

## Introduction

Becky's journey is one that harnesses the reality of limited mobility, the complex reasons that drive migration, and the deeper underlying issues of gender roles. Becky can be seen as a symbol of migrants who struggle to leave their homes due to limited mobility.



The video starts with Becky sharing her experience of being scammed and given a fake passport, a reality of many Nigerians due to the insufficient printing of passports (Asadu, 2021). This reflects the difficulty in mobility for some in a world where passports are the primary entrance to borders across the world. The video then documents the hardships an “illegal” migrant faces on the journey to an imagined freedom. This essay breaks down the concepts behind the motivations of migration and the challenging of imposed gender roles.

## Complex Reasons for Migration



As shown, the streets in Nigeria are messy and cluttered with substandard housing.

Becky has mentioned that she wanted to make lots of money to surprise her family and that she wants to earn money overseas and be rich.



She also commented that meat is too expensive, so they could not afford to eat it daily.

These signal that the economic scene is undesirable in Nigeria, shaping her perception that

leaving will provide her with a “better” life despite her mother saying that the only choice of work in Europe will be prostitution. This is reminiscent of Kamala from *The Kitchen Spoon's Handle* (Gamburd, 2000), who wanted to leave for abroad in hopes to “improve the family” due to the dire economic scene in Naeagama. In search of financial stability, migrants might choose to leave their home country.

However, people often migrate for more than just economic reasons.



Both statements encapsulate Becky's simple desire to travel and see the world. This is the main motivation for Becky to attempt the difficult journey twice. It is possible that Becky simply wanted to escape Nigeria's poor living conditions and experience life in Italy, a more developed



country.



Initially, Becky's statement seems to stem from a place of economic considerations, but she has the aspiration to achieve her dreams of earning for herself and starting her own business. She wishes to "surprise [her] family" and improve her family's life.

According to Shah (2006), many migrants choose to migrate in search of freedom because they feel constrained by the rules and traditions of their homes. Just as Becky wishes to move to Italy in hope of achieving her dreams, the reasons for migration are not purely economic, but complex and different for every migrant.

## Challenging Gender Roles



Women from poor nations are restricted to certain jobs when they migrate. For Becky, prostitution was her only option in Europe. Similarly, most of the women in *The Kitchen's Spoon Handle* (Gamburd, 2000) became domestic workers. Both these jobs are assumed to be traditionally held by women, confining them to professions that correlate to gender roles and expectations. Hence, women are seen to have a lack of sense of agency when choosing their desired career.

However, while their job options are indeed limited, Becky states that women do actually have a choice in becoming prostitutes: not while they are in Europe, but while they are still back at home.



Women have full knowledge of what their migration journey will entail long before reaching Europe. Becky then emphasises that if these women were not willing to be prostitutes, they should not have gone to Europe in the first place. Women have agency in choosing to be prostitutes or not: no one is forcing that decision on them, and they are not deceived or cheated into it.

Agency is also restored to women in how they respond to the prospect of prostitution.

If the film depicts Becky as fully aware of - and to some extent choosing - prostitution, as you note, what assumptions do you think this questions? There is definitely exercise of agency here but agency is a complicated thing - how do you read the agency depicted here?





Becky does not just accept the fact that she has to prostitute herself, but even finds some form of amusement in it. She even praises other women for looking more beautiful after becoming prostitutes.

*nice detail - these small things matter*







Thus, she is able to restore power and agency to herself through humour and self-empowerment, even in a “degrading” profession that supposedly strips her of personal choice.

### **Conclusion**

In essence, Becky’s story is one that many who experience limited mobility relate to, and one we can learn and better understand the struggles that others face in the world.

**Word count:** 711

### **Name of Group Members:**

Lee Si Jie Bethany (A0239731B)

Lee Shi Hann Naomi (A0240154U)

Leong Jia En Rachel (A0240197E)

Melina Thebe (A0221842M)

## Bibliography

Asadu, C. (2021). EXCLUSIVE: Real reason Nigerians can't get passports without tears.

*TheCable*. <https://www.thecable.ng/exclusive-real-reason-nigerians-cant-get-passports-without-tears>

Gamburd, M. R. (2000). *The kitchen spoon's handle: Transnationalism and Sri Lanka's migrant housemaids*. Cornell University Press.

Shah, A. (2006). *The labour of love: Seasonal migration from Jharkhand to the brick kilns of other states in India*. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 40(1), 91-118.

This is a neat analysis focusing on gender in Becky's Journey - how it structures the kind of work options she has, what gender roles she feels constrained by in Nigerian context, what gendered desires she expresses. While you read the

While you refer to the film quite closely, you could have spent some time analyzing what dominant assumptions you see the film addressing and how effectively you think it does so. In other words, some more zooming out would have made the analysis more reflective and stronger.

B