.; Decker, M.R.; Tomko, C.; Silberzahn, B.; Allen, S.T.; Park, J.N.; Footer, K.H.; Sherman, S.G. Resilience among Cisgender and Transgender Women in Street-Based Sex Work in Baltimore, Maryland. *Women's Health Issues* **2021**, *31*, 148–156. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
28. Bauman, Z. *Collateral Damage: Social Inequalities in a Global Age*; Polity: Cambridge, UK, 2011.
29. Cretney, R. Resilience for Whom? Emerging Critical Geographies of Socio-ecological Resilience. *Geogr. Compass* **2014**, *8*, 627–640. [CrossRef]
30. Hudson, R. Resilient regions in an uncertain world: Wishful thinking or a practical reality? *Camb. J. Reg. Econ. Soc.* **2010**, *3*, 11–25. [CrossRef]
31. Evans, J.P. Resilience, ecology and adaptation in the experimental city. *Trans. Inst. Br. Geogr.* **2011**, *36*, 223–237. [CrossRef]
32. Arnott, J. SWEAT (Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce). *Fem. Afr.* **2006**, *6*, 88–90.
33. Peck, J.; Tickell, A. Neoliberalizing space. *Antipode* **2002**, *34*, 380–404. [CrossRef]
34. DeFilippis, J.; Fisher, R.; Shragge, E. Neither romance nor regulation: Re-evaluating community. *Int. J. Urban Reg. Res.* **2006**, *30*, 673–689. [CrossRef]
35. Joseph, M. *Against the Romance of Community*; U of Minnesota P: Minneapolis, MN, USA, 2002.
36. Connolly, M.; Young, I. "Throwing like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory": Response and Commentary. *Hum. Stud.* **1994**, *17*, 463–469. [CrossRef]
37. Walker, J.; Cooper, M. Genealogies of resilience: From systems ecology to the political economy of crisis adaptation. *Secur. Dialogue* **2011**, *42*, 143–160. [CrossRef]
38. Hunter, M. The materiality of everyday sex: Thinking beyond 'prostitution'. *Afr. Stud.* **2002**, *61*, 99–120. [CrossRef]
39. McMillan, K.; Worth, H. "If they paid me well I can stop doing sex work": Sex work and the garment trade in Fiji. *N. Z. Sociol.* **2017**, *32*, 27–47.
40. Smith, N.J. The international political economy of commercial sex. *Rev. Int. Political Econ.* **2010**, *18*, 530–549. [CrossRef]
41. Arrighi, G. *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times*; Verso: New York, NY, USA, 1994; Volume 84.
42. Comaroff, J.; Comaroff, J. *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*, 1st ed.; Westview Press: Oxford, UK, 1992. [CrossRef]
43. Harrington, P.E. *Recruiting & Retaining Women: A Self-Assessment Guide for Law Enforcement*; National Center for Women & Policing: Los Angeles, CA, USA, 2000.
44. A Pacific Solution to a Pacific Challenge: A Human-Rights Approach to Human Trafficking. 2023. Available online: https://asiafoundation.org/a-pacific-solution-to-a-pacific-challenge-a-human-rights-approach-to-human-trafficking/ (accessed on 16 April 2024).
45. Doezema, J. Now you see her, now you don't: Sex workers at the UN trafficking protocol negotiation. *Soc. Leg. Stud.* **2005**, *14*, 61–89. [CrossRef]
46. Merry, S.E. Sex trafficking and global governance in the context of Pacific mobility. *Law Text Cult.* **2011**, *15*, 187–208. [CrossRef]
47. Lindley, J.; Beacroft, L. Vulnerabilities to trafficking in persons in the Pacific Islands. *Trends Issues Crime Crim. Justice* **2011**, *428*, 1–7.
48. McMillan, K.; Hansen, M.; Worth, H. Risky Business Palau: Hostessing, Sex Work and HIV Prevention in Koror. 2015. Available online: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326144155_Risky_Business_Palau_Hostessing_sex_work_and_HIV_Prevention_in_Koror (accessed on 12 September 2024).
49. Home—The Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW). 2007. Available online: https://gaatw.org/Collateral_Damage_Final/singlefile_CollateralDamagefinal.pdf (accessed on 25 April 2024).
50. Mai, N.; Macioti, P.; Bennachie, C.; Fehrenbacher, A.E.; Giametta, C.; Hoefinger, H.; Musto, J. Migration, sex work and trafficking: The racialized bordering politics of sexual humanitarianism. *Ethn. Racial Stud.* **2021**, *44*, 1607–1628. [CrossRef]
51. Rodgerson, G. Arrests of 21 men example of harassment. *Toronto Star*, 19 June 1987; A20.
52. Shapcott, M. Downtown vigilantes harass area residents. *Toronto Star*, 20 November 1987; A22.
53. Smith, D.E. *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*; Northeastern UP: Boston, MA, USA, 1987.
54. Sweat, M.D.; Denison, J.A. Reducing HIV incidence in developing countries with structural and environmental interventions. *AIDS* **1995**, *9* (Suppl. A), S251–S257. [PubMed]
55. Barnett, T.; Whiteside, A. *AIDS in the Twenty-First Century: Disease and Globalization*; Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire, UK, 2002. [CrossRef]

56. Laverack, G.; Wallerstein, N. Measuring community empowerment: A fresh look at organizational domains. *Health Promot. Int.* **2001**, *16*, 179–185. [CrossRef]
57. Bekker, L.G.; Slack, C.; Lee, S.; Shah, S.; Kapogiannis, B. Ethical issues in adolescent HIV research in resource-limited countries. *JAIDS J. Acquir. Immune Defic. Syndr.* **2014**, *65*, S24–S28. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.